

# Highways and Transport Committee Agenda

# Date:Thursday, 23rd January, 2025Time:10.00 amVenue:The Capesthorne Room - Town Hall, Macclesfield SK10 1EA

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 November 2024.

#### 4. Public Speaking/Open Session

In accordance with paragraph 2.24 of the Council's Committee Procedure Rules and Appendix on Public Speaking, set out in the <u>Constitution</u>, 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 each to speak, and 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 - <u>Petitions Scheme</u> <u>Criteria</u>, and falls within the remit of the Committee. Petition organisers will be allowed up to three minutes to speak.

#### 5. Third Financial Review 24/25 (Pages 13 - 102)

To receive a report on the third financial review for Highways and Transport services for the financial year 2024/25.

#### 6. Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2025/26 - 2028/29 Provisional Settlement Update (Highways & Transport Committee) (Pages 103 - 164)

To consider the proposals within the budget consultation relating to the Committee's responsibilities.

#### 7. Local Transport Plan - Vision and Objectives (Pages 165 - 374)

To Consider a report on the progress of a new Local Transport Plan for Cheshire East.

#### 8. Highways Service Contract Improvement Action Plan (Pages 375 - 408)

To consider a report on the Highways Service Contract Improvement Action Plan.

#### 9. Middlewich Eastern Bypass - Authority to Enter into Construction Contract (Pages 409 - 428)

To Consider a report on the Middlewich Eastern Bypass – Approval to enter into Construction Contract.

#### 10. **PROW: Proposed Public Path Creation Agreement in the Parish of Wardle** (Pages 429 - 436)

To consider a report on the proposed Public Path Creation Agreement in the Parish of Wardle.

#### 11. **PROW - Town & Country Planning Act 1990 Section 257 - Proposed diversion of public footpath no 12 (Part) in the Parish of Nether Alderley (**Pages 437 - 444)

To consider an application to divert part of Public Footpath No. 12 in the Parish of Nether Alderley.

#### 12. Work Programme (Pages 445 - 450)

To consider the Work Programme and determine any required amendments.

#### THERE ARE NO PART 2 ITEMS

**Membership:** Councillors L Braithwaite, C Browne, A Burton, R Chadwick, P Coan, A Coiley, L Crane (Vice-Chair), H Faddes, A Gage, M Goldsmith (Chair), C Hilliard, M Muldoon and M Sewart

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# Agenda Item 3

# **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Highways and Transport Committee** held on Thursday, 21st November, 2024 in the The Capesthorne Room -Town Hall, Macclesfield SK10 1EA

#### PRESENT

Councillor M Goldsmith (Chair) Councillor L Crane (Vice-Chair)

Councillors L Braithwaite, C Browne, A Burton, R Chadwick, P Coan, A Coiley, H Faddes, A Gage, C Hilliard, M Muldoon and M Sewart

#### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Mark Greenhough, Public Path Orders Officer Adele Mayer, Definitive Map Officer Tom Moody, Director of Transport, and Infrastructure Nicola Lewis-Smith, Public Rights of Way Manager Steve Reading, Principal Accountant Lorraine Rushton, Parking Services Manager Mandy Withington, Solicitor Karen Shuker, Democratic Services Officer

#### 37 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

#### 38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

#### 39 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2024 be approved as a correct record.

#### 40 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

Mr P Johnson, representing Cheshire Tree Alliance addressed the Committee in relation to agenda item 10 – Work Programme, in respect of the Tree Planting and Verge Maintenance Policy which was listed for the January 2025 meeting. Mr Johnson asked for an explanation as to the reason why the work programme was at odds with a statement, he had received from the Council which stated that it would not be conducting a review of the policy, and it was unable to advise when this would be undertaken.

Mr Johnson stated that the Cheshire Tree Alliance and other stakeholders, including Woodland Trust and Mersey Forest were developing a pilot planting scheme across Green Spaces in Lacey Green, Wilmslow and that they sought a positive, open, partnership approach with all stakeholders, including Cheshire East Council.

In response the Chair stated that the Council was keen to promote quality green spaces and ensuring the right trees are planted in the right location. The Council does not have funding available to plant new trees on verges, however it was aware of the approach from the Cheshire Tree Alliance, who proposed to use external funding to plant trees in public open space, including on highways land. The Council welcomed the proposals and wanted to work closely with the group to deliver that proposal as quickly and as fully as possible.

The collaboration would provide an opportunity to consider appropriate tree locations, the most suitable tree species, and how best to care for the saplings until they became established. It would provide real examples of how the current Council policy operated, highlight the need for any improvements, and inform officers on how best to make any necessary changes.

Although this approach would speed up tree planting and avoid the time and cost to the Council of a full policy review, it would mean that a date for when the revised policy would come before the committee could not be confirmed at present.

# 41 SECOND FINANCIAL REVIEW OF 2024/25 (HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE)

The Committee considered a report which provided the current forecast outturn for the financial year 2024/25 based on the Council's income, expenditure and known commitments as at the end of August 2024. The report also identified actions that were being taken to address adverse variances to urgently address financial sustainability. The Second Financial review forecast revenue outturn was forecasting an adverse variance of £20.1m. This was before the application of any exceptional financial support.

Highways & Infrastructure were forecasting an underspend of £0.6m against a net budget of £16m. The key reasons for the underspend were due to vacancy management and increased income.

An exercise was being undertaken to review the capital programme and schemes were being reprofiled where possible to make them more affordable.

#### **RESOLVED** (Unanimously):

That the Highways and Transport Committee

- note the factors leading to a forecast adverse Net Revenue financial pressure of £20.1m against a revised budget of £395.4m (5.1%) and note the contents of Annex 1, Section 2 of the report on the progress of the delivery of the MTFS approved budget policy change items, the RAG ratings and latest forecasts and the actions to be taken to address any adverse variances from the approved budget.
- 2. note the in-year forecast capital spending of £157.7m against an approved MTFS budget of £215.8m due to slippage that has been re-profiled into future years.
- 3. note the available reserves position as per Annex 1, Section 5 of the report.
- 4. Approve the Supplementary Capital Estimate above £500,000 up to and including £1,000,000 as per Annex 1, Section 4, Table 4 of the report.

#### 42 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE 2025/26 - 2028/29 (HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE)

The Committee received the report which set out progress and further development activity required before the final MTFS 2025-29 would be presented for approval to the budget setting meeting of Council in February 2025.

#### **RESOLVED**:

That the Highways and Transport Committee

- 1. note the progress to date on the development of the MTFS for 2025-29.
- 2. note that officers will continue to challenge draft proposals and develop further proposals in consultation with Members prior to approval by Council.
- 3. note that Committees will be presented with the opportunity to review the full set of financial proposals, designed to achieve a balanced budget, as part of their January cycle of meetings prior to recommendations being made to Council for approval.

#### 43 NATIONAL PARKING PLATFORM (NPP) & MOBILE PAYMENT APP FOR PARKING PAYMENTS

The Committee received an update on the progress and opportunities that arise from development of the National Parking Platform (NPP). The NPP was intended to transform payment for car parking by creating a joined-up market that was simple to use.

The Council joined the NPP pilot expansion project which in turn meant that the council incorporated current national parking platform evidential learning in practices into any future car park charging strategy.

The Council was an associate member which meant that it could keep up to date with any of the changes with the NPP. Until the 'platform' was fully proven and ready for wider adoption the Council wished to retain its associate membership of the NPP. When the NPP had a fully functional offer, the council would review the benefits of full membership.

Members were informed that the commission charge was under full control of the parking operator and not the Council for anyone who signed up to the NPP. In addition, there may also be transactional processing charges for the Council that would be in the region of £23,000 or two pence per transaction added on to the normal convenience fee, added on to the parking charge for the actual service user themselves.

The Council already had a very keenly priced mobile payment solution through Ringo. Ringo were already signed up to the NPP, but the Council had a convenience fee set for its motorists at 7 pence whereas with the NPP the Council did not get to set the end limit that the user had to pay and that could be anything from 10 pence to 25 pence over and above the parking fee.

Members agreed that maintaining associate membership showed the Council's intent while allowing for a cautious approach until the NPP was fully functional.

**RESOLVED**: That the Highways and Transport Committee

- 1. Note the contents of the report in particular the choice to retain associate membership of the National Parking Platform (NPP) until the 'platform' is fully proven and ready for wider adoption. When the NPP has a fully functional offer, the council will review the benefits of full membership.
- 2. Note that the parking service will complete procurement of a best value mobile payment app solution (payment option) to ensure continuity of services and offer a competitive facility to service users.

3. Note that further updates to keep Committee advised on future developments will be circulated by the Members Hub.

#### 44 APPLICATION MA-5-246 FOR AN ORDER TO ADD A FOOTPATH BETWEEN MARKET STREET (A6) AND THE COMMUNITY CENTRE CAR PARK, DISLEY

The Committee considered a report which outlined the consideration of an application, reference MA-5- 246 ("the Application") made in 2010 by the Disley Parish Council under the provisions of schedule 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (the "1981 Act"). The application sought to add a public footpath to the Definitive Map and Statement of Public Rights of Way (the "DM"). The route commenced on Market Road (A6) leading to the boundary of land owned by Cheshire East Borough Council ("CEC") and currently used as the Disley Community Centre Car Park.

The committee considered the application and evidence as set out within the officer report.

#### **RESOLVED:** (Unanimously)

That the Highways and Transport Committee

1. Refuse the Application MA-5-246 on the basis that public rights are already recognised over the route shown between points A and B on plan WCA/047

2. Agree that a "Legal Event" Modification Order be made under section 53(2) (a) of the 1981 Act

#### 45 PROPOSED DIVERSION OF PUBLIC FOOTPATH NO.7 (PART) IN THE PARISH OF BUERTON

The Committee considered a report which outlined the investigation to divert part of Public Footpath No. 7 (part) in the Parish of Buerton.

It was noted that the following legal tests which had been considered had been omitted from the report.

In accordance with Section 119(1) of the Highways Act 1980 it was within the Council's discretion to make the Order if it appeared to the Council to be expedient to do so in the interests of the public or of the owner, lessee or occupier of the land crossed by the path.

The Public Path Orders Officer had been in regular correspondence with the landowner over the last 14 months to establish the permission to have the diversion route on their land. This had involved regular emails and a site meeting to establish the precise route of the path and the width. The landowners expressed a wish to provide a diversion to allow the local community and the wider public the opportunity to continue to walk in and enjoy the local environment but at the same time, wanted to continue to use the field as part of the farm business plan. It was considered that it was expedient to divert the footpath in the interests of the public.

Section 119 (2) of the 1980 Act also stipulates that a public path diversion order shall not alter the point of termination of the path if that point was not on a highway, or, where it was on a highway, otherwise than to another point which was on the same highway, or a highway connected with it, and which was substantially as convenient to the public. The proposed diversion would connect the existing part of Buerton FP No. 7 from point A on the attached plan within the report, to Buerton FP No, 29 at Point B. The length of the proposed route was 94 meters. The proposed diversion was considered, as convenient as the current route.

Where there were no outstanding objections, it was for the Council to determine whether to confirm the Order.

Where objections to the making of an Order were made and not withdrawn, the Order would fall to be confirmed by the Secretary of State.

In considering whether or not to confirm the Order, the Secretary of State where the Order was opposed, or the Council where the Order was unopposed, must be satisfied under the provisions of Section 119 (6) of the 1980 Act that the path or way was not substantially less convenient as a consequence of the diversion having regard to the effect of the following 3 points:

1 What impact the diversion had on the public enjoyment of the path as a whole. It was considered that the diversion would provide a connected network where a natural event had made the current route impassable. However, the diverted route would still be close to the brook and would be as enjoyable as the current path if it were available.

2 What effect that the coming into operation of the Order would have as respects other land served by the existing public right of way. This had been considered and there were no impacts.

3 What effect that any new public right of way created by the Order would have as respects the land over which the rights were so created and any land held with it. This had been considered and there were no additional impacts.

In confirming an Order the Secretary of State where the Order was opposed, or the Council where the Order was unopposed, would also have regard to any material provision of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan prepared by the local highway authority and the effect of the path or way on the needs of agriculture, forestry and biodiversity.

The Committee considered the application and evidence as set out within the officer report. The Committee agreed that a Public Path Diversion Order be made under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980, as amended by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, to divert part of Public Footpath No.7 (part) in the Parish of Buerton by creating a new section of public footpath and extinguishing the current path as illustrated on plan no. HA/155 within the report on the grounds that it was expedient in the interests of the public.

#### **RESOLVED:** (Unanimously)

That the Highways & Transport Committee

1. Agree that a Public Path Diversion Order be made under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980, to divert part of Public Footpath No.7 in the Parish of Buerton as illustrated on plan no. HA/155 within the report on the grounds that it is expedient in the interests of the public.

2. Agree that public notice of the making of the Order be given and in the event of there being no objections within the period specified, the Order be confirmed in the exercise of the powers conferred on the Council by the said Act.

3. Note that in the event of objections being received, Cheshire East Borough Council be responsible for the conduct of any hearing or Public Inquiry.

#### 46 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the work programme. The following changes were noted:

The following items had been added to the work programme: -

- Highways Service Contract Improvement Action Plan.
- Local Transport Plan Vision and Objectives.
- Middlewich Eastern Bypass Authority to Enter into Construction Contract.
- Greater Bollin Trail and A556 Bowden Active Travel Link.

The following items had been deferred: -

- Flowerpot Junction Improvement Scheme
- Tree Planting and Verge Maintenance collaboration would be undertaken with interested groups to understand any issues and would come back to Committee once it had been reviewed.
- Lane Rental Scheme officers were developing an outline network and proposals for the scheme and would conduct a detailed evaluation on the impact of the council. It was agreed that a briefing would be arranged to update members.

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# **RESOLVED:**

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 10.50 am

Councillor M Goldsmith (Chair)

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**Highways and Transport Committee** 

23 January 2025

Third Financial Review 2024/25

Report of: Adele Taylor, Interim Executive Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer)

Report Reference No: HTC/13/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: Not applicable

For Decision or Scrutiny: Both

# **Purpose of Report**

- 1 This report provides the current forecast outturn for the financial year 2024/25 based on our income, expenditure and known commitments as at the end of October 2024. It also identifies actions that are being taken to address adverse variances to urgently address our financial sustainability.
- 2 The report provides the forecast outturn for all services, to provide Members with contextual information on the position for the whole Council. Members are asked to focus their scrutiny on the forecasts and supporting information relating to services within the remit of the Committee whilst understanding the overall context as a whole.
- 3 The report highlights any changes and external pressures that are impacting the Council since setting the budget in February 2024. Annex 1, Section 2 of the report highlights what the Council is forecasting to achieve as part of the 2024/25 approved budget changes per line (growth and savings).
- As set out in previous Financial Reviews, the requirement to continue to identify further actions in order to bring the Council back to a position where we are living within our means remains, and it will be important that these actions are closely monitored, and appropriate action taken to manage our resources. This report includes information on the actions that are currently underway.

- 5 Reporting the financial forecast outturn at this stage, and in this format, supports the Council's vision to be an open Council as set out in the Cheshire East Council Plan 2024/25. In particular, the priorities for an open and enabling organisation, ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making.
- 6 The report also requests member approval for amendments to the Council's budget in line with authorisation levels within the Constitution.

# **Executive Summary**

- 7 The Council operates a financial cycle of planning, review, management and reporting. This report ensures that we review where we are and provides a forecast **outturn** position for the 2024/25 financial year whilst also identifying the actions that need to be taken to manage our overall resources. The information in this report also supports planning for next year's budget by identifying issues that may have medium term impacts.
- 8 The Council set its 2024/25 annual budget in February 2024. The budget was balanced, as required by statute, with planned use of reserves of £22m, plus £30m of savings to achieve in year, and included important assumptions about spending in the year. The budget is part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024 to 2028.
- 9 The Third Financial Review (FR3) forecast revenue outturn is an adverse variance of £18.3m (prior to the application of any Exceptional Financial Support), an improvement of £1.8m from FR2, as detailed below in Table 1:

Table 1 2024/25 FR3	Revised Budget (NET)	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Forecast Variance FR2	Movement from FR2 to FR3			
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m			
Service Committee								
Adults and Health	138.0	157.9	20.0	20.8	(0.8)			
Children and Families	93.0	98.5	5.4	5.4	0.0			
Corporate Policy	41.9	44.4	2.5	2.4	0.1			
Economy and Growth	28.1	24.3	(3.8)	(3.3)	(0.5)			
Environment and Communities	48.4	47.8	(0.6)	(0.1)	(0.5)			
Highways and Transport	16.0	15.5	(0.5)	(0.6)	0.1			
Sub-Committee Finance Sub:					-			
Central Budgets	25.1	20.5	(4.6)	(4.5)	(0.2)			
Funding	(390.5)	(390.5)	-	0.0	(0.0)			
TOTAL	(0.0)	18.3	18.3	20.1	(1.8)			
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10 Whilst an improvement on the Second Financial Review of £1.8m (see mitigations in para 28), the forecast overspend of £18.3m remains a significant financial challenge for the Council. The FR3 forecast reserves, after agreed movements budgeted for in the 2024-28 MTFS, are currently £14.0m, being £4.5m of General Fund Reserves and £9.5m of Earmarked Reserves. The Council's level of reserves is therefore insufficient to cover the current forecast revenue outturn for the year without further action.

# Table 2: Proposed use of Exceptional Financial Support and Reserves as at FR3

<b>Exceptional Financial Support &amp; Reserves FR3</b>	;
	£m
FR3 Forecast Overspend	18.3
Exceptional Financial Support	(17.6)
Forecast Tfr from Reserves	(0.7)
24/25 Outturn	-
Reserves	
General Fund	4.5
Earmarked Reserves	9.5
Original Forecast at 31st March 2025	14.0
Forecast Transformation spend 2024/25	(4.1)
Forecast Tfr from Reserves	(0.7)
Forecast Total Reserves at 31st March 2025	9.2

- 11 As noted in para. 9 above, the forecast adverse variance of £18.3m does not assume the use of the Exceptional Finance Support (EFS) that was requested in 2023/24 and 2024/25 and was agreed in principle, subject to a number of conditions being satisfied, including the submission of a transformation plan at the end of August 2024. It also does not assume the cost of accepting that EFS support which would impact on the cost of borrowing over the medium term.
- 12 A further condition of the EFS was that an independent review was undertaken by CIPFA on behalf of MHCLG to understand the Council's financial management and sustainability. The review was commissioned by and for MHCLG and the Council has not yet had sight of this review to understand any implications or improvements that could be made to existing processes. This was submitted to MHCLG in August 2024
- 13 In order to address the risk to services from the Council's budgetary pressures, there was an urgent report to Council on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024 on Exceptional Financial Support (EFS). The report sought the authority for the Chief Executive to request that the in-principle EFS of up to £17.6m by way of a capitalisation direction for 2023/24 and 2024/25 be able to be applied only in 2024/25, from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in order to address the Council's budgetary pressures during the financial year 2024/25. The full report can

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be found here: <u>CEC Report Template</u>. In addition, the report also addresses the current risks that are identified and considered in the model for the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), as per the report to Corporate Policy Committee on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024 (Item49), hence further requests for 2025/26 of £31.4m and indications of £23.7m for 2026/27 should also be requested, alongside all of the supporting evidence and information requested by MHCLG. The costs of accepting the EFS support will impact over the medium term. The financing of planned use of EFS will be reflected in the MTFP report to Corporate Policy Committee in February. The financing will also reflect that the first call on any capital receipts, over and above the £2m accounted for in the approved revenue budget, will be utilised to finance the EFS.

- 14 As indicated in Table 2, the FR3 report, recognising the requests in the urgent report to Council on 11 December 2024, is proposing to utilise the full £17.6m conditional EFS to cover the forecast adverse variance in 2024/25 in order to protect and minimise the use of reserves. Table 2 identifies that the FR3 forecast remaining adverse balance of £0.7m is forecast to be funded from Reserves however urgent action continues to further reduce the overspend by the year end. Should the FR3 forecast position prevail at out-turn then the balance of reserves will be £9.2m after applying the whole £17.6m EFS and £0.7m from reserves.
- 15 There remains a risk that pressures leading to the latest FR3 forecast position may increase that shortfall figure if further rapid action does not take place to stabilise our financial position.
- 16 The FR3 forecast position for capital spending for 2024/25 indicates forecast capital expenditure of £144.7m against the MTFS budget of £215.8m (FR2 £157.7m).

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Table 3	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2024/28
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Capital Programme FR2	157,661	151,770	115,852	225,173	650,456
Funded by:					
Borrowing	45,101	57,996	14,802	25,044	142,943
Grants and other contributions	112,560	93,774	101,050	200,129	507,513
	157,661	151,770	115,852	225,173	650,456
Capital Programme FR3	144,670	157,134	104,400	243,852	650,056
Funded by:					
Borrowing	40,967	51,807	19,093	29,245	141,112
Grants and other contributions	103,703	105,327	85,307	214,607	508,944
	144,670	157,134	104,400	243,852	650,056
Movement from FR2	(12,991)	5,364	(11,452)	18,679	(400)

# 17 **Table 3** sets out the capital programme profiling changes from FR2:

18 All of the current schemes requiring borrowing have been reviewed by the Executive Directors and Directors and they have indicated that most schemes need to continue for various reasons (e.g. provision of sufficient SEND school place schemes are part of the mitigation plans agreed with the OFFICIAL

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DfE prior to the award of additional High Needs Funding; the Strategic Leisure Review is an invest to save scheme as are Fleet EV Transition and Fleet Vehicle Electric Charging; Public Sector Decarbonisation Schemes require match funding to support the grant and will bring energy efficiencies).

- 19 There have been some schemes where reductions have been made, for example the Children's Home Sufficiency Scheme has been reduced by £0.69m and the review of Household Waste Recycling centres has been reduced by £1m, and a few schemes are proposed to be removed altogether as they are considered unaffordable. e.g. the Strategic Capital scheme £6.8m.
- 20 Changes to the capital programme at this stage of the year will have a limited impact on the current year financial position but reductions in borrowing achieved through the capital review will be reflected in the revenue position each year in the MTFS for 2025-29.
- 21 In order to maintain the current level of scrutiny of capital projects and their financing a new Capital Programme Board will be set up in January. Please see the MTFS Consultation report for further detail.
- 22 The current forecast for achievable capital receipts in year is £2.3m, with a further £0.8m also achievable in year. These receipts can be used to reduce revenue pressures from borrowing in year or could be used to assist with funding of transformation activity.
- Following a Balance Sheet Review by our Treasury Advisors, Arlingclose Ltd, we are reviewing our current Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) policy with a view to bringing it in closer alignment with CIPFA Guidance. The Council currently uses a 2% annuity rate on all its unfinanced capital expenditure. This rate was originally set in 2017 and does not bear any resemblance to the current cost of the borrowing, nor distinguish between assets which have different useful lives. Options to change the rate applied to a rate more reflective of actual borrowing costs and asset life are being considered with effect from 1 April 2024. Should any changes be proposed then these will be reported in the MTFS report to the Corporate Policy Committee in February 2025 setting out the change in Accounting Policy and the effects of the change on the 2024/25 out-turn position and future year impacts through the MTFS.
- 24 Any such changes to the policy would need to be made in the current year due to new regulations coming in from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 and would therefore have the benefit of reducing the current year charge to revenue with a betterment to the overall outturn position. This has not yet been included in the figures reported within this document. However, making such a change has long term implications and therefore should not be undertaken without discussion with our auditors.
- 25 The Strategic Finance Management Board leads on a number of key tasks to urgently reduce spend and identify additional savings, including: OFFICIAL

- Line-by-line reviews of all budgets to further identify immediately any underspends and/or additional funding;
- Stop any non-essential spend;
- Actively manage vacancies, particularly agency usage and reduce any overspends on staffing as soon as possible;
- Review of Section 106 legacy budgets, the effects of which are partly reflected in the FR3 forecast outturn as a one-off contribution to reserves (to be further updated by out-turn);
- Reducing the borrowing elements of the capital programme to minimise the minimum revenue provision and interest payable.
- Review of capital receipts available and potential surplus assets that can be sold (for best consideration);
- Identification of any other areas of discretionary spend including grants awarded, where spend can be reduced or stopped;
- Review Debt management/overall level of bad debt provision work undertaken to date, focussing on the Adult Social Care bad debt provision, has identified through adopting a new approach to reviewing and monitoring these debts, an improvement (reduction) of the Council's bad debt provision of £1.1m, further work is ongoing and will be updated at Out-turn.

# **Overall mitigations planned to manage pressures**

- 26 The Strategic Finance Management Board is leading on a number of key tasks to urgently reduce spend and identify additional savings as noted above.
- 27 In addition, any directorate that is identified as being off target by more than 5% is now subject to a detailed finance and performance review on a weekly basis through a financial recovery review process. This includes a detailed action plan, identifying what can be done to sustainably reduce the pressure and gaining assurance over the management of those actions to deliver improved financial outturns. This process has been put in place for Adults Services and Children and Families and is being chaired by the S151 Officer.
- As reported in paragraphs 34-55 below, work is underway across all Services to look at mitigating actions which can be taken to reduce the forecast position in-year, some of the actions below having contributed to the £8.2m improvement from FR1 position of £26.5m adverse, including:
  - Adults more certainty about the FR2 projections and the delivery of in-year mitigations, including a reduction in the forecast number of placements in-year.

- Children & Families reviewing costs of placements, establishment reviews, Reunification of children, and Work on Edge of Care Service proposals to identify early intervention and cost reduction.
- Place Services mitigations in year through further vacancy management, reducing expenditure and maximising funding opportunities.
- Corporate Vacancy management and some additional income.
- Finance Sub S106 and bad debt reviews generating one-off in year contributions to assist in reducing the in year overspend and review/reset process moving forward.
- 29 Paragraphs 56-57 below provides a summary overview of the forecast against the approved 2024/25 budget change items, including RAG rating. In addition, there is further detail per change item with accompanying commentary, as reviewed by the Council's Corporate Leadership Team, in respect of each item within **Annex 1, Section 2**.

# 30 Annex 1: Detailed Third Financial Review 2024/25

- Section 1 2024/25 Forecast Outturn
- Section 2 2024/25 Approved Budget Change Items
- Section 3 Revenue Grants for approval
- Section 4 Capital
- Section 5 Reserves
- Section 6 Treasury Management

Annex 2: 2024/25 Capital Monitoring

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The Highways and Transport Committee to:

- Review the factors leading to a forecast adverse Net Revenue financial pressure of £18.3m against a revised budget of £390.5m (4.7%). To scrutinise the contents of Annex 1, Section 2 and review progress on the delivery of the MTFS approved 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.
- 2. Review the in-year forecast capital spending of £144.7m against an approved MTFS budget of £215.8m, due to slippage that has been re-profiled into future years.
- 3. Note the available reserves position as per Annex 1, Section 5.

4. Note the Capital Virements above £500,000 up to and including £5,000,000 as per **Annex 1, Section 4, Table 4** will be approved in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

# Background

- 31 This single view of the financial picture of the Council provides the overall financial context.
- 32 The management structure of the Council is organised into four directorates: Adults, Health and Integration; Children's Services; Place; and Corporate Services. The Council's reporting structure provides forecasts of a potential year-end outturn within each directorate during the year, as well as highlighting activity carried out in support of each outcome contained within the Corporate Plan. Budget holders are responsible for ensuring they manage their resources in line with the objectives of the Council and within the approved budget.
- 33 For the purposes of each committee, these directorate budgets are aligned to a specific committee and the appendices to this report provides information at a level that the committee should have the ability to be able to scrutinise what is causing any variations in budget and appropriate actions to bring the council back into line in terms of managing its resources.

# Key issues causing the pressures

- 34 There are a number of key issues causing the forecast revenue overspend, including: Update as required :
  - Ongoing adverse effects of the extended period of high inflation and interest rates;
  - Continued increasing demand and complexity of care beyond the levels that had been previously identified;
  - Increase in staff costs, including use of agency staff and impact of National Living Wage which also impacts on our third party commissioned contracts;
  - Increased borrowing costs associated with the unfunded Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit;
  - Non delivery of some previously agreed savings and/or income targets;
  - The financial impact of investment in transformation and improvement activity over the medium term.

# Specific commentary on the forecast outturn position by Committee

# Adults and Health adverse variance of £20.0m

- 35 The Adults, Health and Integration budget is forecast to overspend by £19.956m. The £19.956m is primarily driven by an overspend of c£23m linked to care costs and pressures on staffing of c£2.m. These pressures are reduced by a variance client income of c£4m, and other mitigations c£1m. The key drivers of forecast expenditure remain price increases, staff costs and increase in complexity.
- 36 The FR3 position has improved by c£700k from the FR2 forecast. This reflects the progress made to mitigate future demand. There is more certainty about the projections and the delivery of in-year mitigations, including a reduction in the forecast number of future placements in-year as shown in the graph below.



- 37 As noted previously the key driver of expenditure in adult social care is the number of people in receipt of care and the cost of each individual's care. The forecast has stabilised because we believe we will make fewer new placements in the second half of the year than we made in the first half of the year.
- 38 There is close alignment between the work being undertaken to manage budget pressures and the transformation plan. There will be some impact inyear including in respect of pricing, the focus on the review of supported living services, and services to support people at home. However, there are also risks including the reduction in the number of agency staff which has led to an increase in waiting times for services and disputes with providers in respect of price increases. In addition, the NHS is currently reporting unprecedented levels of demand in the pre-Christmas period.

# Children and Families adverse variance of £5.4m

39 At the end of the last financial year the outturn for Children and Families was an overspend of £8.2m. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy included growth to address the pressures that were emerging throughout 2023/24. The costs of children's social care are a concern for many local authorities and not unique to Cheshire East. The Third Financial Review for 2024/25 reflects a £5.4m in-year pressure. Although the overall position remains the same as at the Second Financial Review, there was an increase in Social Care Cost relating to cost of agency staff and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, offset by improvement in transport and catering forecast, reduced staffing cost due to vacancy management and use of grants in Education, Strong Start and Integration.

The key pressure areas for the directorate include:

- 40 Children's social care placements (£2.6m adverse variance) where the complexity of children in care has continued to increase and the number of children in care has increased from 528 at April 2024 to 556 at October 2024 (compared to a decrease from 586 at April 2023 to 551 at October 2023). Placement costs are increasing by significantly more than inflation and more than was projected for growth in-year.
- 41 The use and cost of agency staff in children's social care to cover vacancies, sick absence, and maternity leave.
- 42 The number of staff is greater than the planned establishment to ensure we are able to meet our statutory needs. Work is underway to ensure the staffing structure is suitably funded and factored into the MTFS for 2025/26.
- 43 Home to school transport costs (£0.1m adverse variance) where a mix of increasing numbers of pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHCP), and increasing fuel costs have seen overall costs rise.
- 44 Schools Catering (£0.4m adverse variance) where the costs of the service are above the current charged income level and base budget.
- 45 Work is underway in the services to look at mitigating actions which can be taken to reduce this forecast position in-year, and these pressures will be considered as part of the developing MTFS for 2025/26. These include:
  - Reviewing costs of placements as more detailed reviews are underway focusing on the expected length that some placements may need to be in place for;
  - Staffing establishment reviews now scheduled on a 6 weekly basis including a review of agency staff and alternative working;
  - Reunification children to be identified with targeted work in place for individual cases;
  - Tracking of similar spend across teams to be held in the same place as residential and supported accommodation spend to increase overall grip and understanding;

• Work on Edge of Care Service proposals to identify early intervention that may reduce admissions and costs.

# **Dedicated School Grant (DSG)**

- 46 The key pressure on DSG relates to the high needs block where the SEND service continues to see a significant increase in the number of pupils with an EHCPs, and the associated school placement costs.
- 47 This has placed pressure on the grant used to provide funding for children with SEND in various settings and led to a £31.7m deficit in 2023/24. This adds on to the brought forward deficit of £46.9m to take the DSG Reserve to a £78.6m deficit position at the end of 2023/24.
- 48 This is an improvement on the budget gap as determined by the Council's DSG Management Plan that was reported to Children and Families Committee in April 2024 and set out the planned expenditure and income on high needs over the medium term.
- 49 The current forecast is showing an in-year deficit of £37.1m which would increase the overall deficit to £115.7m.

# Corporate Policy adverse variance of £2.5m

- 50 The Corporate Services Directorate has a net budget of £41.7m. At Third Finance Review (FR3), the budget is forecast to overspend by £2.5m compared to a £2.4m overspend at Second Finance Review (FR2). The costs of the Transformation Programme are included in the above figures adding a £3.7m pressure to the forecast (£2.8m at FR2). Without this, the forecast would be a £1.2m underspend (£0.5m at FR2). It also must be noted that, following a recent review of staffing establishments, there are pending staffing budgets realignments to be actioned which will change individual service forecasts but not the overall figure for Corporate Services.
  - Vacancy management in Corporate Services has resulted in the majority of services forecasting an underspend on staffing budgets totalling £2.4m (£2.1m at FR2). There is a staff budget pressure of £0.1m across Corporate Services relating to the estimated impact of the latest pay award offer versus the amount included in the MTFS however, due to the level of vacancies across the service, this is not an in-year pressure;
  - Vacancy management has been combined with tighter control on non-pay spending across all services which is achieving a forecast underspend of £1.0m (£0.7m FR2);
  - Additional income in the Registrations Service, and additional grant income in the Benefits Service.

However, these underspends have been offset by the following:

- Forecast spend of £3.7m (£2.8m FR2) on the Transformation Programme. The cost of the programme will be met from reserves or use of flexible capital receipts, the financial impact of these are shown elsewhere in the accounts;
- A forecast £1.4m (£1.3m FR2) under-recovery of Rent Allowances;
- A forecast overspend of £0.5m (£0.4m FR2) on the Transactional Service Centre (TSC), hosted by Cheshire West and Chester, mainly due to the additional costs of the stabilisation programme which has been put in place to improve the performance of the service and recognises the need to change the way in which Unit4 is used. This was an issue highlighted in the Corporate Peer Review;
- There is a forecast overspend in Accountancy mainly due to of £0.3m additional costs including Bank Charges and External Audit fees.

# Place Directorate favourable variance of £4.9m

51 Overall, the Place Directorate is forecasting an underspend of £4.9m at the Third Financial Review stage against a £92.5m budget. This represents a £0.9m improvement from FR2. Pressures from reducing planning application income (£0.5m), increased waste collection and disposal costs (£0.5m) and yet to be secured savings against leisure (£0.4m) have been mitigated through further vacancy management, reducing expenditure and maximising funding opportunities.

# Economy & Growth favourable variance of £3.8m

- 52 Growth and Enterprise Directorate and Place Directorate are forecasting an underspend of £3.6m against a net budget of £28.1m. The key reasons for the underspend are:
  - Facilities Management: there is a £1.7m underspend forecast. This includes pressures against maintenance budgets of £0.5m (additional pressures and delivery of savings), costs of workplace initiatives and equipment of £0.4m, the transfer of underspends to offset Place MTFS targets across the Directorate £0.6m and these have been offset by:
    - Savings against gas and electricity compared to much higher budgeted costs £3.0m.
    - Business rates underspend of £0.2m due to revaluations and appeals.
    - Underspends from vacancy management £0.5m.

- Economic Development: £0.3m underspend from vacancy management, reduced supplies £0.1m and increased income £0.1m.
- Housing: £0.6m underspend from vacancies and extra grant funding.
- Green infrastructure and Cultural Economy £0.4m due to vacancies.

## Environment & Communities favourable variance of £0.6m

- 53 Environment and Neighbourhood Services is forecasting an underspend of £0.6m against a net budget of £48.4m. This is a £0.5m improvement from FR2. The key reasons for the forecasting underspend are:
  - Development Management: £0.2m overspend reflecting pressures from a shortfall in income from planning applications £0.5m and pressures on supplies and services of £0.1m. These are offset by vacancy management £0.4m.
  - Environmental Commissioning: Orbitas £0.2m underspend overall due to better income performance.
  - Libraries: £0.1m overspend including pressures of £0.5m from the delivery of the MTFS savings which is offset by £0.3m vacancy management and £0.1m underspend from MTFS growth for exploring a charitable trust model.
  - Leisure Commissioning: £0.4m overspend (delivery of MTFS savings)
  - Other service issues: £1.1m underspend:
    - Building Control: £0.3m underspend (£0.1m pressure on income offset by £0.4m vacancies).
    - Local Land Charges and Planning Support: £0.2m underspend from vacancies.
    - Strategic Planning: £0.4m (£0.2m vacancy management plus £0.2m delayed Local Plan costs).
    - Regulatory Services: £0.2m (£0.3m vacancies offset by £0.1m CCTV costs).

#### Highways & Transport favourable variance of £0.5m

54 Highways & Infrastructure are forecasting an underspend of £0.5m against a net budget of £16m. This is a slight worsening of £0.1m since FR2 due to delayed car park income. The key reasons for the underspend are due to vacancies across Car Parking, Strategic Transport and Rail and Transport Integration.

## Finance Sub favourable variance of £4.6m

- 55 Finance Sub Committee are reporting a positive variance of £4.6m against a revised net budget of £25.1m.
  - Financing and Investment £0.5m net pressure reflecting £2.1m increased cost of interest payments on borrowing offset by £1.6m increased interest receipts from investments.
  - Reserves use of £3.6m (net change from MTFS) reflects £0.5m additional Flexible Capital Receipts offset by £1m reduction in available Capital Financing Reserve at outturn compared to forecast balance reflected in the February 2024 MTFS. There is also an additional £4.1m use of the General Fund reserve forecast to fund transformation activities.
  - There is a further £1.5m positive variance as a result of in year reviews of S106 balances/schemes and bad debt. The S106 Review identifying a one off contribution in year where work has been completed in prior years but has not been reflected in transferring money from S106 into the general fund, £0.5m initially reflected at FR2 with potential for further increased contributions at FR3; £01.1m reduction in the Adult Social Care bad debt provision, as referred to in para 77 below.

# Progress on delivery of the 2024/25 approved budget change items

- 56 Table 5 presents a summary of the progress on the delivery of the 2024/25 approved budget change items. For items rated as Amber these are for items where there are risks and/or mitigating actions in place. For items rated as red these are for items where services are projecting an adverse variance and there is risk of in year non delivery/achievement. New mitigation items have also been included that have come forward since the approval of the MTFS to help the in-year position where identified.
- 57 As the green and blue columns show, £35.4m of the budget change items are either delivered or on track to be delivered or even exceed in some cases. However, there is also a pressure of £52.9m as shown in the red column that has a high risk of not being achieved within this financial year. There are new in year mitigations of £11m, unrelated to the change item rows that have been identified to assist the outturn position. The table below summarises the progress by Committee:

# Page 27

Committee	Approved Change Budget	Forecast Outturn	Completed	Could Exceed	Green	Amber	Red	Mitigations
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Adults & Health	1,136	21,092	-2,723	0	-9,216	0	33,625	-594
Children & Families	9,909	15,315	965	0	-764	214	14,017	883
Corporate Policy	494	2,954	-173	0	-117	0	1,581	1,663
Economy & Growth	3,316	-449	-61	0	3,866	-585	940	-4,609
Environment & Communities	-52	-688	875	-1,480	-268	47	2,397	-2,259
Finance Sub	-19,668	-24,294	600	0	-29,279	9,974	0	-5,589
Highways &	4,869	4,335	2,488	0	1,700	275	328	-456
Transport								
TOTAL	-1	18,265	1,971	-1,480	-34,077	9,925	52,888	-10,961

# Table 5: Summary of the progress on the delivery of the 2024/25 approved budget change items

58 A complete list of all approved budget change items, with progress noted against each item, can be found in **Annex 1, Section 2**.

# **Revenue Grants for Approval**

59 Approvals for Supplementary Revenue Estimates for allocation of additional grant funding are detailed in **Annex 1, Section 3**.

# **Reserves Position**

- 60 On 1 April 2024, Earmarked Reserves totalled £32.278m and the General Fund Reserve Balance totalled £5.580m. Of the total earmarked reserves, more than £22m (70.5%) will be spent in 2024/25, on supporting the revenue budget for 2024/25.
- 61 Table 6 and 7 shows the forecast level of Earmarked and General reserves by the end of 2024/25.
- 62 As part of the 2023/24 Out-turn, some Earmarked reserves planned to be spent in 2023/24 were not fully spent in year and therefore an additional slipped amount of Earmarked reserves were brought forward into 2024/25. There is planned spend in place for these earmarked reserves across Services however there is no current approval in place as they were not specifically reported for approval in the MTFS approved in February 2024. Table 6 below and the tables in Annex 1, Section 5 detail by Committee the reserves as an indicative scenario. Recognising that there is existing planned spend against these earmarked reserves in 2024/25 and also the desired outcome of ensuring e that the position on reserves is protected such that the out-turn forecast is not further worsened, it is proposed that the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) carry out a strategic review of existing in-principle decisions on use of earmarked reserves for year end 31 March 2025 with the aim of supporting future financial sustainability. Examples of some of the earmarked reserves to be considered:

- Increasing the General Fund balance by transfer from earmarked reserves (e.g. MTFS reserve)
- Retaining and/or reinstating some earmarked reserves vital to our long-term financial planning (e.g. PFI reserve)
- 63 Following the CLT review, final recommendations will be made in the MTFS report to the Corporate Policy Committee on the 6 February 2025 as regards decisions on earmarked reserves used in 2024/25, and to be remaining as at 31 March 2025.

Earmarked Reserves by Committee	Opening Balance 01 April 2024 £000	Drawdowns to General Fund £000	Approved Movement Forecast £000	Additional Drawdown Requests* £000	Closing Balance Forecast 31 March 2025 £000
Adults and Health	5,226	(2,795)	(110)	0	2,321
Children and Families	1,724	0	(1,593)	(131)	0
Corporate Policy	20,773	(6,551)	(2,830)	(4,545)	6,847
Economy and Growth	2,777	(662)	(1,004)	(765)	346
Environment and Communities	870	(390)	(402)	(78)	0
Highways and Transport	908	(205)	(415)	(288)	0
EARMARKED RESERVES TOTAL	32,278	(10,603)	(6,354)	(5,807)	9,514

#### **Table 6: Earmarked Reserves**

\* All 'Additional Drawdown Requests' are subject to approval.

\* Total excludes schools' balances

# Table 7: General Fund Reserve

General Fund Reserve	Opening Balance 01 April 2024 £000	Drawdowns to General Fund £000	Approved Movement Forecast	Additional Forecast Movement £000	Closing Balance Forecast 31 March 2025 £000
General Fund Reserve	5,580	(1,051)	0	(4,066)	463
GENERAL FUND RESERVE TOTAL	5,580	(1,051)	0	(4,066)	463

64 At FR1 the forecast closing balance at 31 March 2025 in the Council's General Fund Reserve was £4.5m. At FR2, a further £4m transformational spend has been included within the service forecasts which will be funded from General reserves, reducing the forecast balance to £0.5m. If it is possible to identify additional capital receipts these could potentially be used to capitalise this expenditure and this will remain an area that is under review.

- 65 The Council is currently forecast to have £9.514m of earmarked reserves at the end of the financial year 2024/25. Of this £2.279m can be considered ringfenced, with specific conditions limiting their use.
- 66 A full list of all earmarked reserves can be found in **Annex 1**, **Section 5**.

#### **Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve**

- 67 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is ring-fenced funding received for: schools; high needs / special educational needs; and early years provision. In recent years there has been a pressure on the DSG high needs block where funding has not kept pace with the increasing numbers and cost of children with an Education, Health and Care Plan. This has created a deficit DSG reserve balance which is held in an unusable reserve.
- The on-going pressure is regularly reviewed; at the end of 2023/24 the deficit was £78.6m and this is forecast to increase by £37.1m by the end of 2024/25. This is an improvement on the Council's DSG Management Plan approved in April 2024, which sets out the planned expenditure and income on high needs over the medium term. The DSG Management Plan is currently being updated and will be reported to Committee on completion.

#### **Table 8: Dedicated Schools Grant**

Dedicated Schools Grant Deficit	£m
Deficit Balance Brought forward	78.6
Additional In-year Pressures	37.1
Deficit Balance at 31 March 2025	115.7

# Debt

- 69 Sundry debt includes all invoiced income due to the Council except for statutory taxes (Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates). The balance of outstanding debt at 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024 was £16.9m. This has reduced by £1m since FR2 (end of September 2024).
- 70 Annually, the Council raises invoices with a total value of over £80m. Around a quarter of the Council's overall sundry debt portfolio relates to charges for Adult Social Care, the remainder being spread across a range of functions including Highways, Property Services, Licensing and Building Control.
- 71 The Revenue Recovery team (using their experience gained in collecting Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates) engage with services to offer advice and assistance in all aspects of debt management, including facilitating access to debt collection services (currently provided by Bristow & Sutor).

- 72 The total amount of service debt over six months old is £10.8m; split as £9.3m of Adult Social Care debt and £1.5m of Sundry Debt. A provision of £6.8m was made at year ended 31st March 2024 to cover doubtful debt in the event that it needs to be written off. There is an ongoing in year review of the Bad Debt provision which has to date focused on Adult Social Care debt, this work has identified a forecast £1m reduction in the provision in 2024/25 linked to the ASC debt, reflected in the FR3 position.
- 73 The level of Adult Social Care debt can fluctuate depending on when in the month the snapshot is taken, for example if it is before or after the Direct Debit income is received and allocated. The debt also has different levels of risk depending on the type of debt. For example, around £3m is linked to deferred arrangements which is debt that is secured on property or assets, and therefore carries a low risk. There is also around £5m of debt which is deemed to be lower risk as its linked to areas such as probate, property sales or deputyship. As noted above, the current review of Debt provision for Adult Social Care has identified a £1.0m reduction in the ASC debt provision having reviewed the provision process across the 3 main categories of ASC all of which have distinct provision calculations. Further work is ongoing and will extend to wider Council debt throughout the review.
- 74 The Highways position for outstanding debt is consistent throughout the year. The debt is generally made up of three elements: the movement of funds from Cheshire West and Chester Council and Warrington Borough Council in relation to the Cheshire Road Safety Group (these are settled quickly); third party claims for damage to the highway; and permit fees. The third party claims are often paid in instalments.

The previous outturn positions are:

- 31 March 2024 Outstanding debt £1.6m, over 6 months old £0.7m.
- 31 March 2023 Outstanding debt £1m, over 6 months old £0.5m
- 75 The Council has robust processes in place to ensure that all outstanding debt is chased up (where commercially viable) and, where necessary, payment plans are put in place with advice from Legal Services.

	Outstanding Debt £000			Over 6	months c	old £000
			Increase /	Inc		Increase /
	FR2	FR3	(Decrease)	FR2	FR3	(Decrease)
Adults and Health Committee						
Adults, Public Health and Communities	14,967	14,170	(797)	9,060	9,325	265
Children and Families Committee Children's Social Care (Incl. Directorate) Prevention and Early Help Schools	189 69 17	- 189 51 17	- (0) (19) 1	- (7) 2	- 1 (8) 3	1 (2) 1
Highways and Transport Committee		-	-		-	
Highways and Infrastructure	1,115	1,305	190	760	755	(4)
Economy and Growth Committee		-	-		-	
Growth and Enterprise Environment and Communities Committee Environment and Neighbourhood Services	740 398	621 - 377	(119) - (21)	394 215	420 - 214	27 (1)
Corporate Policy Committee		-	-		-	
Finance and Customer Services Governance and Compliance Human Resources ICT	135 (1) - 217	126 0 - 3	(8) 1 - (214)	69 - - 2	67 - - 2	(2) - - 0
Total	17,846	16,859	(988)	10,496	10,780	284

# Table 9 – Debt Summary as at 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024

# **Council Tax and Business Rates**

## **Council Tax**

76 **Table** 10 details each precepting authorities share of the budgeted collectable rates income.

Table 10 Share of Council Tax Collectable Rates	Band D Charge	Collectable Rates £m
Cheshire East Council	1,792.59	287.1
Town and Parish Councils	71.57	11.5
Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner	262.94	42.1
Cheshire Fire Authority	90.09	14.4
Total	2,217.19	355.1

77 The collectable rates valuation is based on the assumption that of the total amount billed, at least 99% will be collected. **Table 11** demonstrates that, excluding a slight reduction during the Covid-19 pandemic, the target to collect at least 99% of Council Tax within three years continues to be achieved.

Table 11 Council Tax Collection Rates	2020/21 %	2021/22 %	2022/23 %	2023/24 %	2024/25 %
After 1 year	97.4	97.8	98.2	98.0	*73.5
After 2 years	98.6	98.5	98.8	**	**
After 3 years	98.9	99.0	**	**	**

\* 2024/25 rate is up to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

\*\* Data is not yet available.

78 After accounting adjustments, the Council Tax Collection Fund is forecasting a £0.003m surplus for 2024/25, of which, £0.002m is attributable to Cheshire East Council. This surplus will be paid out in 2025/26 and will be held in the Collection Fund Earmarked Reserve until such time.

# Non-Domestic Rates (NDR)

- 79 Collectable rates are distributed between Cheshire East Council (49%), Cheshire Fire Authority (1%), and Central Government (50%).
- 80 Non-domestic Rates valuations for 2024/25 were set out in the NNDR1 return to Central Government in January 2024. Any variance to this forecast is included in the following years' NNDR1 return and any gain or loss will be recovered in 2025/26. The total Net Rates Payable into the Collection Fund was forecast at £155.7m.
- 81 **Table 12** demonstrates that the target to collect at least 99% of Non-Domestic Rates within three years continues to be achieved.

Table 12 Non-Domestic Collection Rates	2020/21 %	2021/22 %	2022/23 %	2023/24 %	2024/25 %
After 1 year	92.4	95.6	98.2	97.7	*72.6
After 2 years	97.4	98.3	98.8	**	**
After 3 years	99.0	99.2	**	**	**

\* 2024/25 rate is up to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024. \*\* Data is not yet available.

82 After accounting adjustments, the Non-Domestic Rates Collection Fund is forecasting a £2.1m deficit for 2024/25, of which, £1.0m is attributable to Cheshire East Council. This deficit will be repayable in 2025/26 and will be managed through the Collection Fund Earmarked Reserve.

# Treasury Management Strategy update

83 Treasury Management income to 30 November 2024 is £2.3m which is higher than the budgeted £1.3m. However, borrowing costs are also higher than budgeted at £12.m compared to budget of £10.7m. This is OFFICIAL caused by a combination of increasing interest rates with an increased borrowing requirement. From the projected cash flows for the remainder of 2024/25 the net additional financing costs (borrowing less investment interest) is expected to be £0.8m in excess of that budgeted.

- 84 Interest rates have seen substantial rises over the last two years which has significantly increased the cost of borrowing. The expectation is that borrowing costs will start to fall although market uncertainty and tightening liquidity in the markets suggests we will not benefit from lower rates until 2025/26.
- At the moment, cash shortfalls are generally being met by temporary borrowing from other local authorities which for a number of years has been considerably cheaper than other sources of borrowing and allowed the Council to keep financing costs low. The cost of these loans is currently relatively high compared with longer term loans but interest forecasts suggest it is still the cheaper option in the long term. However, liquidity risk remains an issue as funds become more scarce towards year end and the request to the Government for exceptional financial support has raised credit worthiness concerns with some lenders. To reduce liquidity risk, consideration is being given to taking more longer term PWLB loans.
- 86 The cost of short term borrowing for the first eight months of 2024/25 is 5.38% which is an increase from 4.82% in 2023/24. These costs are now expected to reduce as the outlook is for reducing interest rates.

# **Investment Strategy**

87 There have not been any material changes to the Investment Strategy since that reported at Final Outturn 2023/24, see link <u>Final Outturn 2023-24 Annex 1.pdf (cheshireeast.gov.uk)</u>

# **Consultation and Engagement**

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

# **Reasons for Recommendations**

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

# **Other Options Considered**

91 None. This report is important to ensure Members of the Committee are sighted on the financial pressure the Council is facing and the activity to date to try and mitigate this issue and are given an opportunity to scrutinise this activity and identify any further actions that could be taken to learn to live within our means Do nothing. Impact – Members are not updated on the financial position of the Council. Risks – Not abiding by the Constitution to provide regular reports.

# **Implications and Comments**

# Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 92 The Council must set the budget in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and approval of a balanced budget each year is a statutory responsibility. Sections 25 to 29 of the Local Government Act 2003 impose duties on the Council in relation to how it sets and monitors its budget and require the Council to make prudent allowance for the risk and uncertainties in its budget and regularly monitor its finances during the year. The legislation leaves discretion to the Council about the allowances to be made and action to be taken.
- 93 The provisions of section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, require that, when the Council is making the calculation of its budget requirement, it must have regard to the report of the chief finance (s.151) officer as to the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

- 94 The Council should therefore have robust processes in place so that it can meet statutory requirements and fulfil its fiduciary duty. It must ensure that all available resources are directed towards the delivery of statutory functions, savings and efficiency plans. Local authorities are creatures of statute and are regulated through the legislative regime and whilst they have in more recent times been given a general power of competence, this must operate within that regime. Within the statutory framework there are specific obligations placed upon a local authority to support communities. These duties encompass general and specific duties and there is often significant local discretion in respect of how those services or duties are discharged. These will need to be assessed and advised on as each circumstance is considered.
- 95 The financial position of the Council must therefore be closely monitored, and Members must satisfy themselves that sufficient mechanisms are in place to ensure both that savings are delivered and that new expenditure is contained within the available resources. Accordingly, any proposals put forward must identify the realistic measures and mechanisms to produce those savings or alternative mitigations.
- 96 This report provides an update on progress for 2024/25 for all services.
- 97 It also provides updates and comments regarding the Council's request for Exceptional Financial Support under The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 which inserted an amended Section 12A as a trigger event within the Local Government Act 2003, in relation to capital finance risk management. The legislation also provides for risk mitigation directions to be given to the Council which limit the ability to undertake certain financial action. The limitations are based on identified risk thresholds.

#### Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 98 The Council's financial resources are agreed by Council and aligned to the achievement of stated outcomes for local residents and communities. Monitoring and managing performance helps to ensure that resources are used effectively, and that business planning and financial decision making are made in the right context.
- 99 Reserve levels are agreed, by Council, in February each year and are based on a risk assessment that considers the financial challenges facing the Council. If spending associated with in-year delivery of services is not contained within original forecasts for such activity it may be necessary to vire funds from reserves.

- 100 The unplanned use of financial reserves could require the Council to deliver a greater level of future savings to replenish reserve balances and / or revise the level of risks associated with the development of the Reserves Strategy in future.
- 101 As part of the process to produce this report, senior officers review expenditure and income across all services to support the development of mitigation plans that will return the outturn to a balanced position at year-end.
- 102 Forecasts contained within this review provide important information in the process of developing the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Analysis of variances during the year will identify whether such performance is likely to continue, and this enables more robust estimates to be established.
- 103 The risk associated with the scale of these challenges is that the Council could act illegally, triggering the requirement for a s.114 report from the Chief Financial Officer. Illegal behaviour in this context could materialise from two distinct sources:
  - i) Spending decisions could be made that exceed the available resources of the Council. This would unbalance the budget, which is unlawful.
  - ii) Spending decisions to restrict or hide pressures could be made that avoid an immediate deficit, but in fact are based on unlawful activity.
- 104 The consequences of the Council undermining a budget with illegal activity, or planned illegal activity, is the requirement to issue a s.114 report. Under these circumstances statutory services will continue and existing contracts and commitments must be honoured. But any spending that is not essential or which can be postponed must not take place.
- 105 Further consequences would be highly likely and could include the appointment of Commissioners from the MHCLG, and potential restrictions on the decision-making powers of local leaders.

#### Policy

- 106 This report is a backward look at Council activities and predicts the year-end position. It supports the Corporate Plan aim Open and priority to be an open and enabling organisation.
- 107 The forecast outturn position, ongoing considerations for future years, and the impact on general reserves will be fed into the assumptions underpinning the 2025 to 2029 Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
108 The approval of supplementary estimates and virements are governed by the Finance Procedure Rules section of the Constitution.

#### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

109 Any equality 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.

#### Human Resources

110 This report is a backward look at Council activities at outturn and states the year end position. 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

111 Financial risks are assessed and reported on a regular basis, and remedial action taken if required. Risks associated with the achievement of the 2023/24 budget and the level of general reserves were factored into the 2024/25 financial scenario, budget, and reserves strategy.

#### **Rural Communities**

112 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)

113 The report provides details of service provision across the borough and notes the pressure on Children in Care.

#### Public Health

114 This report is a backward look at Council activities at the first review and provides the forecast year end position. Any public health 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.

#### Climate Change

115 There are no direct implications for climate change.

Access to Information						
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Appendices:	Annex 1 including:					
	Section 1 2024/25 Forecast Outturn					
	<ul> <li>Section 2 2024/25 Approved Budget Change Items</li> </ul>					
	Section 3 Revenue Grants for approval					
	Section 4 Capital					
	Section 5 Reserves					
	Section 6 Treasury Management					
	Annex 2 – 2024/25 Capital Monitoring					
Background	The following are links to key background documents:					
rapers.	Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024-2028					
	First Financial Review 2024/25					

# **ANNEX 1**



# Third Financial Review 2024/25 Results to end of October 2024

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Section 1: 2024/25 Forecast Outturn	
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Section 6: Treasury Management	Error! Bookmark not defined.

# Section 1: 2024/25 Forecast Outturn

- 1.1. Table 1 provides a service summary of financial performance based on information available as at the end of October 2024. The current forecast is that services will be £22.9m over budget in the current year.
- 1.2. It also shows that central budgets are forecast to be £4.6m under budget resulting in an overall outturn of £18.3m overspend against a net revenue budget of £390.5m, an improvement of £1.8m from FR2.
- 1.3. The forecast outturn position is based on a full financial management review across all service and reflects the following assumptions:
  - Includes those savings that have been identified as non-achievable though the tracker on our High Level Business Cases (HLBC) with no/some alternative actions currently presented;
  - A review of the on-going impacts of adverse variances identified in 2023/24;
  - Any identified, emerging items of significance:
    - Within Adult Social Care, significant growth is forecast for care costs in line with position seen year to date, less mitigations linked to delivery of savings;
    - Includes the assumptions around additional revenue resources in Childrens Services to resource the draft improvement plan in relation to the recent OFSTED inspection;
  - Forecast impact of the confirmed increased 2024/25 pay award £1.6m (unfunded);
  - Detailed review of any vacancy underspends in all areas;
  - One-off items that have been identified so far through line by line reviews and/or identification of additional funding that has been announced since the MTFS was set.
  - Mitigation activities delivered or forecast to be delivered by 31 March as reflected in paragraph 28 of the main covering report.
  - Review of Section 106 legacy budgets, the effects of which are partly reflected in the FR3 forecast out-turn as a one off contributions to reserves work undertaken to date has identified an improvement (reduction) of the Council's bad debt provision of £1.0m,

1.4. Further items impacting on the level of the Council's balances are detailed in **Section 5**.

2024/25 FR3	Revised Budget (NET)	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance FR3	Forecast Variance FR2	Movement from FR2 to FR23
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
SERVICE DIRECTORATES					
Adult Social Care - Operations	145.9	167.4	21.5	21.9	(0.4)
Commissioning	(8.0)	(9.5)	(1.5)	(1.1)	(0.4)
Public Health	-	-	-	-	-
Adults and Health Committee	138.0	157.9	20.0	20.8	(0.8)
Directorete	2.6	2.6	1 1	4.4	- (0.0)
Childrenia Casial Cara	2.0	3.0	1.1	1.1	(0.0)
Children's Social Care	55.3	59.7	(0, 1)	3.0	(0.8)
Children and Families Committee	35.2	35.1	(0.1)	5.4	(0.8)
	55.0	30.3	0.4	0.7	-
Directorate	(0.3)	(0.5)	(0.2)	(0.0)	(0.1)
Growth & Enterprise	28.4	24.8	(3.6)	(3.2)	(0.4)
Economy and Growth Committee	28.1	24.3	(3.8)	(3.3)	(0.5)
Environment & Neighbourbood Services	10 1	17.9	(0.6)	(0.1)	- (0.5)
Environment and Communities Committee	48.4	47.8	(0.6)	(0.1)	(0.5)
			(0.0)	(011)	-
Highways & Infrastructure	16.0	15.5	(0.5)	(0.6)	0.1
Highways and Transport Committee	16.0	15.5	(0.5)	(0.6)	0.1
Directorate	1.5	1 1	(0.3)	(0.2)	- (0.2)
Finance & Customer Services	12.1	13.9	1.7	(0.2)	(0.2)
Transformation	-	3.7	3.7	2.8	0.9
Governance & Compliance Services	10.9	9.2	(1.6)	(1.3)	(0.4)
Communications	0.7	0.7	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)
HR	2.4	2.0	(0.4)	(0.3)	(0.0)
ICI Policy & Change	12.4	11.8	(0.6)	(0.3)	(0.3)
Corporate Policy Committee	41.9	44.4	2.5	2.4	0.1
	-				-
Corporate Unallocated					-
Corporate Unallocated	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL SERVICES NET EXPENDITURE	365.4	388.3	22.9	24.5	(1.6)
	000.4	000.0	22.5	24.0	(1.0)
CENTRAL BUDGETS					-
Capital Financing	31.7	32.1	0.5	0.3	0.1
Transfer to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	(18.0)	(21.5)	(3.6)	(3.5)	(0.1)
Parish Precepts & Other Operating Expenditure	11.4	9.9	(1.5)	(1.3)	(0.2)
Finance Sub-Committee - Central Budgets	25.1	20.5	(4.6)	(4.5)	(0.2)
	390.5	408.8	18.3	20.1	(1.8)
					0
Business Rates Retention Scheme	(64.6)	(64.6)	-	-	-
Specific Grants	(32.4)	(32.4)	-	-	-
Council Tax	(293.5)	(293.5)	-	-	-
Sourced from Collection Fund	(300.5)	(300.5)			-
r mance oub-committee - Net Funding	(390.3)	(390.3)	-	-	-
NET (SURPLUS) / DEFICIT	(0.0)	18. <u>3</u>	18.3	20.1	(1.8)

# Section 2: 2024/25 Approved Budget Change Items

The following table provides up detailed commentary on the progress against the approved budget change items that were agreed as part of the budget agreed in February 2024. These are split by relevant committee.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
	Adults and Health Committee	+1.136	+21.092	+19.956	
1	Fees and Charges	-1.800	-1.800	0	Green – see below
2	Client Contributions	-0.800	-4.383	-3.583	Green - £3.85m surplus vs client contribution budget forecasted for 2024/25. This is in addition to achieving the budgeted increase for Fees and Charges & Client Contribution increase in-year (£2.6m)
3	Working Age Adults - Prevent, Reduce, Delay	-1.467	-1.467	0	Green - Multiple activities contributing to these savings. Validation of delivery and measures being developed by SROs and Finance.
4	Older People – Prevent, Reduce, Delay	-1.566	-1.566	0	Green - Multiple activities contributing to these savings. Validation of delivery and measures being developed by SROs and Finance.
5	Market Sustainability and Workforce grant	-1.100	-1.100	0	Completed
6	Revenue grants for Adult Social Care	-2.480	-2.480	0	Completed
7	Pension Costs Adjustment	-0.493	-0.493	0	Completed
8	Investment in Adult Social Care	+7.600	+31.521	+23.921	Red – MTFS growth for Care Costs not sufficient to cover the pressure seen in 2023/24 plus the expected growth in 2024/25. Mitigations to reduce pressure reported separately.
9	Pay Inflation	+1.892	+2.104	+0.212	Red - NJC Pay Claim now approved - over spend against budget as a result of £1,290/2.5% increase. Increase compared to flat percentage budget increase of 3% within original MTFS.
10	Resettlement Revenue Grants – reversal of 2023/24 use	+0.850*	+0.850*	0	Completed
11	Adult Social Care Transformation Earmarked Reserve Release – reversal of 2023/24 use	+0.500*	+0.500*	0	Completed

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
12	Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care – Removal of Grant Income	-	-	-	Completed - Now a 2025/26 Item
13	Asset Management	TBC	твс	-	Green - The business case for future usage of the site will be revisited and taken through the appropriate CEC governance procedures. The model of care in relation to high-cost adult social care and health provisions will be part of this work.
14	Investigate potential agency creation	TBC	TBC	-	Green - This proposal has been consistently delivered in relation to the usage of a Care Workers agency in all but name. Care4CE, the Council's in house care provider, has been utilising workers, both casual and agency, as a bank of workers for several years to successfully deliver operational requirements.
In year	Other variances to reconcile to 2024/25 FR3 forecast	0	+2.162	+2.162	
In year	Mitigations reducing the FR3 reported forecast position	0	-2.756	-2.756	

\* Item represented a one-off spend in 2023/24. As it is not a permanent part of the budget, the value of the proposal is reversed in 2024/25.

MTFS 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)	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
	Children and Families Committee	+9.909	+15.314	+5.405	
15	Discretionary offer to children with disabilities	-0.900	-0.970	-0.070	Green - On Track, project team progressing multiple improvements to redesign the service offer, ensuring consistency and efficiency.
16	Remove school catering subsidy	-0.516	-0.139	+0.377	Red - In progress, rate uplift applied from September 2024 in order to cover the costs of the service through to the end of March 2025 when it ends. However, as some schools are making their own arrangements before the end of the financial year, this will impact on the savings target.
17	Review of structure to further integrate children and families services	-1.000	-0.200	+0.800	Red - Delivery Planning in progress to address saving. Including: further Establishment review, service redesign, cross directorate risk management.
18	Reduce discretionary Post- 16 Travel Support	-0.400	-0.321	+0.079	Red - Agreed by Committee so progressing, too early to confirm take-up.
19	Achieve the Family Hub model	-0.250	-0.250	0	Green - Committee approved new model of delivery in Nov Committee. Savings are not going to be delivered in 2024/25 therefore alternative saving being found to cover this.
20a	Other Service Reviews – Review of commissioned services across the C&F directorate. Review of the current Domestic Abuse Service	-0.100	-0.100	0	Completed.
20b	Other Service Reviews – Maximise grant allocation to cover all costs	-0.100	0	+0.100	Red - Plan to explore current / future grants to ensure where T&Cs allow, contribution to fund base costs (e.g. staffing and on costs) is maximised.
20c	Other Service Reviews – Traded services	-0.050	+0.020	+0.070	Red - Part delivered but may need to look for alternative options to cover the remaining saving.
21a	Reduce Growth in expenditure – review of high cost, low outcome external residential placements	-1.000	-1.000	0	Red - Whilst work has been taking place to open CE Children's Homes and our first open is now open, with our second due in autumn/winter, our collaboration with Foster4 working well to increase our foster carers, we still are seeing more children coming into care. There is also increasing instability with the residential market, driving up prices. Complex young people need high packages of support, which are extremely

MTFS 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)	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
					expensive. We are due to review all high cost placements and other placements to identify children for whom reunification to family would be appropriate. Processes are also in place by the Head of Provider Services to review costs being paid to providers.
21b	Reduce Growth in expenditure – increase commissioning approach to establish greater opportunities to provide accommodation for +16 young people	-0.400	-0.169	+0.231	Red - 16+ and 18+ Commissioning Plans / Market Shaping in Progress. Responding to increasing demand and complexity.
21c	Reduce Growth in expenditure – Foster Care	-0.250	-0.250	0	Amber - Developing a Delivery Plan to increase Foster Care provision.
21d	Reduce Growth in expenditure – reduced spend on expert assessment in court proceedings and services post public law proceedings	-0.250	-0.504	-0.254	Green - Task & Finish Group put in place to explore and develop processes and capacity to reduce costly legal proceedings.
22	Pension Costs Adjustment	-0.515	-0.361	+0.154	Red - Teacher's pension legacy costs are not reducing as anticipated.
					Completed - CEC pension reduction.
23	Growth to deliver statutory Youth Justice service, and growth to ensure budget is sufficient to meet Safeguarding Partnership duties	+0.170	+0.197	+0.027	Amber - It is incumbent upon the three statutory safeguarding partners, the police, health and the Local Authority, to ensure that adequate funding is allocated to the Children's Safeguarding Partnership so it can fulfil its statutory functions in delivering the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. An internal audit identified the Local Authority had not reviewed its contributions to the partnership and was insufficiently contributing to the delivery of the partnership arrangements. As a result, growth was approved by committee. This has been supported by an increase in contributions from all partner agencies. A vacancy has also been held in the business unit.
24	Growth to provide capacity to deliver transformation for SEND	+0.500	+0.456	-0.043	Green.
25	Wraparound Childcare Programme (funded)	+0.587	+0.587	0	Amber - Currently reviewing sufficiency and funding details to manage delivery within budget.

MTFS 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)	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
25	Wraparound Childcare Programme (funded)	-0.587	-0.587	0	Amber - Currently reviewing sufficiency and funding details to manage delivery within budget.
26	Legal Proceeding - Child Protection	+0.770	+0.770	0	Green.
27	Growth in School Transport budget	+0.936	+0.988	+0.052	Red.
28	Pay Inflation	+1.374	+1.915	+0.541	Red - NJC Pay Claim now approved - over spend against budget as a result of £1,290/2.5% increase. Increase compared to flat percentage budget increase of 3% within original MTFS.
29	Use of Children & Families Transformation Reserve – reversal of 2023/24 use	+1.065*	+1.065*	0	Completed.
30	Growth in Childrens Placement costs	+10.825	+13.284	+2.459	Red - Will need to be closely monitored throughout the year to ensure that funding is sufficient to meet demand and complexity.
31	Revenue costs for the Crewe Youth Zone (as above) aligned to Supporting Families Funding	-	-	-	Green.
31	Early Help budget to support funding towards the Crewe Youth Zone	-	-	-	Green.
32	SEND Capital Modification	TBC	TBC	-	Amber - Contingent upon wider asset management and associated timelines. Extensive work underway to plan and progress development opportunities. Captured as part of the Capital Program reported to Committee.
33	Childrens Social Work Bank	TBC	TBC	-	Red - Various options currently being explored as part of wider C&F Establishment review and potential peripatetic resource options.
34	Safe Walking Routes to School	TBC	TBC	-	Green - Features as part of School Transport Programme.
35	Withdrawal of the CEC School Meals Service	ТВС	TBC	-	Green - Features as part of School Catering subsidy project - CF2428- 16.
In year	In-year emerging variance Education, Strong Start and Integration	0	-1.485	-1.485	Green. Underspend relates to vacancy management, reduced spend and income generation across services.
In year	In-year emerging variance Children and Families Directorate	0	+0.211	+0.211	Red. Overspend relates to external Quality Assurance Agency costs and cost of establishment.

MTFS 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)	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
In year	In-Year emerging variance Children's Social Care	0	+2.156	+2.156	Red. Overspend mainly relates to staffing costs.

\* Item represented a one-off spend in 2023/24. As it is not a permanent part of the budget, the value of the proposal is reversed in 2024/25.

MTFS 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)	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
	Corporate Policy Committee	+0.489	+2.954	+2.465	
36	Reduce leadership and management costs	-0.540	-	+0.540	Red - The feedback from the DMA review is that senior management vacancies will require recruitment to in order to complete the complement of Corporate Managers. In year vacancy savings will continue but will be time limited. There is potential to increase costs by additional management support during transformation. This will result in increased budget pressure. This pressure is being mitigated through the four in-year items at the end of this table. Most of those will be permanent and used to deliver this saving.
37	Close the Emergency Assistance Scheme	-0.220	-0.220	0	Completed
38	Reduce election costs and increase charges where possible	-0.150	-0.150	0	Green - The proposal is to make a payment during 2024/25 of £70k- £80k from the existing election account, as part of this one-off saving. The remainder will be delivered by reducing the sum which would normally be paid 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)	-0.100	-0.100	0	Green – third party costs have been reduced and there are plans to reduce further during the year.
39b	Accelerate Digital (Digital efficiencies)	-0.150	-0.150	0	Green – Removal of temporary budget for Solutions Architect Resource, now covered by an Earmarked Reserve.
40	Enforce prompt debt recovery and increase charges for costs	-0.150	-0.150	0	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 action is therefore complete, but the financial benefits will accrue as we continue

MTFS 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)	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
					the regular recovery process during the year.
41a	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – School Subsidy (ICT)	-0.032	-0.033	-0.001	Green
41b	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – Organisational Development	-0.100	-0.100	0	Completed
41c	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – Registration Services	-0.050	-0.050	0	Green
41d	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – School Subsidy	-0.018	0	+0.018	Amber - Part of the £50k School Subsidy saving - Finance team to assist in identifying options. These are listed at the end of the table.
41e	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services	-0.010	0	+0.010	Amber - Finance team to assist in identifying options. These are listed at the end of the table.
41f	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – Printing	-0.050	0	+0.050	Amber - Finance team to assist in identifying options. These are listed at the end of the table.
41g	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – Hybrid working / mileage	-0.050	0	+0.050	Amber – Options being considered regarding reduced travel spend including ensuring efficient planning around meeting attendance and minimising unnecessary movements across the area. This maximises efficient use of time as well for teams.
42	Pension Costs Adjustment	-0.378	-0.378	0	Completed
43	Mitigation of reduction in the Dedicated Schools Grant	+0.136	+0.136	0	Completed
44	Pay Inflation	+1.446	+1.581	+0.135	Red - NJC Pay Claim now approved - over spend against budget as a result of £1,290/2.5% increase. Increase compared to flat percentage budget increase of 3% within original MTFS.
45	Legal Services Capacity	+0.455	+0.455	0	Completed
46	ICT Review 1	+0.450	+0.450	0	Green - The move to Software as a Service has necessitated the transfer from Capital to Revenue budget requirements. The Shared Service continues to reduce third party costs and agency spend as per the Business case.

MTFS 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)	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
47	Workforce Strategy Review	TBC	-	-	Amber - There are no savings attributed to this area 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. It is recommended that this item is removed from the list.
In year	Recognising the increased level of Registration service income of £350k.	0	-0.350	-0.350	This will be a permanent change to deliver the Red ranked items above.
In year	Recognising the receipt of £45k of Police and Crime Commissioner grant income.	0	-0.045	-0.045	This will be a permanent change to deliver the Red / Amber ranked items above.
In year	Taking the underspend on phones in corporate services (mobiles and rental) compared to budget.	0	-0.060	-0.060	This will be a permanent change to deliver the Red / Amber ranked items above.
In year	Adjustment required to balance to FR3 position of +£2,465k for corporate incl ICT.	0	+2.218	+2.218	These will be a mix of permanent and temporary items to assist the in-year position. This includes Transformation costs.
In-year	Reduce Members Allowances budget for excess budget relating to a pay award that was not taken	0	-0.100	-0.100	

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
	Economy and Growth Committee	+3.316	-0.449	-3.765	
49	Service Restructures within Place based Services	-0.787	-0.368	+0.419	Amber – achievement through permanent savings remains challenging without a full restructure – which is pending the LGA review. Mitigation is through offset of underspend 'in year' and proposals are to be considered to offset permanently.
50	Reduce opening hours for main offices	-0.050	-0.050	0	Completed
51	Office estate rationalisation	-0.550	-0.250	+0.300	Amber - due to the timeline for the transfer of buildings being extended. This item is being mitigated by in year savings and by the items at the end of the table which are a mix of permanent and temporary measures.
52	Tatton Park	-0.046	-0.046	0	Amber - Savings can be achieved through investment in the Tatton Vision Programme. To date this programme has achieved cumulative MTFS savings of £624k. Amber rating reflects the fact that the Tatton Vision capital programme is currently under review. Lack of investment to maintain infrastructure or develop visitor attractions is likely to reduce savings.
53	Transfer of Congleton Visitor Information Centre	-0.020	-0.020	0	Green - Transfer of Congleton VIC to the Town Council has already occurred.
54	Pension costs adjustment	-0.157	-0.157	0	Completed
55	Tatton Park ticketing and electronic point of sale (EPOS) upgrade	+0.005	+0.005	0	Green - A procurement process is currently underway to source a supplier who can ensure onsite and web-based delivery of a new system which aligns with present and future needs. Improved functionality should enable future savings delivery.
56c	West Park collection	+0.012	+0.012	0	Green - Cost for vital conservation and storage of West Park Museum collections and ongoing temporary storage requirements.
56d	CEC archives	+0.008	0	-0.008	Amber - Timescales for implementation of the Archives capital project have slipped due to grant funding decisions, with revised opening date of Spring 2026.
57	Property Information and Management System -	+0.030	+0.031	+0.001	Completed

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
	Estates – Revenue Adjustment				
58	Housing	+0.035	+0.035	0	Green - Consultation on the Housing Restructure commences 22 May and includes the post that the funding is attributed to. The new structure will be implemented by 1 August 2024.
59	Environmental Hub Waste Transfer Station	+0.040	+0.040	0	Green - Project on track delivery Q1/2. The replacement of bay 1 in the Councils Environmental Hub Residual Waste Transfer Station building with a new design more likely to provide long- term resilience to wear and tear, to enable the continuation of waste processing at the transfer station.
60	Rural and Visitor Economy	+0.045	+0.045	0	Green - Additional revenue support is required to cover the increase in electricity charges for the Rural and Culture Economy Service to maintain existing service provision at Tatton Park and Countryside sites.
61	Minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) - Estates - Revenue Adjustment	+0.079	+0.079	0	Amber – Prioritised negotiations with 3rd parties/tenants occupying premises being expedited to avoid delays on obtaining access for surveys, completing necessary improvement works and legally completing lease renewals.
62	Public Rights of Way Income Realignment	+0.115	+0.115	0	Completed. Adjustments made to budget forecasts 2024/25
63	Pay inflation	+0.788	+0.940	+0.152	Red - NJC Pay Claim now approved - over spend against budget as a result of £1,290/2.5% increase. Increase compared to flat percentage budget increase of 3% within original MTFS. This item is being mitigated by the items at the end of the table which are a mix of permanent and temporary measures.
64	Crewe town centre maintenance and operation	+0.650	+0.630	-0.020	Green
65	Assets - Buildings and Operational	+3.119	+3.119	0	Green
66	Landfill Site Assessments revenue adjustment - Estates – CE Owned Landfill sites (53 sites) Review and Risk Assessment completions	-	-	-	Amber - £10k cost growth in for 25/26. Second stage of the review to commence shortly. Internal capacity within Environmental Services to be identified.
67	Tatton Park Estate Dwellings Refurbishment	-	-	-	Completed - Provision for response maintenance issues for 8 onsite dwellings to ensure properties meet standards required as part of tenancy

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
					agreements and the National Trust lease.
68	Improving Crewe Rented Housing Standards	-	-	-	Green
In year	Growth & Enterprise 2024/25 mitigations to balance back to finance review position	0	-4.034	-4.034	
In year	Place Directorate 2024/25 mitigations to balance back to finance review position	0	-0.575	-0.575	

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
	Environment and Communities Committee	-0.052	-0.688	-0.636	
69	Refresh wholly owned company overheads and contributions	-1.000	-1.500	-0.500	Green - ASDV Review recommendations have now been approved in full by Finance Sub- Committee in their role as shareholder of the wholly owned companies. The process of insourcing these services is now underway which will release an element of their reserves in year to meet this one-off contribution. The release of Company reserves has now been actioned
70	Strategic Leisure Review (Stage 2)	-1.305	-1.185	+0.120	Amber - Initial savings secured via committee decision on 11th March 2024. Proposals are being developed with EHL and town and parish councils to secure the residual £250k amount - dialogue is ongoing. Delays to disposing of Middlewich and Holmes Chapel Leisure Centres in year are having a negative impact on savings position.
71	Mitigate the impact of contract inflation and tonnage growth	-0.490	-0.490	0	Completed - Mitigate the impact of contract inflation and tonnage growth.
72	Emergency reduction of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) to four core sites	-0.263	-0.200	+0.063	Amber - Full saving on basis of original HLBC will not be achieved due to introduction of mobile provision offer as a result of Full Council decision and costs associated with trial of booking system. Following implementation of temporary closures final negotiations with supply chain are concluded in relation to savings in year, which include adjustment for waste diversion. The actual level of waste diversion will be monitored over the remaining trial period (through to end of August 2025) to inform the permanent position.
73	Libraries Strategy	-0.365	-0.291	+0.074	Green - Committee approval to implement final Strategy secured on 27th November, implementation now ongoing with revised opening hours at Tier 3 sites going live from January 2025 and Tier 2 sites as of 1st April 2025. Staff consultations due to be launched imminently relating to restructure of service. Engagement with Town and Parish Councils undertaken to shape the Strategy proposals and seek funding contributions, which has resulted in a total of 8 sites being supported to a total

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
					of c.£166k enabling over 2,150 hours of library opening time per annum. This item is being partly mitigated by the item at the end of the table which is a mix of permanent and temporary measures, principally vacancy management
74	Reduce costs of street cleansing operations	-0.200	-0.200	0	Green - Value of saving now reduced from ANSA Management Fee for 2024/25, proposals to achieve which include immediate reductions in service resilience, due to removal of any vacancies and under utilised fleet.
75	Reduce revenue impact of carbon reduction capital schemes	-0.336	0	+0.336	Amber – Carbon Neutral Council target deferred from 2025 to 27, as agreed at Full Council on 27.02.24, large scale prudential borrowing funded schemes spend now reprofiled to suit, however budget not sat within E&C Committee. Discussion with Corporate Financing team to re-allocate. This item is being partly mitigated by the item at the end of the table which is a mix of permanent and temporary measures.
76	Increase Garden Waste charges to recover costs	-0.045	-0.045	0	Green – Increase Garden Waste charges for the calendar year 2025 to recover costs
77	MTFS 80 (Feb 23) – Waste Disposal – Contract Inflation and Tonnage Growth (updated forecast)	+3.577	+3.977	+0.400	Green – rating due to fluctuations in waste markets relating to recyclates and continued levels of inflation, outside CEC control and not aligned to projections. Mitigation is to continue with monthly financial monitoring and detailed update of forecasting to year end, based on market intelligence from suppliers and historical seasonal trends data.
78	Pay Inflation – CEC & ASDV	+1.861	+2.397	+0.536	Red - NJC Pay Claim now approved - over spend against budget as a result of £1,290/2.5% increase. Increase compared to flat percentage budget increase of 3% within original MTFS. This item is being partly mitigated by the item at the end of the table which is a mix of permanent and temporary measures.
79	Pension Costs Adjustment	-0.151	-0.151	0	Completed
80	MTFS 90 (Feb 23) Strategic Leisure Review	+1.250	+1.250	0	Completed - Growth item budget adjustment only - replacing 2023/24 £1.3m savings target.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
81	MTFS 91 (Feb 23) – Green Spaces Maintenance Review	-0.200	-0.200	0	Green - Year 2 saving - Policy now implemented and full saving secured from ANSA contract.
82	MTFS 92 (Feb 23) - Review Waste Collection Service - Green Waste	-3.150	-3.150	0	Green - Subscription levels in line with original business model.
83	Review MTFS 92 (Feb 23) Garden waste subscription financial model in line with latest subscription levels and with actual observed position on any waste migration	-0.429	-0.429	0	Green - Continued monitoring of subscription levels and any adverse impacts is already in place, update to original business plan assumptions.
84	MTFS 93 (Feb 23) Libraries - Service Review	-0.200	-0.200	0	Amber - Year 2 of Service Review - reduction in staffing levels have been implemented and now include vacancy management in year to ensure achievement of saving. Currently covered temporarily by vacancy savings
85	Explore a Trust delivery model for Libraries and other services	+0.150	+0.020	-0.130	Green - Growth item to cover one off costs relating to implementation of alternative delivery model(s) for libraries service. Aligned to development of Libraries Strategy.
86	CCTV – Service Efficiencies	-0.030	-0.030	0	Green – Ongoing actions to increase customer base for existing services, identification of new chargeable services/customers and service efficiency savings as well as increased fees and charges to meet the target.
87	Congleton Town Council Collaboration Agreement – Grounds Maintenance	-0.062	-0.062	0	Completed - Congleton Town Council Collaboration Agreement on Grounds Maintenance Cheshire East Contribution reduced in line with reductions in Cheshire East Maintained green space.
88	Closed Cemeteries	+0.005	+0.005	0	Completed - Inflationary adjustment to previous budget allocation only.
89	Environmental Hub maintenance	+0.023	+0.023	0	Completed - Inflationary adjustment to previous budget allocation only.
90	Review Closed Landfill Sites	+0.300*	+0.300*	0	Completed - The Council has responsibility for a number of closed landfill sites across the borough for which it holds a provision.
91	Land Charge Income Adjustment	+0.050	+0.064	+0.014	Amber - Uncertainty around implementation timescales of HMLR changes to centralise some aspects of land charges functions hence understanding of actual impact, to be regularly monitored.
92	Building Control Income Alignment	+0.203	+0.403	+0.200	Amber - Due to current national trend of downturn in planning and related building control income. To be

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
					monitored through more regular financial forecasting in service. Reforms to national planning policy recently consulted upon may have a positive impact on this position moving forward due to uplift in both volume and pace of developments coming forward. To be considered in due course following Govt announcement.
93	Local Plan Review	+0.255	+0.255	0	Amber - Reprofiled budget adjustment to provide additional funding towards development of new Local Plan which has now commenced
94	Planning income	+0.400	+0.910	+0.510	Amber – Forecast reduced income in year due to current national trend of downturn in planning applications and hence income. Proactively monitored through regular financial forecasting in service. Partially mitigated by continued high level of vacancies and the item at the end of the table. Recent national planning policy forms announced by Govt which were recently subject to a consultation process may help to alleviate the income position, but will require vacancies to be filled to cater for the likely increase in applications. To be considered as and when further announcement made.
95	Planning Service Restructure	-	-	-	Green - No action for 2024/25. Growth for 2025/26 to be kept under review.
96	Review of Household Waste Recycling Centres	+0.100	+0.100	0	Green - all activities are on track for completion on time following decision at Environment and Communities Committee on 26 September 2024 to proceed with preferred option and finalisation of new operating contract procurement process.
In year	Environment & Neighbourhood Services mitigations 2024/25 to balance back to finance review position	0	-2.259	-2.259	

\* Item represented a one-off saving in 2023/24. As it is not a permanent part of the budget, the value of the proposal is reversed in 2024/25.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
	Highways and Transport Committee	+4.869	+4.335	-0.534	
97	Highway maintenance savings	-0.750	-0.750	0	Green - Savings are being achieved through: - reducing the number of cuts on grass verges from 10 to 8; - directly employing staff to carry out surveys, rather than sub-contracting; - reductions in staffing and vacancy management; and - reliance on the Council's adverse weather reserve for snow clearance. Service budgets have been reduced to reflect the savings being made.
98	Introduce annual increases to car parking charges	-0.150	-0.150	0	Green - Annual inflation adjustment to existing P&D tariffs can be implemented by 1st July 2024, in advance of bringing charges into effect in the "free towns". This is 3 months earlier than planned.
99	Pension Costs Adjustment	-0.052	-0.052	0	Completed
100	Highways	-0.031	-0.031	0	Completed - This saving was delivered by changes to response times to defects in 2023/24.
101	Safe Haven outside schools (Parking)	-0.023	-0.023	0	Red - Introduction of CCTV camera enforcement of waiting/loading restrictions at school gates on a trial basis using bespoke equipment that is type approved and proven for these purposes in order to improve road safety and increase enforcement capacity at these high risk locations.
102	Transport and Infrastructure Strategy Team - Restructure	+0.120	+0.030	-0.090	Amber - Vacancies in existing structure provide some flexibilities of resourcing and recruitment planning, with the opportunity to reduce costs of outsourcing / agency staffing. The proposed changes will develop a more resilient in-house team to meet the needs of the Council, as it moves towards a new statutory Local Transport Plan and the development of transport functions in a new Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority.
103	Pay Inflation	+0.339	+0.351	+0.012	Red - NJC Pay Claim now approved - over spend against budget as a result of £1,290/2.5% increase. Increase compared to flat percentage budget increase of 3% within original MTFS. This item is being mitigated by the item at the end of the table which is a mix of permanent and temporary measures.
104	Parking - PDA / Back Office System contract	+0.100	+0.100	0	Green - Market testing completed - exploring a direct award opportunity with

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
					implementation testing and data migration.
105	Flood and Water Management Act 2010 SuDS & SABs Schedule 3 Implementation	+0.100	+0.100	0	Green - The requirement is to be ready to implement changes when regulations are implemented nationally. A training plan for existing staff has been identified. Recruitment is to be progressed.
106	Energy saving measures from streetlights	+0.242	+0.242	0	Completed - This entry was in the MTFS to cancel an unachievable saving from 2022/23. There is no further action.
107	Parking	+0.245	+0.245	0	Amber - Following decisions in January 2024, tariffs were uplifted on 1 July 2024 and extend pay and display to car parks in "free towns" from the start of December. Statutory consultations on Sunday and Evening charges have been completed to inform implementation by the end of the year. A trial of demand- responsive tariffs began with the opening of the new multistorey car park in Crewe.
108	Highways Revenue Services	+2.479	+2.479	0	Completed - This is a growth item. The growth has been factored into 2024/25 service levels and business plans. No further action.
109	Local Bus	+2.250	+2.250	0	Green
110	FlexiLink Service Improvement Plan	-	-	-	Green - A bus service review is underway, including proposals relating to flexible transport. Committee received a report updating on the outcomes of the consultation and the approach to procurement on 19 September 2024. The review of flexible transport will consider its role in filling gaps in local bus service provision, especially in rural areas, as well as options to extend hours of operation, open up the service to more users and introduce fares to make a contribution to operating costs.
111	Highways Depot Improvements	-	-	-	Red - This later year saving is subject to the approval of the business case for capital investment in depots. This will be reviewed during 2024/25.
112	Bus Stop Advertising Revenue Generation	-	-	-	Amber - Opportunity to shadow CWAC council's extension of the existing contract in the interim period.
In year	Highways & Infrastructure 2024/25 mitigations to balance to finance review	0	-0.456	-0.456	

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Central Budgets	2024/25 £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
	Finance Sub-Committee	-19.667	-24.151	-4.626	
113	Capital Financing - Minimum Revenue Provision	+9.508	+9.974	+0.466	Amber – assumes use of reserve of £2.135m (subject to approval). Ongoing capital review seeking to significantly reduce spend funded by borrowing.
114	Central Bad Debt Provision adjustment	+0.600	+0.600	0	Completed - budget adjustment.
115	Use of Earmarked Reserves – MTFS Reserve	+0.255	+0.255	0	Completed - budget adjustment / planned use of reserve.
115	MTFS Reserve – reversal of 2023/24 use	+1.536	+1.536	0	Completed - budget adjustment / planned use of reserve.
116	Collection Fund Reserve - Use of Earmarked Reserves	-0.834	-0.834	0	Completed - budget adjustment / planned use of reserve.
116	Collection Fund Reserve – reversal of 2023/24 use of reserves	+2.234	+2.234	0	Completed - budget adjustment / planned use of reserve.
117	Brighter Futures Transformation – reversal of 2023/24 use of reserves	+1.271	+1.271	0	Completed - budget adjustment / planned use of reserve.
118	Use of General Reserves – Fund in-year budget shortfall [NEW]	-11.654	-11.654	0	Completed - Drawn down in line with the MTFS forecast.
Amber 119	Council Tax - % increase	-13.527	-13.527	0	Green - Council tax and business rates income collection managed through the Collection Fund therefore no impact on current year funding target.
120	Council Tax – Base increase	-2.461	-2.461	0	Green - Council tax and business rates income collection managed through the Collection Fund therefore no impact on current year funding target.
121	Business Rates Retention Scheme – use of S31 compensation grants	-1.350	-1.350	0	Green - Grants to be received in line with final settlement from MHCLG.
122	Unring-fenced Grants + Revenue Support Grant	-5.245	-5.245	0	Green - Grants to be received in line with final settlement from MHCLG.
123	Council Tax and Business Rates Collection [NEW]	TBC	-	-	Initial case was to implement a working group to review council tax collection. No savings value was assigned to the case. The intention now is to bring forward via an informal briefing to

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Central Budgets	2024/25 £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
					include options around the council tax support scheme review (FS2428)
124	Council Tax Support [NEW]	TBC	-	-	No change to Council Tax support scheme for 2024/25 or 2025/26. To be reviewed for 2026/27.
In year	Bad Debt Provision reduction (one off)	-	-1.071	-1.071	
In year	S106 (Estimate provisional – one off – may increase, still under review)	-	-0.452	-0.452	
In year	Increased use of reserves re Transformation spend included in Service forecasts	-	-4.066	-4.066	
In year	Adjustment to use of Earmarked reserves budgeted figure within Service Budgets	-	+0.497	+0.497	

# Section 3: Revenue Grants for approval

- 3.1. Cheshire East Council receives two main types of Government grants; specific purpose grants and general use grants. Specific purpose grants are held within the relevant service with a corresponding expenditure budget. Whereas general use grants are held in central budgets with a corresponding expenditure budget within the allocated service area.
- 3.2. Spending in relation to specific purpose grants must be in line with the purpose for which it is provided.
- 3.3. **Table 1** shows additional specific purpose grant allocations that have been received over £1m that **Council** will be asked to approve.

### Table 1 – Council Decision

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

Committee	Type of Grant	£000	Details
Children and Families – Schools	Dedicated Schools Grant (Specific Purpose)	1,089	This grant is an increase to the DSG funding, in line with updated allocations information.
Economy & Growth	Enterprise Cheshire Warrington Skills Bootcamp	1,717	This grant is from the DfE, it is for the delivery of and management of Skills Bootcamps in geographical and neighbouring areas in agreement with relevant local authorities. This element of skills bootcamp is being delivered through Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington.

# Section 4: Capital

#### Table 1: Financial Parameters for 2023/24 to 2026/27

Parameter	Value (£m)						
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27			
Repayment of Borrowing							
Minimum Revenue Provision*	17.5	18.8	23.2	24.9			
External Loan Interest	14.3	18.5	16.5	15.0			
Investment Income	(3.8)	(3.9)	(2.2)	(1.8)			
Contributions from Services Revenue Budgets	(1.2)	(1.3)	(1.8)	(2.4)			
Total Capital Financing Costs	26.8	32.1	35.7	35.7			
Use of Financing EMR	(7.9)	(2.1)	0	0			
Actual CFB in MTFS	19.0	28.5	35.2	35.5			
Budget Deficit	(0)	1.5	0.5	0.2			
Capital Receipts targets*	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0			
Flexible use of Capital Receipts	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0			

\*Anticipated MRP based on achieving capital receipts targets

- 4.1. The revised programme is funded from both direct income (grants, external contributions) and the Council's own resources (prudential borrowing, revenue contributions, capital reserve). A funding summary is shown in **Table 2**. For detailed tables by Committee please see **Annexe 2**.
- 4.2. **Table 3** lists details of Delegated decisions up to £500,000 for noting.
- 4.3. Table 4 lists Capital Supplementary Estimates over £500,000 and up to £1,000,000 for committee approval and Capital Virements over £500,000 and up to and including £5,000,000 that require Relevant Member(s) of CLT and Chief Finance Officer in consultation with Chair of the relevant Committee and the Chair of Finance Sub-Committee to approve.

### **Table 2: Capital Programme Update**

# CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL CAPITAL PROGRAMME SUMMARY

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28							
	Forecast 2024/25 £000	Forecast 2025/26 £000	Forecast 2026/27 £000	Forecast 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast 2024-28 £000		
Committed Schemes - In Progress							
Adults and Health	800				800		
Children and Families	29,476	26,919	16,355	17,749	90,499		
Highways & Transport	46,744	38,134	27,448	124,578	236,904		
Economy & Growth	40,772	33,237	28,610	78,539	181,158		
Environment & Communities	9,727	14,250	7,252	3,101	34,330		
Corporate Policy	9,700	8,889	3,173	1,834	23,596		
Total Committed Schemes - In Progress	137,219	121,429	82,838	225,801	567,287		
		MME 2024/28	5 2027/20				
CA	PITAL PROGRA	IVIIVIE 2024/23	0 - 2027720		Total		
	Forecast 2024/25 £000	Forecast 2025/26 £000	Forecast 2026/27 £000	Forecast 2027/28 £000	Forecast 2024-28 £000		
New Schemes							
Children and Families	1,132	8,199	5,248	3,000	17,579		
Highways & Transport	895	21,842	15,051	15,051	52,839		
Economy & Growth	3,309	1,530	113	0	4,952		
Environment & Communities	2,115	4,134	1,150	0	7,399		
Total New Schemes	7,451	35,705	21,562	18,051	82,769		
Total	144,670	157,134	104,400	243,852	650,056		
	Funding	Requirement					
Indicative Funding Analysis: (See note 1)							
Government Grants	88,816	90,029	71,278	114,808	364,931		
External Contributions	14,288	14,566	12,705	66,418	107,977		
Revenue Contributions	444	0	0	0	444		
Capital Receipts	155	732	1,324	33,381	35,592		
Prudential Borrowing (See note 2)	40,967	51,807	19,093	29,245	141,112		
Total	144,670	157,134	104,400	243,852	650,056		

#### Note 1:

The funding requirement identified in the above table does not currently represent a balanced and affordable position, in the medium term. The Council will need to transform the capital programme to reduce the number of schemes requiring Cheshire East Resources and the need to borrow. The level of capital receipts are based on a prudent approach based on the work of the Asset Management team and their most recently updated Disposals Programme.

#### Note 2:

The schemes marked \*\*and highlighted in the MTFS cannot proceed until the Capital Programme Review has been completed. Any urgent reuests to continue prior to the reviews completion will require approval from the Chair of Finance Sub Committee and the S.151 Officer

#### Note 3:

Appropriate charges to the revenue budget will only commence in the year following the completion of the associated capital asset. This allows the Council to constantly review the most cost effective way of funding capital expenditure.

# Table 3: Delegated Decisions – Supplementary Capital estimates and Budget virements up to £500,000

Committee / Capital Scheme	Amount Requested £	Reason and Funding Source
Supplementary Capital Estimates that have been made up to	£500,000	
Environment & Communities		
Neighbourhood Bollington Leisure Swimming Pool	50,737	Funds from Sport England for Bollington Leisure for works to swimming pool
Total Supplementary Capital Estimates Requested	50,737	
	£	
Capital Budget Virements that have been made up to £500,0	00	
Children & Families Education and 14-19 Skills		
Cledford House	89,125	Transfer of budget from CAP-10464 Cledford House to New SEN Places - Springfield Wilmslow
Total Capital Budget Virements Approved	89,125	
Total Supplementary Capital Estimates and Virements	139,862	

#### **Table 4: Requests for Capital Virements**

Committee / Capital Scheme	Amount Requested £	Reason and Funding Source							
Service committee are asked to note Capital Budget Virements above £500,000 up to and including £5,000,000 for approval by Relevant Member(s) of CLT and Chief Finance Officer in consultation with Chair of the relevant Committee and the Chair of Finance Sub-Committee									
Children & Families									
Crewe Youth Zone	1,353,000	Realignment approved by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government of the Crewe Towns Fund allocations from Flag Lane Baths. Resulting in a funding swap removing £1.353m of Prudential Borrowing which has been moved to Flag Lane Baths.							
Environment & Communities									
Environment Services									
Crewe Towns Fund - Cumberland Arena Crewe Towns Fund - Pocket Parks	701,000 200,000	Realignment approved by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government of the Crewe Towns Fund allocations from Flag Lane Baths .							
Economy and Growth									
Crewe Towns Fund - Mill Street Corridor	407,583								
History Centre Public Realm & ICV (Crewe Towns Fund) CTC1	200,000 -	Realignment approved by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government of the Crewe Towns Fund allocations from Flag Lane Baths.							
Crewe Towns Fund – Mirion Street	458,000								
Total Capital Virements requested	3,319,583								
Total Virements	3,319,583								

# Prudential Indicators revisions to: 2023/24 and 2024/25 – 2026/27 and future years

#### Background

4.4. There is a requirement under the Local Government Act 2003 for local authorities to have regard to CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the "CIPFA Prudential Code") when setting and reviewing their Prudential Indicators.

#### Estimates of Capital Expenditure

4.5. In 2024/25, the Council estimates to spend £144.7m on capital expenditure as summarised below.

Capital Expenditure	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Future
	Actual	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	years
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Total	136.9	144.7	157.1	104.4	243.8

Source: Cheshire East Finance

#### **Capital Financing**

4.6. All capital expenditure must be financed either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Council's own resources (revenue reserves and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing, leasing and Private Finance Initiative). The planned financing of capital expenditure is as follows.

Capital Financing	<b>2023/24</b> Actual £m	2024/25 Estimate £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	<b>2026/27</b> <b>Estimate</b> £m	Future years £m
Capital receipts	0.1	0.1	0.7	1.3	33.4
Government Grants	61.2	88.8	90.0	71.3	114.8
External Contributions	8.8	14.3	14.6	12.7	66.4
Revenue Contributions	0.4	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Financing	70.5	103.7	105.3	85.3	214.6
Prudential Borrowing	65.5	41.0	51.8	19.1	29.2
Total Funding	65.5	41.0	51.8	19.1	29.2
Total Financing and Funding	136.0	144.7	157.1	104.4	243.8

Source: Cheshire East Finance

#### **Replacement of debt finance**

4.7. Debt is only a temporary source of finance, since loans and leases must be repaid, and this is therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which is known as minimum revenue provision (MRP). Alternatively, proceeds from selling capital assets may be used to replace debt finance. Planned MRP repayments are as follows:

Replacement of debt	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
finance	Actual	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Total	17.5	18.8	22.9	24.9	25.0

Source: Cheshire East Finance

#### **Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement**

4.8. The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP repayments and capital receipts used to replace debt. The CFR will decrease by £2m during 2024/25. This assumes that were there has been significant forward funding of certain schemes that grants and other contributions are received in year to repay that forward funding. Based on the above figures for expenditure and financing, the Council's estimated CFR is as follows.

Capital Financing	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Requirement	Actual	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Total	488	481	508	502	501

Source: Cheshire East Finance

#### Asset disposals

4.9. When a capital asset is no longer needed, it may be sold so that the proceeds, known as capital receipts, can be spent on new assets or to repay debt. Repayments of capital grants, loans and investments also generate capital receipts. The Council received £3.5m of capital receipts from asset sales in 2023/24 and plans to receive a further £25.9m in future years.

Capital Receipts	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Actual	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Asset Sales	3.4	2.3	6.8	8.2	7.8
Loans Repaid	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Total	3.5	2.5	7.0	8.4	8.0

Source: Cheshire East Finance

#### **Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement**

- 4.10. The Council's main objectives when borrowing are to achieve a low but certain cost of finance while retaining flexibility should plans change in the future. These objectives are often conflicting and the Council therefore seeks to strike a balance between cheap short term loans (currently available at around 4.95%) and long term fixed rate loans where the future cost is known but fixed over a period when rates are expected to fall (currently 4.99%%– 5.3%).
- 4.11. Projected levels of the Council's total outstanding debt (which comprises borrowing, PFI liabilities, leases are shown below, compared with the capital financing requirement.
- 4.12. Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short term. As can be seen from the above table, the Council expects to comply with this in the medium term.

#### **Liability Benchmark**

4.13. To compare the Council's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £20m at each year end. This benchmark is currently £331m and is forecast to rise to £366m over the next four years.

Borrowing and the	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Liability Benchmark	Actual	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Outstanding Debt	337	374	438	462	486
Liability Benchmark	331	332	365	369	366

Source: Cheshire East Finance

4.14. The table shows that the Council expects to borrow above its liability benchmark.

#### Affordable borrowing limit

4.15. The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower "operational boundary" is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

	2023/24 limit £m	2024/25 limit £m	<b>2025/26</b> limit £m	2026/27 Estimate £m	2027/28 Estimate £m
Authorised Limit for					
Borrowing	540	570	590	590	590
Authorised Limit for					
Other Long-Term					
Liabilities	18	17	17	15	14
Authorised Limit for					
External Debt	558	587	607	605	604
Operational Boundary					
for Borrowing	530	560	580	580	580
Operational Boundary	*****	*****	****		*****
for Other Long-Term					
Liabilities	18	17	17	15	14
Operational					
Boundary for					
External Debt	548	577	597	595	594

Source: Cheshire East Finance

#### **Investment Strategy**

- 4.16. Treasury investments arise from receiving cash before it is paid out again. Investments made for service reasons or for pure financial gain are not generally considered to be part of treasury management.
- 4.17. The Council's policy on treasury investments is to prioritise security and liquidity over yield, that is to focus on minimising risk rather than maximising returns. Cash that is likely to be spent in the near term is invested securely, for example with money market funds, other local authorities or selected high quality banks, to minimise the risk of loss. Money that will be held for longer terms is invested more widely, including in shares and property, to balance the risk of loss against the risk of returns below inflation.

Treasury Management	31/03/24 Actual	31/03/25 Estimate	31/03/26 Estimate	31/03/27 Estimate	31/03/28 Estimate
Investments	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Short term	22	20	20	20	20
Long term	20	20	20	20	20
Total Investments	42	40	40	40	40

Source: Cheshire East Finance

4.18. Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue, offset by an investment income receivable. The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e., the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government grants.

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Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	31/03/24 Actual	31/03/25 Estimate	31/03/26 Estimate	31/03/27 Estimate	31/03/28 Estimate
Financing Costs (£m)	19.0	32.1	35.9	37.3	37.8
Proportion of net revenue stream %	5.38	8.11	8.92	9.04	8.90

Source: Cheshire East Finance

# Section 5: Reserves

### Management of Council Reserves

- 5.1. The Council's Reserves Strategy states that the Council will maintain reserves to protect against risk and support investment.
- 5.2. The opening balance at 1 April 2024 in the Council's General Fund Reserves was £5.6m, as published in the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2023/24.
- 5.3. At FR1, the closing balance at 31 March 2025 in the Council's General Fund Reserve was forecast to be £4.5m. However, a further £4.0m transformational spend has been included within the service forecasts, reducing the General Reserve balance to £0.5m.
- 5.4. The current balance on reserves is insufficient in order to provide adequate protection against established and newly emerging risks, such as inflation and particularly the DSG deficit, which is projected to rise to £115.7m by year end and has been highlighted in the MTFS as having no alternative funding.
- 5.5. The Council also maintains Earmarked Revenue Reserves for specific purposes. The opening balance at 1 April 2024 was £32.3m.
- 5.6. During 2024/25, a net total of £10.6m will be drawn down to the support the in-year deficit position. A further £12.2m is being forecast to fund expenditure specifically provided for by services. These balances fall within the forecasts approved during the MTFS budget setting process.
- 5.7. Additional drawdown requests, above those forecast during MTFS, have been made by various services to support specific expenditure totalling £5.8m. These drawdowns, as detailed in the tables below, will be subject to a strategic review by the Corporate Leadership Team of existing in-principle decisions on use of earmarked reserves for year end 31 March 2025 recommendations will be made in the MTFS report to the Corporate Policy Committee in February.
- 5.8. The indicative closing balance on Earmarked Reserves at 31 March 2025, is forecast at £9.5m.
- 5.9. Total reserves available for Council use at 31 March 2025 are forecast at £9.98m.
- 5.10. Unspent schools' budgets that have been delegated, as laid down in the Schools Standards Framework Act 1998, remain at the disposal of the school and are not available for Council use. These balances are therefore excluded from all reserve forecasts.
### Table 1 – Reserves Balances

#### Adults and Health Committee

Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024	Drawdowns to General Fund	Approved Movement Forecast	Additional Drawdown Requests*	Closing Balance Forecast 31 March 2025	Notes
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Adults Social Care Co	ommission	ing				
PFI Equalisation - Extra Care Housing	2,857	(2,795)	0	0	62	Surplus grant set aside to meet future payments on existing PFI contract and the anticipated gap at the end of the agreement.
Public Health						
Public Health Reserve	2,369	0	(110)	0	2,259	Ring-fenced underspend to be invested in areas to improve performance against key targets; including the creation of an Innovation Fund to support partners to deliver initiatives that tackle key health issues.
ADULTS AND HEALTH	5,226	(2,795)	(11 <u>0)</u>	0	2,321	
<b>RESERVE TOTAL</b>						

\* All 'Additional Drawdown Requests' are subject to approval.

#### **Children and Families Committee**

Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024	Drawdowns to General Fund	Approved Movement Forecast	Additional Drawdown Requests*	Closing Balance Forecast 31 March 2025	Notes
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Childrens Social Care	<u>e</u>					
Domestic Abuse Partnership	131	0	0	(131)	0	To sustain preventative services to vulnerable people as a result of partnership funding in previous years.
Strong Start, Family I	Help and In	tegration				
Troubled Families Initiative	1,593	0	(1,593)	0	0	Crewe Youth Zone and ACT have been assigned funding from shared outcomes of the Supporting Families Programme.
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES RESERVE TOTAL	1,724	0	(1,593)	(131)	0	

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\* All 'Additional Drawdown Requests' are subject to approval.

#### **Corporate Policy Committee and Central Reserves**

Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024	Drawdowns to General Fund	Approved Movement Forecast	Additional Drawdown Requests*	Closing Balance Forecast 31 March 2025	Notes
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Corporate Directorat	<u>e</u>					To support a number of
Corporate Directorate Reserve	1,164	(935)	0	0	229	widespread projects within the Corporate Directorate.
Finance and Custom	er Service					
Collection Fund Management	8,154	(1,235)	(2,915)	0	4,004	To manage cash flow implications as part of the Business Rates Retention Scheme.
Capital Financing Reserve	4,531	0	0	(4,531)	0	To provide for financing of capital schemes, other projects and initiatives
MTFS Reserve	2,914	(741)	255	0	2,428	To support the financial strategy and risk management. £1.2m of the remaining reserve balance had previously been earmarked for future voluntary redundancy costs.
Brighter Futures Transformation Programme Section 31 Revenue Grants	490 14	(470) 0	(20) 0	0 (14)	0 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. Unspent specific use grant carried forward into 2024/25.
Governance and Cor	<u>npliance</u>					
Insurance Reserve	3,098	(3,098)	0	0	0	To settle insurance claims and manage excess costs. The full reserve has been released to the general fund to support the in- year deficit pressure.
Elections General	132	0	0	0	132	To provide funds for Election costs every 4 years.

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Brexit Funding	13	(13)	0	0	Residual reserve balance has been released to the general fund to support the in- year deficit pressure.
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Corporate Policy Committee and Central Reserves Continued						
Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024	Drawdowns to General Fund	Approved Movement Forecast	Additional Drawdown Requests*	Closing Balance Forecast 31 March 2025	Notes
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
<u>Human Resources</u>						
HR (CARE4CE Review, Culture Change, Pay realignment, Learning Mgt System)	59	(59)	0	0	0	Residual reserve balance has been released to the general fund to support the in- year deficit pressure.
Pay Structure (M Grade Review)	54	0	0	0	54	Created to help fund ongoing changes to pay structure.
ICT Digital Solutions Architect	150	0	(150)	0	0	New reserve created in 23/24 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 AND CENTRAL RESERVE TOTAL	20,773	(6,551)	(2,830)	(4,545)	6,847	

### Economy and Growth Committee

Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024	Drawdowns to General Fund	Approved Movement Forecast	Additional Drawdown Requests*	Closing Balance Forecast 31 March 2025	Notes
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Directorate Place Directorate Reserve	1,164	0	(473)	(385)	306	To support a number of widespread projects within the Place Directorate. To support
Investment (Sustainability)	610	0	(427)	(143)	40	investment that can increase longer term financial independence and stability of the Council.
Growth and Enterprise						
Legal Proceedings	212	0	(104)	(108)	0	To enable legal proceedings on land and property matters.
Investment Portfolio	534	(534)	0	0	0	The full reserve has been released to the general fund to support the in-year deficit pressure.
Homelessness & Housing Options - Revenue Grants	129	0	0	(129)	0	Grant committed for the purchase and refurbishment of properties to be used as temporary accommodation to house vulnerable families.
Tatton Park Trading Reserve	128	(128)	0	0	0	The full reserve has been released to the general fund to support the in-year deficit pressure.
ECONOMY AND GROWTH RESERVE TOTAL	2,777	(662)	(1,004)	(765)	346	

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### Environment and Communities Committee

Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024	Drawdowns to General Fund	Approved Movement Forecast	Additional Drawdown Requests*	Closing Balance Forecast 31 March 2025	Notes
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Environment and Neigh	<u>nbourhood</u>	Services				
Strategic Planning	568	(281)	(287)	0	0	To meet costs associated with the Local Plan - site allocations, minerals and waste DPD.
Trees / Structures Risk Management	139	(55)	(55)	(29)	0	To help respond to increases in risks relating to the environment, in particular the management of trees, structures and dealing with adverse weather events.
Air Quality	36	0	(17)	(19)	0	Air Quality Management - DEFRA Action Plan. Relocating electric vehicle charge point in Congleton.
Licensing Enforcement	8	0	0	(8)	0	Three year reserve to fund a third party review and update of the Cheshire East Council Taxi Licensing Enforcement Policies.
Flood Water Management (Emergency Planning)	2	0	(2)	0	0	Relating to Public Information Works.
Neighbourhood Planning	82	(41)	(41)	0	0	To match income and expenditure.
Spatial Planning - revenue grant	13	(13)	0	0	0	Residual reserve balance has been released to the general fund to support the in- year deficit pressure.
Street Cleansing	22	0	0	(22)	0	Committed expenditure on voluntary litter picking equipment and electric blowers.
ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD RESERVE TOTAL	870	(390)	(402)	(78)	0	

Highways and Transport Committee						
Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024	Drawdowns to General Fund	Approved Movement Forecast	Additional Drawdown Requests*	Closing Balance Forecast 31 March 2025	Notes
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Highways and Infrast	ructure					
Rail and Transport Integration	385	(185)	(200)	0	0	To support the Council's committed costs to the rail and transport networks across the borough.
Flood Recovery Works	400	0	(200)	(200)	0	To help the service manage risks such as the impact of adverse weather, specifically flooding or extensive periods where winter maintenance is required.
Highways Procurement Project	104	(20)	(15)	(69)	0	To finance the development of the next Highway Service Contract. Depot mobilisation costs, split over 7 years from start of contract in 2018.
LEP-Local Transport Body	19	0	0	(19)	0	Contribution to LEP transport studies/consultancy. Ongoing working around Transport Legacy issues.
ECONOMY AND GROWTH RESERVE TOTAL	908	(205)	(415)	(288)	0	

# Section 6: Treasury Management

### **Management of Council Reserves**

- 6.1 Treasury management is the management of the Authority's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Authority has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Authority's prudent financial management.
- 6.2. Treasury risk management at the Authority is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Authority's legal obligation under the *Local Government Act 2003* to have regard to the CIPFA Code.
- 6.3. Investments held for service purposes or for commercial profit are considered in the Investment Report (see **Section 9**).

# **1. External Context**

- 6.4. **Economic background:** UK headline consumer price inflation (CPI) remained around the Bank of England (BoE) target later in the period, falling from an annual rate of 3.2% in March to 2.0% in May and then rebounding marginally as was expected, due to base effects from energy prices. Energy prices continue to be the main upward component of inflation.
- 6.5. The UK economy continued to expand over the period, albeit slowing from the 0.7% gain in the first calendar quarter to 0.5% (downwardly revised from 0.6%) in the second. Of the monthly figures, the economy was estimated to have registered no growth in July.
- 6.6. Labour market data was slightly better from a policymaker perspective, showing an easing in the tightness of the job market, with inactivity rates and vacancies declining. However, a degree of uncertainty remains given ongoing issues around the data collected for the labour force survey by the Office for National Statistics. Figures for the three months to September showed the unemployment rate increased slightly to 4.3% from 4.2% in the previous three-month period while the employment rate rose to 74.8% from 74.5%.
- 6.7. With headline inflation on target, the BoE cut Bank Rate from 5.00% to 4.75% at the November Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting. The decision

was a 8-1 majority with one member preferring to hold at 5.00% citing some upward pressures on inflation. Indications are that further rate reductions are likely but may not be as quick as markets had originally been forecasting.

- 6.8. The November quarterly Monetary Policy Report (MPR) is forecasting Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth to pick up to around 1.75% (four-quarter GDP) in the early period of the BoE's forecast horizon before falling back. The impact from the Budget pushes GDP higher in 2025 than was expected in the previous MPR, before becoming weaker. Current GDP growth was shown to be 0.5% between April and June 2024, a downward revision from the 0.6% rate previously reported by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).
- 6.9. Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, maintained its central view that Bank Rate would steadily fall from the 5.25% peak, with February 2025 the likely next cut, taking Bank Rate down to around 3.75% by the end of 2025.
- 6.10. **Financial Markets:** Expectation is for long-term gilt yields to remain broadly at current levels on average (amid continued volatility), but to end the forecast period modestly lower compared to now. Yields will continue remain relatively higher than in the past, due to quantitative tightening and significant bond supply. As ever, there will be short-term volatility due to economic and (geo)political uncertainty and events.
- 6.11. **Credit Review:** Due to improving credit conditions our treasury advisors, increased their recommended maximum unsecured duration limit on most banks on its counterparty list to 6 months from the previous limit of 100 days.
- 6.12. Credit default swap prices were generally lower at the end of the period compared to the beginning for the vast majority of the names on UK and non-UK lists. Price volatility over the period was also generally more muted compared to previous periods.
- 6.13. Financial market volatility is expected to remain a feature, at least in the near term and credit default swap levels will be monitored for signs of ongoing credit stress. As ever, the institutions and durations on the Authority's counterparty list recommended by Arlingclose remain under constant review
- 6.14. An outlook for the remainder of 2024/25 and interest rate forecast provided by Arlingclose is attached at **Annex A**.

# 2. Local Context

6.15. As at 30 November 2024 the Authority has borrowings of £370m and investments of £50m. This is set out in further detail at **Annex B.** Forecast changes in these sums are shown in the balance sheet analysis in **Table 1** below.

	31/03/24 Actual £m	31/03/25 Estimate £m	31/03/26 Estimate £m	31/03/27 Estimate £m
General Fund CFR	506	498	525	521
Less: Other long term liabilities *	(18)	(17)	(17)	(15)
Loans CFR	488	481	508	506
Less: External borrowing **	(337)	(296)	(128)	(123)
Internal (over) borrowing	151	185	380	383
Less: Usable reserves	(131)	(122)	(113)	(103)
Less: Working capital	(46)	(47)	(50)	(50)
Investments (or New borrowing)	26	(16)	(217)	(230)

#### **Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary and Forecast**

\* finance leases and PFI liabilities that form part of the Authority's debt

- \*\* shows only loans to which the Authority is committed and excludes optional refinancing
- 6.16. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. The Authority's current strategy is to maintain borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing.
- 6.17. CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance recommends that the Authority's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. **Table 1** shows that the Authority expects to comply with this recommendation during 2024/25.

# 3. Borrowing Strategy

- 6.18. The Authority currently holds loans of £352m, an increase of £15m since 31 March 2024. However, this will increase to a higher level, currently forecast as £370m at 31 March 2025.
- 6.19. Borrowing is at a lower level than our Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) which means that internal resources (reserves, etc) are being used rather than external debt. However, increasing service demand and the unfunded

special educational needs situation is utilising those internal resources resulting in increased borrowing.

- 6.20. Interest rates have seen substantial rises over the last 2 years which has significantly increased the cost of borrowing. The expectation is that borrowing costs will start to fall although market uncertainty and tightening liquidity in the markets suggests we will not benefit from lower rates until 2025/26.
- 6.21. At the moment, cash shortfalls are generally being met by temporary borrowing from other Local Authorities which for a number of years has been considerably cheaper than other sources of borrowing and allowed the Council to keep financing costs low. The cost of these loans is currently relatively high compared with longer term loans but interest forecasts suggest it is still the cheaper option in the long term. However, liquidity risk remains an issue as funds become more scarce towards year end and the request to the Government for exceptional financial support has raised credit worthiness concerns with some lenders. To reduce liquidity risk, consideration is being given to taking more longer term PWLB loans.
- 6.22. The cost of short term borrowing for the first 8 months of 2024/25 is 5.38% which is an increase from 4.82% in 2023/24. These costs are now expected to reduce as the outlook is for reducing interest rates.
- 6.23. **LOBO's:** The Authority holds £17m of LOBO (Lender's Option Borrower's Option) loans where the lender has the option to propose an increase in the interest rate at set dates, following which the Authority has the option to either accept the new rate or to repay the loan at no additional cost. All of these LOBOS have options during 2024/25. It is unlikely that the lender will exercise their options but if this happens, the Authority is likely to take the option to repay LOBO loans at no cost.

### 4. Investment Strategy

- 6.24. The Authority holds invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. Due to the overriding need for short term borrowing, other than £20m invested strategically in managed funds, the investments are generally short term for liquidity purposes. The level at 30 November 2024 is £50m.
- 6.25. The CIPFA Code requires the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Authority's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.
- 6.26. The maximum amount that can be invested with any one organisation is set in the Treasury Management Strategy Report. The maximum amount and duration of investments with any institution depends on the organisations credit rating, the type of investment and for banks and building societies, the

security of the investment. Generally credit rated banks and building societies have been set at a maximum value of £6m for unsecured investments and £12m for secured investments. Any limits also apply to the banking group that each bank belongs to. Limits for each Money Market fund have been set at a maximum value of £12m per fund. All potential counterparties are kept under continual review by our treasury advisors and advisory lower limits than those contained in the strategy are applied.

- 6.27. Treasury Management income to 30 November 2024 is £2,260,000 which is higher than the budgeted £1,250,000. However, borrowing costs are also higher than budgeted at £12.4m compared to budget of £10.7m. This is caused by a combination of increasing interest rates with an increased borrowing requirement. From the projected cash flows for the remainder of 2024/25 the net additional financing costs (borrowing less investment interest) is expected to be £0.8m in excess of that budgeted.
  - The average daily investment balance including managed funds up to 30 November 2024 is £65.3m
  - The average annualized interest rate received on in-house investments up to 30 November 2024 is 5.06%
  - The average annualized interest rate received on the externally managed funds up to 30 November 2024 is 5.60%
- 6.28. The Authority's total average interest rate on all investments in 2024/25 is 5.17%. The return is below our own performance target of 5.60% (average Base Rate + 0.50%) due to the short term nature of most of our investments. However, we do compare favourably to the Sterling Over Night Interest Average (SONIA) rate.

	•
Comparator	Average Rate to 30/11/2024
Cheshire East	5.17%
SONIA	5.05%
Base Rate	5.10%

Table 3	– Interest	Rate	Com	parison
	111101031	nuic	00111	parison

Target Rate

6.29. As the Authority holds reserves and working capital, £20m of this has been placed in strategic investments in order to benefit from higher income returns whilst spreading risk across different asset classes.

5.60%

6.30. The investments are in five different funds which are all designed to give an annual income return higher than cash investments but which have different underlying levels of volatility. By spreading investments across different types of fund, the intention is to dampen any large fluctuations in the underlying value of the investments.

Fund Manager	Asset Class	Invested	Current Value
		£m	£m
CCLA	Property	7.5	7.2
Aegon	Multi Asset	5.0	4.7
Fidelity	Equity - Global	4.0	4.4
Schroders	Equity - UK	2.5	2.4
M & G	Bonds	1.0	0.9
TOTAL		20.0	19.6

#### Table 4 –Strategic Investments

6.31. The value of these investments does vary. Fund values had been affected by high inflation, the effects of the war in Ukraine and low levels of GDP. However, the 8 month period to September 2024 has shown a gradual improvement, particularly to the equity funds. All funds continue to deliver good levels of income return.



Chart 2 – Current Investments by Counterparty Type

#### Table 5 – Types of Investments and Current Interest Rates

Instant Access Accounts	Average Rate	£m
Money Market Funds Banks	4.79% 4.62%	10.0 0.1
Fixed Term Deposits		£m
Local Authorities	4.95%	20.0
Externally Managed Funds		£m
Total – see table 4	5.60%	20.0

Summary of Current Investments		£m
TOTAL	5.17%	50.1





6.32. Note: Bail-inable means that in the event of default the counterparty may be required to use part of the investments as their own capital in which case the Council would not get back as much as they invested. This would apply with most bank and Building Society investments.

# **Treasury Management Indicators**

- 6.33. The Authority measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.
- 6.34. **Interest Rate Exposures**: This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limit on the one-year revenue impact

Interest Rate Risk Indicator	Limit
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <b>rise</b> in interest rates	£2,270,000
Likely revenue impact in 2024/25 of a 1% <u>rise</u> in interest rates	£1,296,000

of a 1% rise in interest rates is:

- 6.35. The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investments will be replaced at current rates. The Council is expected to remain a net borrower in 2024/25 so a fall in rates would lead to savings rather than incurring additional cost so a limit of £0 was set. Rates are now more likely to reduce than increase so full revenue impact of changing rates is likely to be beneficial.
- 6.36. **Maturity Structure of Borrowing:** This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk. Lower limits have been set at 0%. The upper limits on the maturity structure of borrowing and the actual maturity profiles as at 30 September 2024 are:

Refinancing rate risk indicator	Upper Limit	Actual
Under 12 months	75%	68%
12 months and within 24 months	75%	1%
24 months and within 5 years	75%	6%
5 years and within 10 years	75%	12%
10 years and within 20 years	100%	5%
20 years and above	100%	8%

- 6.37. Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment. The upper limit for loans maturing in under 12 months is relatively high as short term has been considerably cheaper than alternatives and allows for LOBO loans which have the potential to be repaid early. This will be kept under review as it does increase the risk of higher financing costs in the future.
- 6.38. **Principal Sums Invested for Periods Longer than 364 days:** The purpose of this indicator is to control the Authority's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The limits on the total principal sum invested to final maturities beyond the period end will be:

Price Risk Indicator	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£25m	£15m	£10m
Actual amounts committed beyond year end	£0m	£0m	£0m

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# Annex B: Existing Investment & Debt Portfolio Position

	30/11/24	30/11/24
	Actual Portfolio	Average Rate
	£m	%
External Borrowing:		
PWLB – Fixed Rate	157	4.79%
Local Authorities	174	5.38%
LOBO Loans	17	4.63%
Other	4	4.92%
Total External Borrowing	352	5.03%
Other Long Term Liabilities:		
PFI	18	-
Total Gross External Debt	370	-
Investments:		
Managed in-house		
Short-term investments:		
Instant Access	10	4.78%
Fixed Term Deposits	20	4.95%
Managed externally		
Property Fund	7.5	5.06%
Multi Asset Fund	5	5.82%
Equity - Global	4	5.95%
Equity - UK	2.5	6.80%
Bonds	1	4.11%
Total Investments	50	5.17%
Net Debt	320	-

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# ANNEX 2



# Third Financial Review 2024/25 Capital Programme by Committee

# **Adults and Health Committee**

# Adults & Health

				CAPIT	AL PROGRA	MME 2024/2	25 - 2027/28						
				Forecast Ex	cpenditure					Forecast Fundi	ng		
Scheme Description	Total Approved Budget	Prior Years	Forecast Budget 2024/25	Forecast Budget 2025/26	Forecast Budget 2026/27	Forecast Budget 2027/28	Total Forecast Budget 2024/28	Grants	External Contributions	Revenue Contributions	Capital Receipts	Prudential Borrowing	Total Funding
Committed Schemes in progress	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Adults Services	110	04	222	0	0	0		000	0		0		
Community - Rural Shared Prosperity Fund	413	81	332 389	0	0	0	332	332	0	U 389	0	0	332 389
People Planner System	94	43	51	0	0	0	51	51	0	0	0	0	51
Replacement Care4CE Devices	93	65	28	0	0	0	28	28	0	0	0	0	28
Total Committed Schemes	989	189	800	0	0	0	800	411	0	389	0	0	800
Total Adults and Health Schemes	989	189	800	0	0	0	800	411	0	389	0	0	800

# **Children and Families Committee**

### Children and Families

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28													
				Forecast Ex	penditure				F	orecast Funding			
Scheme Description	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Forecast Budget 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024/28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	Total Funding £000
Committed Schemes in progress													
Childrens Social Care													
Foster Carers Capacity Scheme	534	434	51	50	0	0	101	0	0	0	0	101	101
**Crewe Youth Zone	4,826	395	2,025	2,406	0	0	4,431	3,584	0	0	0	847	4,431
Family Hubs Transformation	131	124	7	0	0	0	7	7	0	0	0	0	7
**Children's Home Sufficiency Scheme	1,404	204	700	500	0	0	1,200	0	0	0	0	1,200	1,200
Strong Start, Family Help & Integration													
Early Years Sufficiency Capital Fund	1,036	943	14	79	0	0	93	93	0	0	0	0	93
Childcare Capital Expansion	749	0	449	300	0	0	749	749	0	0	0	0	749
Education and 14-19 Skills													
Adelaide Academy	904	55	100	748	0	0	848	678	0	0	0	170	848
Basic Need Grant Allocation	7,569	10	5,117	2,442	0	0	7,559	7,559	0	0	0	0	7,559
Brine Leas High School	701	5	696	0	0	0	696	696	0	0	0	0	696
Cledford House	11	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Congleton Planning Area - Primary (1)	2,209	179	0	2,030	0	0	2,030	764	1,266	0	0	0	2,030
Congleton Planning Area - Primary (2)	628	574	55	0	0	0	55	55	0	0	0	0	55
Congleton Planning Area - Primary (3)	7,504	4	49	0	2,200	5,250	7,499	4,299	3,200	0	0	0	7,499
Devolved Formula Grant - Schools	1,533	0	893	330	310	0	1,533	1,533	0	0	0	0	1,533
Energy Efficiency Grant - Schools	672	391	280	0	0	0	280	280	0	0	0	0	280
Future Schemes - Feasibility Studies	250	25	225	0	0	0	225	225	0	0	0	0	225
Handforth Planning Area - New School	13,003	3	100	400	4,000	8,499	12,999	135	12,864	0	0	0	12,999
Little Angels Satellite Sites	29	21	8	0	0	0	8	8	0	0	0	0	8
Macclesfield Academy Resource Provision	103	3	100	0	0	0	100	100	0	0	0	0	100
Macclesfield Planning Area - Secondary	1,163	1,148	15	0	0	0	15	0	15	0	0	0	15
Macclesfield Planning Area - Secondary New	1,031	5	0	1,025	0	0	1,025	1,025	0	0	0	0	1,025
Macclesfield Planning Area - New School	4,001	1	0	0	0	4,000	4,000	0	4,000	0	0	0	4,000
Malbank High School	1,922	1,897	25	0	0	0	25	25	0	0	0	0	25
Mobberley Primary School	1,208	35	2	609	561	0	1,172	872	0	0	300	0	1,172

### Children and Families

				CAPITAL P	ROGRAMME	2024/25 - 202	7/28						
				Forecast Exp	enditure				Fe	orecast Funding			
Scheme Description	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Forecast Budget 2024/25	Forecast Budget 2025/26	Forecast Budget 2026/27	Forecast Budget 2027/28	Total Forecast Budget 2024/28	Grants	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions	Capital Receipts	Prudential Borrowing £000	Total Funding ະດາດາ
Committed Schemes in progress	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000		2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000
Nantwich Planning Area (Primary Schools - 210	9,061	733	500	7,328	500	0	8,328	5,308	3,020	0	0	0	8,328
Oakfield Lodge & Stables	50	12	38	0	0	0	38	38	0	0	0	0	38
Poynton Planning Area	1,500	13	100	1,387	0	0	1,487	684	803	0	0	0	1,487
Provision of Sufficient School Places - SEND	7,182	3,861	3,000	322	0	0	3,322	0	0	0	0	3,322	3,322
Puss Bank SEN Expansion	532	520	12	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	12	12
Provision of SEN Unit - Wistaston Primary School	1,506	169	1,337	0	0	0	1,337	1,037	0	0	0	300	1,337
Sandbach Primary Academy	1,583	106	1,477	0	0	0	1,477	1,477	0	0	0	0	1,477
Schools Condition Capital Grant	7,833	1,227	2,606	2,000	2,000	0	6,606	6,606	0	0	0	0	6,606
SEN/High Needs Capital Allocation	5,327	168	5,159	0	0	0	5,159	5,159	0	0	0	0	5,159
Shavington Planning Area - New Primary School	8,040	156	100	1,000	6,784	0	7,884	5,549	2,335	0	0	0	7,884
Shavington Planning Area - Secondary	3,506	2,883	623	0	0	0	623	623	0	0	0	0	623
Springfield Satellite Site (Dean Row)	6,112	5,934	178	0	0	0	178	0	0	0	0	178	178
The Dingle PS Expansion	1,395	1,135	260	0	0	0	260	260	0	0	0	0	260
Tytherington High School	2,500	172	100	2,228	0	0	2,328	2,328	0	0	0	0	2,328
Various SEN Sites - Small Works/Adaptations	150	0	150	0	0	0	150	150	0	0	0	0	150
Wheelock Primary School	2,411	201	1,000	1,210	0	0	2,210	1,750	460	0	0	0	2,210
Wilmslow High School BN	14,179	12,355	1,300	525	0	0	1,825	487	1,290	0	0	48	1,825
Wilmslow Primary Planning Area	626	1	625	0	0	0	625	125	500	0	0	0	625
Total Committed Schemes	126,615	36,114	29,476	26,919	16,355	17,749	90,499	54,268	29,753	0	300	6,178	90,499
New Schemes													
Education and 14-19 Skills													
New Satellite Special School - 1	6,000	0	500	5,500	0	0	6,000	6,000	0	0	0	0	6,000
New Satellite school - 2	9,000	0	50	950	5,000	3,000	9,000	9,000	0	0	0	0	9,000
New SEN places - 1	1,089	0	339	750	0	0	1,089	1,089	0	0	0	0	1,089
New SEN places - 2	25	0	25	0	0	0	25	25	0	0	0	0	25
New SEN places - 3	163	0	163	0	0	0	163	163	0	0	0	0	163
SEN New Free School	998	0	5	745	248	0	998	998	0	0	0	0	998
Workplace	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gainsborough Primary - Flooring	304	0	50	254	0	0	304	304	0	0	0	0	304
Total New Schemes	17,579	0	1,132	8,199	5,248	3,000	17,579	17,579	0	0	0	0	17,579
Total Children and Families Schemes	144,194	36,114	30,608	35,118	21,603	20,749	108,078	71,847	29,753	0	300	6,178	108,078

# **Corporate Policy Committee**

# Corporate

	CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28												
				Forecast Exp	enditure			F	Forecast Funding				
Scheme Description	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Forecast Budget 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	Total Funding £000
Committed Schemes in progress													
ICT Services													
Accelerate Digital	1,460	0	760	700	0	0	1,460	0	0	0	0	1,460	1,460
**Care Act Phase 2	6,314	4,599	635	1,080	0	0	1,715	0	0	0	0	1,715	1,715
Digital Customer Enablement	3,102	2,424	678	0	0	0	678	0	0	0	0	678	678
**ICT Device Replacement	1,912	683	729	500	0	0	1,229	0	0	0	0	1,229	1,229
ICT Hybrid Model	3,449	445	3,004	0	0	0	3,004	0	0	0	0	3,004	3,004
**IADM (Information Assurance and Data	19,465	16,421	1,644	1,400	0	0	3,044	0	0	0	0	3,044	3,044
Infrastructure Investment Programme (IIP)	34,429	31,065	730	1,804	830	0	3,364	0	0	0	0	3,364	3,364
Vendor Management	1,006	765	23	218	0	0	241	0	0	0	0	241	241
Finance & Customer Services													
**Core Financials	11,317	9,365	997	662	293	0	1,952	0	0	0	0	1,952	1,952
**Strategic Capital Projects	15,588	8,754	500	2,500	2,000	1,834	6,834	0	0	0	0	6,834	6,834
**Vendor Management - Phase 2	99	24	0	25	50	0	75	0	0	0	0	75	75
Total Committed Schemes	98,141	74,545	9,700	8,889	3,173	1,834	23,596	0	0	0	0	23,596	23,596
Total CorporatePolicy Schemes	98,141	74,545	9,700	8,889	3,173	1.834	23,596	0	0	0	0	23,596	23,596

# **Economy and Growth Committee**

# Economy & Growth

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28													
				Forecast Expe	enditure				F	orecast Funding			
Scheme Description	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Forecast Budget 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	Total Funding £000
Committed Schemes in progress													
Facilities Management													
Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund - FM 3	5,214	5,023	191	0	0	0	191	0	0	0	0	191	191
PSDS - 3B - Lot 1	1,028	77	827	124	0	0	951	827	0	0	0	123	951
PSDS - 3B - Lot 3 (schools)	4,390	3,267	1,123	0	0	0	1,123	1,056	0	0	0	67	1,123
**Septic Tanks	636	285	50	50	251	0	351	0	0	0	0	351	351
Schools Capital Maintenance	8,315	5,575	1,696	1,044	0	0	2,740	2,459	0	0	0	281	2,740
**Corporate Landlord - Operational	999	996	4	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	4	4
**Premises Capital (FM)	39,914	32,530	3,557	2,678	1,149	0	7,384	0	0	0	0	7,384	7,384
Poynton Pool Spillway	1,380	468	276	636	0	0	912	0	0	0	0	912	912
Housing													
Crewe Towns Fund - Warm and Healthy Homes	2,126	31	827	1,268	0	0	2,095	2,095	0	0	0	0	2,095
Disabled Facilities	22,025	10,181	3,580	2,664	2,800	2,800	11,844	10,807	109	0	0	928	11,844
Green Homes Grant	3,105	2,378	50	339	339	0	728	728	0	0	0	0	728
Gypsy and Traveller Sites	4,136	2,938	1,198	0	0	0	1,198	175	0	0	0	1,023	1,198
**Home Repairs Vulnerable People	1,338	870	66	402	0	0	468	0	32	0	0	436	468
Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2	4,409	740	2,000	1,669	0	0	3,669	3,666	3	0	0	0	3,669
Local Authority Housing Fund	742	293	140	309	0	0	449	449	0	0	0	0	449
Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund	1,565	1,557	8	0	0	0	8	8	0	0	0	0	8
Temporary Accommodation	1,479	1,069	410	0	0	0	410	0	164	0	0	246	410
Warm Homes Fund	239	213	26	0	0	0	26	26	0	0	0	0	26
Estatos													
Corporate Landlord - Non-Operational	1 226	0	0	1 226	0	0	1 336	_	0	0	0	1 226	1 226
Malking Book Londfill Site	1,330	0	110	1,330	0	0	1,330	0	0	0	0	1,330	1,330
	1,360	1 00	116	263	0	0	699	0	0	0	1 221	699	699
Fams Strategy	2,910	1,689	55	331	209	626	1,221	0	0	0	1,221	0	1,221

### Economy & Growth

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28													
				Forecast Expe	enditure				F	orecast Funding			
Scheme Description	Total Approved Budget	Prior Years	Forecast Budget 2024/25	Forecast Budget 2025/26	Forecast Budget 2026/27	Forecast Budget 2027/28	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28	Grants	External Contributions	Revenue Contributions	Capital Receipts	Prudential Borrowing	Total Funding
Committed Schemes in progress	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000
Economic Development													
Crewe Towns Fund - Repurposing Our High Streets	1,132	162	463	507	0	0	970	970	0	0	0	0	970
Crewe Towns Fund - Flag Lane Baths	1,968	583	1,385	0	0	0	1,385	32	0	0	0	1,353	1,385
Crewe Towns Fund - Mill Street Corridor	4,027	684	2,546	798	0	0	3,343	3,343	0	0	0	0	3,343
Crewe Towns Fund - Mirion St	1,190	164	1,026	0	0	0	1,026	1,026	0	0	0	0	1,026
Crewe Towns Fund - Crewe Youth Zone non-grant	351	125	63	163	0	0	226	226	0	0	0	0	226
History Centre Public Realm & ICV (Crewe Towns Fund) CTC1	580	10	200	370	0	0	570	570	0	0	0	0	570
Handforth Heat Network	13,219	17	663	50	450	12,039	13,202	2,587	7,428	0	0	3,187	13,202
**Demolition of Crewe Library & Concourse CTC10	3,396	859	2,538	0	0	0	2,538	1,015	0	0	0	1,523	2,538
Future High Street Funding - CEC Innovation Centre	3,973	530	3,443	0	0	0	3,443	3,443	0	0	0	0	3,443
Crewe Town Centre Regeneration	32,293	30,993	300	1,000	0	0	1,300	198	64	0	0	1,037	1,300
**South Macclesfield Development Area	34,630	3,259	100	100	0	31,171	31,371	10,000	10,000	0	11,371	0	31,371
North Cheshire Garden Village	57,866	7,026	5,261	6,588	17,285	21,706	50,840	20,165	0	0	21,700	8,975	50,840
Handforth Garden Village s106 Obligations	6,841	0	0	0	2,740	4,101	6,841	0	0	0	0	6,841	6,841
**Leighton Green	2,096	1,468	150	478	0	0	628	0	0	0	0	628	628
Connecting Cheshire Phase 3	8,000	128	800	2,000	2,200	2,872	7,872	0	7,872	0	0	0	7,872
Connecting Cheshire 2020	9,250	5,680	585	0	0	2,985	3,570	3,570	0	0	0	0	3,570
UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Core	950	202	748	0	0	0	748	748	0	0	0	0	748
Culture & Tourism													
Cattle Handling Facility - Oakwood Farm	367	367	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Countryside Vehicles	1,579	700	226	219	217	217	879	0	0	0	0	879	879
Culture & Tourism S106 Schemes	601	91	98	385	5	22	510	22	488	0	0	0	510
**New Archives Premises CTC1	10,256	442	3,141	6,433	240	0	9,814	0	0	0	0	9,814	9,814
PROW Capital Works	1,138	1,042	96	0	0	0	96	96	0	0	0	0	96
PROW CMM A6 MARR	100	69	2	29	0	0	31	31	0	0	0	0	31
PROW Flood Damage Investment	72	71	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Visitor Economy - Rural Shared Prosperity Fund	415	113	302	0	0	0	302	302	0	0	0	0	302
**Tatton Park Investment Phase 2	3,280	1,434	436	684	725	0	1,845	0	0	0	0	1,845	1,845
Total Committed Schemes	308,219	127,061	40,772	33,237	28,610	78,539	181,158	70,643	26,159	0	34.291	50.064	181.158

### Economy & Growth

				CAPITAL	PROGRAM	ME 2024/25 ·	2027/28						
				Forecast Expe	enditure				F	orecast Funding			
Scheme Description	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Forecast Budget 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	Total Funding £000
New Schemes													
Facilities Management													
PSDS - 3C	1,449	0	290	1,159	0	0	1,449	1,449	0	0	0	0	1,449
Estates													
WorkplaCE	1,000	0	1,000	0	0	0	1,000	1,000	0	0	0	0	1,000
Economic Development													
Macclesfield Indoor Market Refurbishment (MIMR)	1,712	40	1,673	0	0	0	1,673	1,673	0	0	0	0	1,673
Macc on Foot (MOF)	351	5	347	0	0	0	347	347	0	0	0	0	347
Nantwich Town Centre Public Realm Improvements	100	0	0	100	0	0	100	0	100	0	0	0	100
Culture & Tourism													
**Green Structures Investment	384	0	0	271	113	0	384	0	0	0	0	384	384
Total New Schemes	4,997	45	3,309	1,530	113	0	4,952	4,468	100	0	0	384	4,952
Total Growth & Enterprise	313 216	127 107	44 081	34 767	28 723	78 539	186 109	75 112	26 259	0	34 291	50 448	186 110

# **Environment and Communities Committee**

### **Environment & Communities**

			CAPI	TAL PROGR	AMME 2024/2	25 - 2027/28						
			Forecast Ex	penditure				F	orecast Funding			
Scheme Description	Prior Years £000	Forecast Budget 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants C £000	External ontributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	Total Funding £000
Committed Schemes in progress												
Environment Services												
Bereavement Service Data System	7	28	0	0	0	28	0	0	28	0	0	28
Booth Bed Lane, Goostrey	0	40	100	0	0	140	0	140	0	0	0	140
Bosley Village Play Area	0	10	10	0	0	20	0	20	0	0	0	20
Browns Lane Play Area 2024/25	0	12	0	0	0	12	0	12	0	0	0	12
**Carbon Offset Investment	137	131	300	0	0	431	0	0	0	0	431	431
Carnival Fields	0	0	42	0	0	42	0	42	0	0	0	42
Chelford Village Hall Open Space and Sport Improvements	119	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	2
Chelford Village Hall Phase 2	0	61	0	0	0	61	0	61	0	0	0	61
Cremator Flue Gas Modifications	0	30	0	0	0	30	0	0	0	0	30	30
Crewe Crematorium and Macclesfield Crematorium Major	14	16	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	0	16	16
Elworth Park	0	52	0	0	0	52	0	52	0	0	0	52
Energy Improvements at Cledford Lane	908	77	0	0	0	77	0	0	0	0	77	77
Fleet EV Transition	39	1,557	3,301	2,000	0	6,858	0	0	0	0	6,858	6,858
Fleet Vehicle Electric Charging	155	150	140	140	0	430	0	0	0	0	430	430
Future High Street Funding - Sustainable Energy Network	1,148	633	0	0	0	633	633	0	0	0	0	633
Green Investment Scheme (Solar Farm)	2,279	1,665	6	0	0	1,671	0	0	0	0	1,671	1,671
Grounds Maintenance Management ICT System	101	20	0	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	20	20
Household Bins Schemes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Household Waste Recycling Centres	48	222	590	0	0	812	0	0	0	0	812	812
Jim Evison Playing Fields	0	0	161	0	0	161	0	161	0	0	0	161
Litter and Recycling Bins	119	17	25	25	22	89	0	0	0	0	89	89
Longridge Open Space Improvement Project	0	66	0	0	0	66	0	66	0	0	0	66
Macclesfield Chapel Refurbishment	22	7	400	0	0	407	0	0	0	0	407	407
Main Road, Langley	0	259	0	0	0	259	0	259	0	0	0	259
Newtown Sports Facilities Improvements	81	18	0	0	0	18	0	18	0	0	0	18

### Environment & Communities

			CAPI	TAL PROGR	AMME 2024/2	25 - 2027/28						
			Forecast Ex	penditure				F	orecast Funding			
Scheme Description	Prior Years £000	Forecast Budget 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	Total Funding £000
**Park Development Fund	670	53	36	87	0	176	0	0	0	0	176	176
Park Lane, Poynton	0	39	0	0	0	39	0	39	0	0	0	39
Park Play, Meriton Road & Stanley Hall	0	10	0	0	0	10	0	10	0	0	0	10
Pastures Wood De-carbonisation	35	16	0	0	0	16	0	0	16	0	0	16
Pear Tree Play Area, Stapeley Improvements	1	6	0	0	0	6	0	6	0	0	0	6
Queens Park Bowling Green	0	17	0	0	0	17	0	17	0	0	0	17
Rotherhead Drive Open Space and Play Area	117	24	0	0	0	24	0	24	0	0	0	24
Shaw Heath Recreation Ground	3	19	0	0	0	19	0	19	0	0	0	19
**Solar Energy Generation	91	10	6,000	5,000	3,079	14,089	0	0	0	0	14,089	14,089
Stanley Hall Improvements	0	55	0	0	0	55	20	35	0	0	0	55
The Carrs Improvement Project	0	15	46	0	0	61	0	61	0	0	0	61
The Moor, Knutsford	0	36	0	0	0	36	0	17	0	0	19	36
Tytherington Public Art	0	10	0	0	0	10	0	10	0	0	0	10
Unsafe Cemetery Memorials	9	26	0	0	0	26	0	0	0	0	26	26
Victoria Park Amenity Improvements	9	11	0	0	0	11	0	11	0	0	0	11
Victoria Park Pitch Improvements	28	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
West Park Open Space & Sports Improvements	23	98	0	0	0	98	0	98	0	0	0	98
Wilmslow Town Council - Villas	0	81	0	0	0	81	34	13	0	0	34	81
Woodland South of Coppice Way, Handforth	68	5	16	0	0	21	0	21	0	0	0	21
Wynbunbury Parish Open Space	1	4	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	4
Wybunbury St Chad's Closed Cemetery	0	0	219	0	0	219	0	0	0	0	219	219
Neighbourhood Services												
Congleton Leisure Centre	12,963	38	0	0	0	38	0	20	0	0	18	38
Crewe Towns Fund - Valley Brook Green Corridor	327	1,372	1,640	0	0	3,012	3,012	0	0	0	0	3,012
Crewe Towns Fund - Cumberland Arena	128	2,140	825	0	0	2,965	2,965	0	0	0	0	2,965
Crewe Towns Fund - Pocket Parks	652	436	393	0	0	829	829	0	0	0	0	829
Middlewich Leisure Centre	51	9	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	9	9
Libraries - Next Generation - Self Service	336	38	0	0	0	38	0	0	0	0	38	38
Bollington Leisure	0	51	0	0	0	51	51	0	0	0	0	51
Planning & Regulatory Services												
Regulatory Systems & Environmental Health ICT System	279	34	0	0	0	34	0	0	0	0	34	34
Total Committed Schemes	20,968	9,727	14,250	7,252	3,101	34,330	7,544	1,237	44	0	25,505	34,330

### Environment & Communities

			CAPI	TAL PROGR	AMME 2024/2	5 - 2027/28						
			Forecast Ex	penditure				F	orecast Funding			
Scheme Description	Prior Years	Forecast Budget 2024/25	Forecast Budget 2025/26	Forecast Budget 2026/27	Forecast Budget 2027/28	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28	Grants Co	External ntributions	Revenue Contributions	Capital Receipts	Prudential Borrowing	Total Funding
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
New Schemes												
Environment Services												
Closed Cemeteries	0	50	102	0	0	152	0	0	0	0	152	152
LTA - Tennis Facility Improvements	1	124	0	0	0	124	99	0	0	0	25	124
Review of Household Waste Recycling Centres	2	100	900	0	0	1,000	0	0	0	0	1,000	1,000
Strategic Leisure Review	0	1,750	1,000	650	0	3,400	0	0	0	0	3,400	3,400
Weekly Food Waste Collections	0	80	2,132	500	0	2,712	2,712	0	0	0	0	2,712
Macclesfield Crematorium - hearth replacement	0	11	0	0	0	11	0	0	11	0	0	11
Total New Schemes	3	2,115	4,134	1,150	0	7,399	2,811	0	11	0	4,577	7,399
Total Environment and Communities Schemes	20,971	11,842	18,384	8,402	3,101	41,729	10,355	1,237	55	0	30,083	41,729

# **Highways and Transport Committee**

# Highways & Transport

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28													
				Forecast Ex	penditure				Fo	recast Funding			
Scheme Description	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Forecast Budget 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	Total Funding £000
Committed Schemes in progress													
Highways													
**A532 Safer Road Fund Scheme	1,223	677	546	0	0	0	546	447	0	0	0	99	546
A536 Safer Road Fund Scheme	2,404	1,925	479	0	0	0	479	385	0	0	0	94	479
**A537 Safer Road Fund Scheme	2,733	2,155	578	0	0	0	578	335	0	0	0	243	578
Air Quality Action Plan	523	421	102	0	0	0	102	87	0	0	0	15	102
Alderley Edge Bypass Scheme Implementation	60,611	60,359	25	227	0	0	252	0	0	0	0	252	252
Bridge Maintenance Minor Wks	12,463	10,037	2,427	0	0	0	2,427	1,406	602	0	0	418	2,427
Client Contract and Asset Mgmt	756	485	271	0	0	0	271	111	0	0	0	160	271
Footpath Maintenance - Slurry Sealing & Reconstruction Works	1,319	514	805	0	0	0	805	805	0	0	0	0	805
Highway Maintenance Minor Wks	67,964	53,616	14,348	0	0	0	14,348	9,994	0	0	0	4,353	14,348
Highway Pothole/Challenge Fund	11,669	8,098	3,571	0	0	0	3,571	3,316	0	0	0	255	3,571
Jack Mills Way Part 1 Claims	300	299	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Local Highway Measures	7,255	6,873	382	0	0	0	382	382	0	0	0	0	382
Ward Members Local Highway Measures	872	0	357	515	0	0	872	496	0	0	0	376	872
Programme Management	1,547	1,229	286	33	0	0	318	318	0	0	0	0	318
Road Safety Schemes Minor Wks	6,423	5,944	378	100	0	0	478	350	0	0	0	128	478
Traffic Signal Maintenance	1,095	516	318	260	0	0	578	577	0	0	0	1	578
Traffic Signs and Bollards - LED Replacement	1,250	1,011	239	0	0	0	239	0	0	0	0	239	239
**Winter Service Facility	958	674	97	97	89	0	284	0	0	0	0	284	284
Infrastructure													
**A500 Dualling scheme	89,456	11,031	50	1,950	0	76,425	78,425	74,125	4,300	0	0	0	78,425
A500 Corridor OBC Update	2,435	0	300	2,135	0	0	2,435	2,435	0	0	0	0	2,435
A50 / A54 Holmes Chapel	603	100	0	0	0	503	503	0	503	0	0	0	503
A54 / A533 Leadsmithy Street, Middlewich	563	176	0	0	0	387	387	0	387	0	0	0	387
**A6 MARR CMM Handforth	1,088	1,032	56	0	0	0	56	0	56	0	0	0	56
A6 MARR Technical Design	473	280	0	194	0	0	194	70	124	0	0	0	194
A556 Knutsford to Bowdon	504	367	50	87	0	0	137	0	137	0	0	0	137
Peacock Roundabout Junction	750	2	50	500	0	198	748	0	748	0	0	0	748
Congleton Link Road	83,991	72,263	574	1,254	1,279	8,621	11,728	316	11,412	0	0	0	11,728
Crewe Green Roundabout	7,500	7,057	0	443	0	0	443	0	443	0	0	0	443
**Flowerpot Phs 1 & Pinchpoint	10,037	1,509	100	588	336	7,504	8,528	3,284	726	0	0	4,518	8,528

# Highways & Transport

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28													
				Forecast Ex	penditure				Fo	precast Funding			
Scheme Description	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Forecast Budget 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	Total Funding £000
Committed Schemes in progress													
Future High Street Funding - Adaptive Signals Future High Street Funding - Flag Lane Link Future High Street Funding - Southern Gateway	509 1,558 5,118	455 1,249 1,318	54 0 3,800	0 309 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	54 309 3,800	0 309 3,800	54 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	54 309 3,800
Highways & Infrastructure S106 Funded Schemes	4,731	816	1,004	1,179	494	1,238	3,915	497	3,417	0	0	0	3,915
Transport & Infrastructure Development Studies Middlewich Eastern Bypass	350 96,600	10 26,237	50 1,031	290 22,140	0 22,876	0 24,316	340 70,363	340 46,779	0 14,611	0 0	0 0	0 8,973	340 70,363
Mill Street Corridor - Station Link Project North-West Crewe Package	1,534 51,366	92 43.108	900 7.058	542 300	0 300	0 600	1,442 8.258	858 0	284 8.258	0	0	300 0	1,442 8.258
Old Mill Road / The Hill Junction	1,325 54 849	187 46 283	0 2 623	1,137 1,096	0 1 146	0 3 700	1,137 8,566	0 2 236	1,137	0	0 1.000	0 2 191	1,137 8,566
Sydney Road Bridge	10,501	10,111	25	200	165	0	390	0	390	0	0	0	390
A538 Waters Roundahout Pedestrian and Cyclist Crossing	140	87	53	0	0	0	53	53	0	0	0	0	53
Active Travel Fund	2,861	729	951	1,181	0	0	2,132	2,132	0	0	0	0	2,132
Active Travel (Cycling / Walking Route) Investment	3,329	2,765	564	0	0	0	564	499	0	0	0	65	564
Available Walking Routes	151	0	151	0	0	0	151	151	0	0	0	0	151
Bollin Valley / Greater Bollin Trail	100	89	11	0	0	0	11	11	0	0	0	0	11
LEVI Capital Fund 23/24	2,172	0	0	543	543	1,086	2,172	2,172	0	0	0	0	2,172
On-street Residential Charging	551	258	293	0	0	0	293	251	0	0	0	42	293
Park Lane – Ayreshire Way, Congleton Walking and Cycling	250	14	236	0	0	0	236	236	0	0	0	0	236
Route 55 Middlewood Way on Black Lane	700	694	6	0	0	0	6	6	0	0	0	0	6
Sustainable Travel Access Prog	2,438	2,038	200	200	0	0	400	400	0	0	0	0	400
Sustainable Modes of Travel to Schools Strategy (SMOTSS)	1,117	756	361	0	0	0	361	361	0	0	0	0	361
Public Transport Infrastructure	1,815	1,134	681	0	0	0	681	681	0	0	0	0	681
Local Access - Crewe Transport Access Studies	400	88	100	212	0	0	311	311	0	0	0	0	311
Local Access - Macclesfield Transport Access Studies	300	61	100	139	0	0	239	239	0	0	0	0	239
Middlewich Rail Study	20	0	20	0	0	0	20	20	0	0	0	0	20
LTP Development & Monitoring Studies	900	430	50	200	221	0	471	471	0	0	0	0	471
Digital Car Parking Solutions	140	93	19	27	0	0	47	0	0	0	0	47	47
Pay and Display Parking Meters	620	607	13	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	13	13
Car Parking improvements (including residents parking)	322	266	0	56	0	0	56	0	0	0	0	56	56
Total Committed Schemes	625,533	388,628	46,744	38,134	27,448	124,578	236,904	162,053	50,728	0	1,000	23,123	236,904

# Highways & Transport

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28														
				Forecast Ex	penditure									
Scheme Description	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Forecast Budget 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	Total Funding £000	
New Schemes														
Highways														
**Managing and Maintaining Highways	4,712	0	0	4,712	0	0	4,712	0	0	0	0	4,712	4,712	
Pothole Funding	17,397	0	0	5,799	5,799	5,799	17,397	17,397	0	0	0	0	17,397	
ntegrated Block - LTP	6,009	0	0	2,003	2,003	2,003	6,009	6,009	0	0	0	0	6,009	
*Maintenance Block - LTP	19,476	0	0	7,878	5,799	5,799	19,476	17,397	0	0	0	2,079	19,476	
ncentive Fund - LTP	4,350	0	0	1,450	1,450	1,450	4,350	4,350	0	0	0	0	4,350	
Strategic Transport and Parking		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	C	
Car Parking Review	895	0	895	0	0	0	895	0	0	0	0	895	895	
Total New Schemes	52,839	0	895	21,842	15,051	15,051	52,839	45,153	0	0	0	7,686	52,839	
Fotal Highways & Transport	678,372	388,628	47,639	59,976	42,499	139,629	289,743	207,206	50,728	0	1,000	30,809	289,743	

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OPEN

**Highways and Transport Committee** 

Thursday, 23 January 2025

Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2025/26 - 2028/29 Provisional Settlement Update (Highways & Transport Committee)

Report of: Adele Taylor, Interim Executive Director of Resources (s151 Officer)

Report Reference No: HTC/24/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: All Wards

### For Decision or Scrutiny: Both

### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 The Highways and Transport Committee is being asked to provide feedback, as consultees, on the development of the Cheshire East Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 to 2028/29. Feedback is requested in relation to the responsibilities of the Committee.
- 2 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out how the Council will resource the achievement of the Council Plan and the budget change proposals within that report are subject to consultation and approval on an annual basis.
- 3 Developing the MTFS requires a wide range of stakeholder engagement. Members are key stakeholders in their capacity as community leaders and also have specific responsibilities as decision makers in setting the Council's budget.
- 4 All feedback will be collated and provided as evidence to the Corporate Policy Committee on 6 February 2025.

- 5 Final approval of the 2025/26 budget will take place at full Council on 26 February 2025 following recommendation from the Corporate Policy Committee.
- 6 This report is being considered in full by all Service Committees. However, please note that Appendix C Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement and Appendix D Council Tax Benchmarking and scenarios are to be scrutinised by the Finance Sub Committee but are being included as overall context for all other committees.

### **Executive Summary**

- 7 Financial and corporate strategies underpin how Cheshire East Council will allocate resources, achieve the Cheshire East Plan and provide in the region of 500 local services every day. The strategies must be affordable, based on robust estimates and balanced against adequate reserves.
- 8 Committees are responsible for overseeing the achievement of the Council's priorities contained within the Plan. Resources for the 2024/25 financial year, including Revenue, Capital and Reserves were allocated by the Finance Sub-Committee in March 2024, following the budget Council that approved the overall budget in February 2024. All resources are allocated to a specific Service Committee or the Finance Sub-Committee.
- 9 The November 2024 Corporate Policy Committee received a report on the overall medium term financial position and list of proposed budget changes at that time, but they did not go far enough to balance the budget for 2025/26. At that time the reported budget gap for 2025/26 was £31.4m.
- 10 The Corporate Policy Committee also noted the approach to budget consultation and engagement. The majority of proposals do not require formal consultation as they are achievable within existing policies or do not require any statutory consultation. However, it is good practice to give all stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposals and draft budget, to help generate additional ideas and provide Members with insights into the potential wider impacts of their decisions.
- 11 Stakeholders, businesses and residents are invited to give feedback on the overall approach to budget setting including the principles, from 19 December 2024 to 19 January 2025. Feedback will be provided to this committee verbally as the consultation will still be running and live, and to the other service committees during January. There will also be an opportunity during the January cycle of committee meetings to give formal feedback, from each committee, to the Corporate Policy Committee, ahead of the full Budget Council meeting in February 2025.

- 12 Since November there have been various funding announcements that have improved the reported position including the better than anticipated funding for the Extended Producer Responsibility of £7m for 2025/26. There has also been a favourable early forecast for the new pension scheme triannual valuation period which will be announced in March 2025 and comes into effect in April 2026. This will have the effect of reducing pension contributions from 2026/27 when compared to the previous MTFS in February 2024. There are however other announcements and impacts that are not favourable and these have also been built into the model.
- 13 The Provisional Local Government Settlement was received on 18 December 2024. This resulted in an improvement to the funding envelope when compared to the November position by £4.5m. This includes the Employers National Insurance grant (£3.0m estimate) that sits outside of the specific confirmed funding announcements at this time. The actual grant allocation will be announced as part of the Final Local Government Settlement in February 2025 and at that time it will then be included in the Core Spending Power total. It should be noted that the grant is only anticipated to cover around 80% of the estimated additional direct costs (c.£3.7m).
- 14 Appendix C sets out the Core Spending Power funding announcements and comparison to the net funding envelope as reported to the Corporate Policy Committee in November 2024.
- 15 The latest funding position and other movements identified above, has the result of improving the forecast gap for 2025/26 by £6.1m and is now £25.3m as per the table below.

Table 1: Summary position for 2025/26 to 2028/29	Revised Budget 2024/25 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2025/26 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2026/27 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2027/28 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2028/29 £m
Childrens	89.0	98.5	103.6	109.3	115.7
Adults	137.5	158.9	157.8	159.3	160.8
Place	92.5	91.4	95.5	97.0	104.1
Corporate	41.5	42.6	47.0	48.8	50.3
Council Wide Transformation savings		-13.5	-34.2	-45.2	-45.2
Total Service Budgets	360.5	377.9	369.7	369.2	385.7
CENTRAL BUDGETS:					
Capital Financing	28.5	38.2	41.9	45.3	46.8
Income from Capital Receipts	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0
Contingency Budget	0.0	9.3	20.6	26.7	33.1
Risk Budget	0.0	0.0	3.5	1.9	0.7
Pension adjustment	0.0	-0.7	-0.7	-0.7	-0.7
Use of (-) / Top up (+) Reserves	-12.2	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Total Central Budgets	15.2	50.7	69.2	77.1	83.8
TOTAL: SERVICE + CENTRAL BUDGETS	375.7	428.6	438.9	446.4	469.6
FUNDED BY:					
Council Tax	-287.1	-307.3	-325.6	-345.0	-365.5
Business Rate Retention Scheme	-56.6	-57.1	-57.1	-57.1	-57.1
Revenue Support Grant	-0.4	-0.8	-0.8	-0.8	-0.8
Specific Unring-fenced Grants	-31.6	-38.0	-34.1	-34.1	-34.1
TOTAL: FUNDED BY	-375.7	-403.2	-417.7	-437.1	-457.6
Funding Position (+shortfall)	0.0	25.3	21.3	9.3	12.0

- 16 An urgent report was received by full Council on 11 December 2024, which was necessitated following a request from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) received on 4 December 2024 to submit a formal request and supporting evidence for any Exceptional Finance Support (EFS) for future years by Friday 13 December 2024. At the same time, any revisions to previous in-principle decisions also needed to be submitted for the current year.
- 17 The revised gap for 2025/26 of £25.3m contained in the table above now revises down the Exceptional Financial Support required for 2025/26 by £6.1m. The paper also gave delegated permission to the S151 officer to liaise with MHCLG on any changes following the finance settlement which she will continue to do to advise them of the changes.
- 18 As well as being in the form of a capitalisation directive, Exceptional Financial Support could also take the form of increased Council Tax above the current referendum limit of 4.99%. There is no current policy in place in this regard.
- 19 However, as part of the recent Policy Statement from central government, it was announced that, where a council is in need of exceptional financial support and views additional council tax increases as critical to maintaining their financial sustainability, the government will continue to consider requests for bespoke referendum principles. Local proposals will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In considering any requests, the government will take account of councils' specific

circumstances, for example their existing levels of council tax relative to the average, the potential impact on local taxpayers, and the strength of plans to protect vulnerable people.

- 20 Appendix D sets out some benchmarking data on the level of Council Tax and Core Spending Power at Cheshire East compared to the average of our statistical nearest neighbouring authorities. The appendix also highlights the amount of Council tax foregone as a result of accepting the Council Tax freeze grant during the period 2011/12 to 2015/16. This committee should consider the information and scenarios provided and the impacts a request could have on the overall financial sustainability of the council.
- 21 The full list of draft budget changes and a short explanation of each item is included at Appendix A.
- 22 Appendix B details the proposed list of new Capital Growth Items summarised in the table below:

Capital Growth Requests	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Adults	-	-	-	-	-
Children & Families	-	-	-	-	-
Corporate	5,356	3,505	3,554	200	12,615
Economy & Growth	1,758	3,451	3,916	6,899	16,024
Environment & Neighbourhood	7,402	250	250	-	7,902
Highways & Transport	8,130	12,422	12,883	11,501	44,936
	22,646	19,628	20,603	18,600	81,477
Funded by					
Government Grants	8,918	800	800	800	11,318
External Contributions	1,042				1,042
Revenue Contributions	6,110				6,110
Capital Receipts			60		60
Prudential Borrowing	6,576	18,828	19,743	17,800	62,947
	22,646	19,628	20,603	18,600	81,477

23 The revenue implications of the capital growth and funding EFS from borrowing can be seen in the table below:

Capital Financing Budget (CFB) Position	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
CFB requirement for Current programme	32,148	35,958	37,065	37,855	37,612
Additional requirement for Capital growth requests	-	545	1,578	3,457	5,527

fund current gap	-	1,700	3,277	3,990	3,704
	32,148	38,203	41,921	45,302	46,844

Note: Additional requirement for EFS to fund current gap: This is based on a capital repayment profile of 20 years and is subject to any further guidance and also consideration of the strategic approach to balancing the 2025/26 budget and MTFS 2025/26-2028/29.

### RECOMMENDATIONS The Highways and Transport Committee is being asked to: a) Recommend to the Corporate Policy Committee, for their meeting on 6 February 2025, all proposals within Appendix A, as related to the Committee's responsibilities, for inclusion on the Council's budget for 2025/26. b) Identify any further budget change proposals, as related to the Committee's responsibilities, that could assist Corporate Policy Committee in presenting an overall balanced budget to Council for 2025/26. Note the capital growth items listed in Appendix B and the revenue implications c) noted in paragraph 23. These will be reviewed by the Capital Review Programme Board in January before a final list is brought to Corporate Policy committee in February. Note the contents of Appendix C – Provisional Local Government Settlement d) 2025/26 (Finance Sub Committee).

e) Note the contents of Appendix D – Council Tax benchmarking and scenarios (Finance Sub Committee) and consider what the impact of any requests for a change of Council Tax policy would be

### Background

- 24 The Council's financial resources are provided from a combination of local taxes, government grants, investment returns on asset and other direct contributions from individuals or organisations. Financial plans are based on estimated spending and income over the next four years and the report of the Chief Finance Officer brings Members' attention to the processes and risks associated with developing these estimates.
- 25 The Council aims to achieve value for money based on Economy (how much we pay for things), Efficiency (how well we use things) and Effectiveness (how we use things to achieve outcomes). Public feedback and internal and external scrutiny create the necessary framework to hold the Council to account for achieving these aims.
- 26 All councils are legally required to set a balanced budget each year and therefore the immediate focus will be on balancing the 2025/26 financial year rather than on the whole medium term. This reflects the extremely challenging circumstances all councils are currently facing.
- 27 The Council's general budget pressures are associated with a number of factors, including, but not limited to:
  - (a) Demand-led pressures, including those for statutory adult and child social care services for those most in need of our support, continuing to rise beyond the rate of funding increases;
  - (b) The ongoing impact of inflation and interest rates on all aspects of our budget, including revenue spend, borrowing costs and cost of capital schemes, as well as the revenue costs of our deficit on the Dedicated Schools Grant from the impact of increased SEND costs;
  - (c) Revisions to funding mechanisms;
  - (d) The need to invest in improvements within Children's Services.
- 28 Strategic Finance Management Board introduced weekly meetings, chaired by the S151 Officer and has led on a number of key tasks to urgently reduce spend and identify additional savings, including:
  - (a) Line-by-line reviews of all budgets to further identify immediately any underspends and/or additional funding;
  - (b) Stop any non-essential spend;
  - (c) Actively manage vacancies, particularly agency usage and reduce any overspends on staffing as soon as possible;
  - (d) Review of Section 106 legacy budgets, the effects of which are partly reflected in the FR3 forecast outturn as a one-off contribution to reserves;
  - (e) Review of capital receipts available and potential surplus assets that can be sold (for best consideration);
  - (f) Identification of any other areas of discretionary spend including grants awarded, where spend can be reduced or stopped;
  - (g) Review Debt management/overall level of bad debt provision work undertaken to date, focussing on the Adult Social Care bad debt provision, has identified through adopting a new approach to reviewing and monitoring these debts, an improvement (reduction) of the Council's bad debt provision of £1.07m, further work is ongoing and will be updated at Outturn.

- (h) Any directorate that is identified as being off target by more than 5% is subject to a detailed finance and performance review on a weekly basis through a financial recovery review process. This process has been put in place for Adults Services and Children and Families and is being chaired by the S151 Officer.
- 29 Capital Programme Review was implemented to also try to reduce revenue costs:
  - (a) Reduce, delay or remove schemes funded by borrowing;
  - (b) Focus on existing contractual commitments, fulfilling statutory services and public safety requirements;
  - (c) Prioritise the capital projects that will have most beneficial impact on the revenue budget in the medium term;
  - (d) Remove forward funding;
  - (e) Reprioritise use of grants and apply appropriate S106 contributions to schemes.
- 30 Whilst the review has reduced and removed some borrowing from the total programme the new growth asks far outweigh any savings.
- 31 In order for the Council to maintain a more sustainable capital financing budget there must be a reduction in the overall level of borrowing to fund capital programmes. The future aim must be to add less to the total borrowing load in a year than we are paying off in that year so that the total revenue burden from the cost of borrowing starts to fall. If we do not, it will continue to rise.
- 32 At present the cost of borrowing £5 million pounds for 15 years to fund a capital project in 2025/26 will lead to an approximate revenue cost of £475,000 in 2026/27 onwards. This revenue cost is made up of both the interest cost of the borrowing as well as the Minimum Revenue Provision that needs to be made annually to pay back a proportion of the principle amount borrowed.
- 33 A Capital Programme Review Board made up of senior officers is being established in January 2025 and will review the business cases for the capital growth requests that are listed in Appendix B. It is intended that this Board will function in the following ways:
  - (a) To be a gatekeeper of new proposals consider how the request supports overall council objectives, seek assurance on business cases, assess the impact of long-term financial burden for borrowing,

before recommendations are made to CLT then on to Members for approval to be added to the Programme;

- (b) To set clear guidance on strategic priorities for the capital programme and how programmes are to be funded with a view to restricting borrowing except for schemes that meet certain criteria;
- (c) To monitor progress on delivery at a high level, including issues of delays and funding variances; to support delivery by managers but also routine in-year and also 'by exception' issue reporting to Members;
- (d) To consider rolling programmes and future financing options, including reviewing revenue vs capital options to reduce impacts of future borrowing decisions.
- 34 Capital Receipts Forecast

Forecast – Prudent View	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28+
	£m	£m	£m
Forecast (Prudent view)	9.07	10.94	12.75
Already included in MTFS /	(2.25)	(2.75)	(5.0)
Capital Programme			
Additional Receipts Forecast	6.82	8.19	7.75

- 35 The table above sets out the latest prudent forecast for future year capital receipts based on the disposal programme. It allows for some slippage /timing differences around actual receipts and adjustments for receipts already included in the currently approved MTFS 2024/25 either within the capital programme or as part of the Capital Financing Budget. As part of the strategic approach to balancing the 2025/26 budget and MTFS for 2025/26-2028/29, consideration will be given to the available capital receipts and their utilisation to support:
  - Investment of transformational activities (e.g. revenue growth)
  - Funding Exceptional Financial Support costs instead of additional borrowing
  - Invest to save capital projects (E.g. Transformation)
- 36 An urgent report was received by full Council on 11 December 2024, which was necessitated following a request from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) received on 4 December 2024 to submit a formal request and supporting evidence for any Exceptional Finance Support (EFS) for future years by Friday 13

December 2024. At the same time, any revisions to previous in-principle decisions also need to be submitted, for the current year.

- 37 It was agreed at that meeting that the Chief Executive could finalise and submit a request for exceptional financial support in the form of an inprinciple capitalisation direction for 2024/25 for up to £17.6m.
- 38 It was also agreed that the Chief Executive could finalise and submit a request for exceptional financial support in the form of an in-principle capitalisation direction of up to £31.4m for 2025/26 and indications of a potential request of up to £23.7m for 2026/27.
- 39 Approval was also given to delegate to the Interim Executive Director of Resources (S151 Officer) the ability to update those requests once further financial information from the local government finance settlement was received. This will be in consultation with the Chief Executive and will be reported at the earliest opportunity to the relevant committee(s).
- 40 The Provisional Local Government Settlement was received on 18 December 2024. This resulted in a betterment of the funding envelope when compared to the November position by £4.5m. Appendix C sets out the Core Spending Power funding announcements and comparison to the net funding envelope as reported to the Corporate Policy Committee in November 2024.
- 41 The budget is currently based on the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2025/26. The final settlement is expected in early February 2025 with a debate by Members of Parliament in the House of Commons expected in mid-February (after the publication date of this report to Committee) to agree the final position.
- 42 The provisional settlement set out the Core Spending Power for the authority, based on the assumption that council tax is forecast to be increased in line with the maximum allowable before a referendum would have to be held (4.99%). Some of the grants included in the Core Spending Power calculation are ringfenced for use within the relevant service.
- 43 The latest funding position has the result of improving the forecast gap for 2025/26 by £6.1m and is now £25.3m as per Table 1 in the Executive Summary. The Exceptional Financial Support now required for 2025/26 could be up to £25.3m to balance the budget for 2025/26.
- 44 As well as being in the form of a capitalisation directive, Exceptional Financial Support could also take the form of increased Council Tax above current referendum limit of 4.99%. There is no current policy in place in this regard, however, the recent Policy Statement from central

government noted that it would once again be considering any requests for increases above the standard referendum limit.

- 45 Appendix D sets out some benchmarking data on the level of Council Tax and Core Spending Power at Cheshire East compared to the average of our statistical nearest neighbouring authorities.
  - Cheshire East council tax compared to (average of) nearest neighbours – Average band D of all nearest neighbours (NNs): £1,827.30 (CEC is 1.94% lower than the average).
  - Cheshire East core spending power compared to (average of) nearest neighbours – Average CSP per dwelling of all NNs: £2,202.36 (CEC is 5.77% lower than the average).
  - Council Tax income in 2024/25 if using Cheshire West and Chester Band D rate and CEC taxbase: Would equate to an extra £14.7m in 2024/25.
- 46 The appendix also highlights the amount of Council tax foregone as a result of accepting the Council Tax freeze grant during the period 2011/12 to 2015/16.
- 47 Appendix D also shows the amounts of extra Council Tax that could be raised by increases above 4.99% under a number of scenarios.
- 48 Further balancing options:
  - Use of available Capital Receipts consideration will be given to the available capital receipts and their utilisation to support either Transformational activities (revenue or capital) and/or to fund the costs of Exceptional Financial Support.
  - Following a Balance Sheet Review by our Treasury Advisors, Arlingclose Ltd, we are reviewing our current Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) policy with a view to bringing it in closer alignment with CIPFA Guidance. Such changes are likely to have a positive impact on our Revenue position during the period of the MTFS and if changes are proposed then these will be reported to the Corporate Policy Committee in February 2025 and the effects of the change on future years will be included within the MTFS.
  - Further identification of savings or generation of income to further reduce the forecast requirement for use of EFS in 2025/26 and 2026/27.

- 49 The full list of draft budget changes and a short explanation of each item is included at Appendix A.
- 50 The list of draft additional Capital Programme changes including a short explanation of each item is included at Appendix B.

## **Consultation and Engagement**

- 51 This report forms part of the consultation and engagement process for Members on the budget setting for 2025/26. Each committee will receive the same report and will focus on items within their own area of responsibilities.
- 52 The Corporate Policy Committee in November 2024 noted the approach to budget consultation and engagement. Stakeholders, businesses and residents were invited to give feedback on the overall approach to budget setting including the principles, from 19 December 2024 to 19 January 2025. Feedback will be provided to this committee verbally and to the service committees during January. There will also be an opportunity during the January cycle of committee meetings to give formal feedback, from each committee, to the Corporate Policy Committee, ahead of the full Budget Council meeting in February 2025.
- 53 All feedback from each committee will be presented to the Corporate Policy Committee on 6 February. That committee will then make recommendations on spending and income estimates for 2025/26 to the full Council meeting on 26 February 2025.
- 54 This report and other committee meeting debates will form part of a series of engagement events with wider stakeholders to gather opinion and collate feedback on the final budget for 2025/26.
- 55 Any changes made as a result of the engagement process and further debate will be reported to Members at the Council meeting on 26 February 2025.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 56 In accordance with the Constitution, Committees play an important role in planning, monitoring and reporting on the Council's finances. Each Committee has specific financial responsibilities.
- 57 The Council's annual budget must be balanced. The proposals within it must be robust and the strategy should be supported by adequate reserves. The assessment of these criteria is supported by each Committee having the opportunity to help develop the budget and financial proposals before they are approved by Full Council.

# **Other Options Considered**

- 58 The Council has a legal duty to set a balanced annual budget taking regard of the report from the Chief Finance Officer. As such options cannot be considered that would breach this duty. Any feedback from the Committee must still recognise the requirement for Council to fulfil this duty.
- 59 There is no option to "do nothing". The Council has statutory obligations to provide certain services, which would be unaffordable if the Council failed to levy an appropriate Council Tax and also consider the allocation of our resources.

## **Implications and Comments**

#### Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 60 The Council must set the budget in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and approval of a balanced budget each year is a statutory responsibility. Sections 25 to 29 of the Local Government Act 2003 impose duties on the Council in relation to how it sets and monitors its budget and require the Council to make prudent allowance for the risk and uncertainties in its budget and regularly monitor its finances during the year. The legislation leaves discretion to the Council about the allowances to be made and action to be taken.
- 61 The provisions of section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, require that, when the Council is making the calculation of its budget requirement, it must have regard to the report of the chief finance (s.151) officer as to the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.
- 62 The Council should therefore have robust processes in place so that it can meet statutory requirements and fulfil its fiduciary duty. It must ensure that all available resources are directed towards the delivery of statutory functions, savings and efficiency plans. Local authorities are creatures of statute and are regulated through the legislative regime and whilst they have in more recent times been given a general power of competence, this must operate within that regime. Within the statutory framework there are specific obligations placed upon a local authority to support communities. These duties encompass general and specific duties and there is often significant local discretion in respect of how those services or duties are discharged. These will need to be assessed and advised on as each circumstance is considered.
- 63 The financial position of the Council must therefore be closely monitored, and Members must satisfy themselves that sufficient mechanisms are in place to ensure both that savings are delivered, and that new expenditure

is contained within the available resources. Accordingly, any proposals put forward must identify the realistic measures and mechanisms to produce those savings or alternative mitigations.

64 This report provides an update towards the setting of the budget for 2025/26 and clarifies the proposals going forward. It would be appropriate to consult on the proposals beyond the statutory consultation requirements, if possible, as this may help to facilitate early implementation of proposals once the budget is set.

#### Section 151 Officer/Finance

65 The current financial position and draft budget changes contained within this report provide up-to-date information on the Council's MTFS progress for the period 2025/26 to 2028/29, specifically aimed to setting the budget for 2025/26 which legally has to be completed by March 2025. Further details are contained within the body of this report.

## Policy

66 The Cheshire East Plan 2021-25, refreshed for 2024/25 approved in July 2024, has driven and informed Council policy and priorities for service delivery. A new Cheshire East Plan 2025-29 is now being developed in parallel to the budget as the MTFS is essentially the resource plan for its delivery. The draft Cheshire East Plan will follow the same timeline as the MTFS and be taken to Corporate Policy Committee and full Council in February 2025. The Plan will set out the vision and priorities for Cheshire East, building on the existing transformation and improvement plans in the short-term and setting out the longer-term ambitions for residents, businesses and visitors.

#### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 67 Under the Equality Act 2010, decision makers must show "due regard" to the need to:
  - (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;

(b) Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it; and

- (c) Foster good relations between those groups.
- 68 The protected characteristics are age, disability, sex, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership.

- 69 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.
- 70 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 Council Plan and the MTFS. 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.
- 71 The proposals within the MTFS may include positive and negative impacts for individuals, groups and communities. A separate Equality Impact Assessment for the budget as a whole is routinely included in the full MTFS report each year.
- 72 The Cheshire East 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.

#### Human Resources

73 Consultation on the budget change proposals will include staff. Any changes involving staff will be managed in consultation with staff and Trade Unions.

#### Risk Management

- 74 Cheshire East recognises that in pursuit of its objectives and outcomes, it may choose to accept an increased degree of risk. Where the Council chooses to accept an increased level of risk it will do so, subject always to ensuring that the potential benefits and threats are fully understood before developments are authorised, that it has sufficient risk capacity and that sensible measures to mitigate risk are established.
- 75 The Council needs to reestablish a level of reserves that are adequate to protect the Council against financial risks, such as emergencies, which are not specifically budgeted for in individual years.
- 76 The Council will continue to be flexible about investing revenue funding in maintaining sustainable services and reflecting changes to the risks facing the Council. The full Budget Report will include a revised Reserves Strategy for 2025/26 to provide further detail on estimated balances and the application and top up of reserves in the medium term.

### **Rural Communities**

77 The budget report, as approved at Council on 27 February 2024, provides details of current service provision across the borough. Appendix A sets out any future impacts for 2025/26 and beyond.

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

78 The budget report, as approved at Council on 27 February 2024, provides details of current service provision across the borough. Appendix A sets out any future impacts for 2025/26 and beyond.

## Public Health

79 Public health implications that arise from activities that the budget report deals with will be dealt with as separate reports to Members or Officer Decision Records as required.

#### Climate Change

80 Any climate change implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that the budget 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:	Adele Taylor						
	Interim Executive Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer)						
	adele.taylor@cheshireeast.gov.uk						
Appendices:	Appendix A – Draft Revenue Budget Change Proposals						
	Appendix B – Draft Capital Programme Proposals						
	Appendix C – Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement						
	Appendix D – Council Tax Benchmarking and scenarios						

Background Papers:	The following are links to key background documents:
	Cheshire East Plan 2024/25
	Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024-28
	Corporate Policy Committee 21 August 2024 -

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#### Appendix A – Draft Revenue Budget Change Proposals

#### **Children and Families**

#### Responsibilities of the Committee: Membership: 13 Councillors

- 1.1. The Children and Families Committee will be responsible for those services which help keep children and young people safe and enable them to achieve their full potential. The responsibility incorporates matters in relation to schools and attainment, early help and family support and social care for children and families. The Committee will oversee the work of the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee (formerly the Corporate Parenting Committee), which focuses on those children who are cared for by the local authority and for whom the Council has corporate parenting responsibility.
- 1.2. The Committee's responsibilities include:
  - Determining policies and making decisions in relation to the delivery of services to children and young people in relation to their care, well-being, education and health;
  - Discharging the Council's functions in relation to children in need and child protection including safeguarding and youth justice;
  - Discharging the Council's functions and powers in relation to the provision of education and Schools Forum;
  - Support to and maintenance of relationships with schools in relation to raising standards of attainment;
  - The Council's role as Corporate Parent;
  - Discharging the Council's functions in relation to Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND);
  - Discharging the Council's functions in relation to early help and family support;
  - Provision and commissioning of domestic violence support services and quality assurance.
- 1.3. Oversight, scrutiny, reviewing outcomes, performance, budget monitoring and risk management of the Directorates of Prevention and Support, Education and 14-19 Skills and Children's Social Care including: Children's mental health, Prevention and early help, Children's transport, , Children Service Development and Children's Partnerships, Commissioning of support for children, Cared for Children and Care Leavers, Child in Need and Child Protection, Children with Disabilities and Fostering, Children's Safeguarding, Education Infrastructure and Outcomes, Education Participation and Pupil Support, Inclusion and SEND.

(Extract from Cheshire East Council Constitution - Dec 2024)

#### Overview

- 1.4. The Children and Families Directorate is responsible for delivering the council's statutory duties and responsibilities in respect of children in need of help, support and protection and ensuring that all children have access to high-quality early years' provision, education and learning experience. The directorate is responsible for services and support to children with Special Educational Needs. These duties are spread across two directors for: Family Help and Children's Social Care, and Education, Strong Start and Integration. The directorate brings together the council's duties in relation to children identified and assessed to need help, support, protection, cared for by the council and young people with care experience (leaving care service). It includes a range of targeted services to support families and help to avoid the need for children to become 'looked after', together with Youth Justice Services and Adoption services.
- 1.5. These services are now supported by a third Directorate designed to ensure the Quality Assurance functions that ensure plans and assessments are suitably safe and effective across the wider partnership for which the Local Authority is the lead partner.
- 1.6. Approximately 45% of the overall children's revenue budget is committed to meeting the costs of care for our cared for children linked to the cost of providing homes for these children.

#### Appendix A – Draft Revenue Budget Change Proposals

- 1.7. The Education budget represents the council's responsibilities for education and learning funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and council's revenue budget. The council budget funds services including school admissions, place planning, home to school transport and school improvement.
- 1.8. Transport services make up 17% of the overall children's revenue budget. The remaining budget is for services such as additional responsibilities include new responsibilities in relation to school attendance and a wider remit for the Virtual School to include all children with a social worker and education psychology. The service also supports inclusion and other groups of vulnerable children.
- 1.9. Despite growth allocated within the MTFS process, significant in year pressures are evident. These are primarily a result of systemic deficits in the staffing structure unforeseen inflationary impacts and increases in demand in children's placements, and school transport budgets.
- 1.10. Whilst in-year mitigations and activity to avoid spend and reduce costs are in place, the forecast for the end of year is a deficit position. All indications are that demand, complexity and cost will continue to increase and therefore it has been vital to revisit the MTFS and ensure that the children services budget is right sized.
- 1.11. The Children's Directorate is committed to increasing the pace of implementing reforms and service improvements to make financial savings by reducing demand for expensive, reactive services by providing high quality support to children young people and their families at the earliest point.
- 1.12. Implementing the new children policy Keeping Children Safe Helping Families Thrive Keeping <u>children safe, helping families thrive - GOV.UK</u> will be embedded with our Improvement and Transformation Plans in the following ways.
- 1.13. A review of commissioned services A review of delivery models across SEND, Family Hubs and wider commissioning of services.
- 1.14. A redesign of our services in line with new legislation and policy will see a wider range of practitioners integrated with multi agency colleagues working closely with our communities at a very local level.
- 1.15. A refreshed sufficiency strategy for children's homes led by Right Child Right Home an ambitious programme to support children within their families where it is safe to do and to ensure a wider range of family based care locally.
- 1.16. A refreshed service offer for young people who are care experienced offering a wider range of expertise and support within the Care Leaver service.
- 1.17. We will look to create an enhanced service that supports children and young people (from birth to 25 years of age) with complex needs or who are disabled as they grow into adults. This is so that our young people can progress smoothly at key stages of development in their life, rather than those changes being dictated by age.
- 1.18. In addition to the £93.0m council revenue budget for the Children's Directorate the service also oversees the £389.7m DSG budget of which £203.3m is given to academies and £79.9m is earmarked for council-maintained schools. £106.5m is used by the council and settings for education services such as admissions, early years education and special educational needs placements. The council spend on High Needs does not match the funding received due to the growth in the number of pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan and the costs in particular of Independent Special School places. This has resulted in a significant deficit DSG reserve which is permitted by a temporary accounting override announced by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This override has been extended to 31 March 2026. The DSG deficit is forecast to be £115.7m at the end of 2024/25.
- 1.19. Full list of change proposals for this committee are noted in the table below.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
	Children and Families		+9.425	+5.166	+5.688	+6.373
твс	<b>Pension costs adjustment</b> This item relates to pension contributions funded by the Council. This results from a successful financial strategy to secure stability in the funding of future pension liabilities. The effect is a reduction in overheads in pay cost budgets following a change in the employer's contribution rate confirmed by the Cheshire Pension Fund.	Interim Executive Director of Resources	-0.537	-0.923	-0.155	-0.167
ТВС	Growth to deliver statutory Youth Justice service, and meet Safeguarding Partnership duties Partnerships are reviewed regularly to ensure that partners, including the council, are contributing at the right levels to ensure service performance and delivery in line with increased need. These increases in budget are to ensure that we are meeting our statutory duties through the partnerships.	Interim Director of Family Help and Childrens Social Care	+0.203	+0.167	+0.031	+0.034
твс	Growth in School, SEND and Social Care Transport budget The cost and number of children and young people eligible for free school transport is continuing to increase. The main growth and higher costs relate to transport for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), particularly in rural areas.	Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration	+1.501	+1.548	+0.476	
TBC	Pay Inflation The pay deal agreed for 2024/25 included a pay increase for individuals of the greater of £1,290 or 2.5%. This growth in budget reflects the shortfall compared to the flat percentage budget increase of 3% within original MTFS for 2024/25 now included in 2025/26 budget increase. Plus 2.5% inflation rate for 2025/26 onwards. National Insurance increase for 2025/26 onwards also included (to be offset in part by a grant from central government).	Interim Executive Director of Resources	+2.624	+1.096	+1.124	+1.152
твс	<b>Demand in Children's Placements</b> The Council must have sufficient placements for children in care. This budget increase is driven by higher unit costs, which is a national challenge and higher numbers of children in care. The scarcity of placements nationally allows private companies to keep costs high.	Interim Director of Family Help and Childrens Social Care	+4.645	+5.230	+5.889	+6.631
TBC	<b>Court Progression Improvement</b> Improvement is required in this area of work to ensure there are not delays for children and young people when planning for their futures, in the context of court work. This budget growth will allow an increased focus on this important area of work.	Interim Director of Family Help and Childrens Social Care	+0.023			

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
твс	Growth for annual contribution to the Regional Adoption Agency Regional Adoption Agencies bring together adoption professionals from councils across a region, providing expertise and support at every stage of the adoption journey. This increase in budget is to enable us to continue to deliver quality adoption services for vulnerable children.	Interim Director of Family Help and Childrens Social Care	+0.213	+0.048	+0.048	+0.048
TBC	Growth for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children due to emerging pressures There is an expectation made by central Government that local authorities will care for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. This growth reflects this duty and the increases in unit costs of placements.	Interim Director of Family Help and Childrens Social Care	+0.500			
ТВС	Reversal of a one year policy change for traded services In 2024/25, Council agreed a 3% levy for traded services in education to ensure that service delivery is not compromised. This growth in net budget is the result of removing that levy. A full review of traded services in education is taking place to ensure the services delivered have a full cost recovery in future years.	Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration	+0.120			
ТВС	Schools Improvement This growth is to secure the full base funding of staff delivering school improvement functions, within the education department. The roles support schools and identify areas for improvement, support the development of a strategic plan and provide consultation on the school's journey to improving the quality of education in schools.	Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration	+0.175			
TBC	Funding the staffing establishment The staffing structure had (over recurrent recent years) been underfunded due to savings being allocated against it and no subsequent restructure plan coming forward. A review of requirements has been undertaken, and this investment sees these deficits eradicated. A full base build of service design will begin in 2025.	Interim Executive Director of Childrens Services	+2.739		-1.000	-0.600
твс	Safe Walking Routes to School Building on 2023/24 MTFS savings proposals, we are identifying a robust portfolio of potential Safe Walking Routes to school and bringing new routes forward for delivery within 2025/26 and future years, (We will adopt a cross- directorate, coordinated approach and access potential grant funding opportunities, if possible, to off-set costs).	Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration	-0.250			

#### Appendix A – Draft Revenue Budget Change Proposals

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
ТВС	New accommodation with support offer for 16-25 young people This reduction in expenditure relates to commissioning work that has identified lower cost accommodation for this group of young people. Savings will be achieved through accessing lower unit cost places.	Interim Director of Family Help and Childrens Social Care	-1.100	-0.700		
твс	<b>Birth to Thrive</b> These savings will result from redesign of the end-to-end pathway for young people transitioning between Children's and Adult's services, co-designed with users and partners and, developing a new transitions function across both Children's and Adult services that will bring changes through Council governance and drive activities and ongoing service improvement.	Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration	-0.500			
TBC	<b>Right Child, Right Home</b> This saving refers to work that actively reviews placements for cared for children and young people and agrees actions that meet the identified needs of children and young people but at a lower unit cost, and also identifies alternatives to being 'in care'.	Interim Director of Family Help and Childrens Social Care	-1.320	-1.300	-0.725	-0.725
ТВС	Extended Rights to Free Transport The 'extended rights' grant, which is a contribution towards the cost of arranging home to school travel for children eligible on the grounds of low-income will be included in the Local Government Finance Settlement in future years. This budget alignment is to receive permanent budget for this area of expenditure.	Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration	+0.389			

\*Values represent a +/- variation to the Cheshire East Council approved budget for 2024/25.

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### Adults and Health Committee

### Responsibilities of the Committee: Membership: 13 Councillors

- 1.20. The Adults and Health Committee will be responsible for community welfare, public health and adult social care services with a view to enabling all people to live fulfilling lives and to retain their independence. When discharging its functions the Committee shall recognise the necessity of promoting choice and independence.
- 1.21. The Committee's responsibilities include:
  - Promotion of the health and well-being of residents and others;
  - determination of policies and making decisions in relation to people aged 18 and over (some young people up to the age of 25 may still be within Children's services as care leavers or with a Special Educational Needs and Disability) with eligible social care needs and their carers including;
  - Adult safeguarding, adult mental health, physical health, older people and learning disabilities and lifelong learning;
  - Determination of policies and making decisions in relation to Public Health in coordination with the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Scrutiny Committee;
  - Oversight of the Communities Strategy;
  - Provision and commissioning of domestic violence support services and quality assurance; and
  - Prevent reporting and Channel Panel counter terrorism oversight.
- 1.22. Oversight, scrutiny, reviewing outcomes, performance, budget monitoring and risk management of the Directorates of Adult Social Care Operations; Commissioning and Public Health including: Public Health, lifelong learning, health improvement and intelligence, Adult social care and safeguarding, Adult Mental Health and Learning Disability, Adult social care operations, Care4CE and commissioning of support for adults.

(Extract from Cheshire East Council Constitution - Dec 2024)

#### Overview

- 1.23. The 2024-28 MTFS report of 27th February 2024, highlighted several extraordinary challenges facing adult social care. These challenges have persisted throughout 2024/25 and will continue into 2025/26. Complexity of need continues to increase both amongst younger adults in need of care or support with autism or a learning disability transitioning from children's services, and amongst older people where there is an increasing demand for dementia services. Price inflation is also a significant driver of cost pressures in adult social care primarily due to the increase in the national living wage over the past three years. Finally, the need to support the NHS with hospital discharge continues to drive higher levels of activity in adult social care.
- 1.24. Throughout 2024/25 the whole council has been focused on the urgent action necessary to reduce a significant projected budget overspend. As of November 2024, adult social care is forecast to overspend by £20m, this is the major variance within the Council's overall position. The budget variance in 2024/25 is partially due to a higher level of commitment than originally planned when setting the MTFS in February 2024, this is the consequence of the full year impact of activity levels identified at the 2023/24 year-end outturn and the ceasing of one-off mitigations which alleviated the budget gap in the previous year.
- 1.25. In the face of these challenges, Cheshire East remains committed to delivering high-quality adult social care services that meet the increasing needs of our residents and recognises the vital role played by both internally and externally commissioned providers. The response to the challenges has been two-fold:

- Enhanced management processes have been introduced to ensure robust oversight and budgetary control. This improvement is enabling expenditure pressures to be managed more effectively, further promoting value for money with the necessity of safeguarding the longterm viability of our services.
- The programme of transformation, which in adult social care is focused on:
- Prevent, Reduce, Enable work to ensure we continue to promote wellbeing, prevention, independence, and self-care for people across Cheshire East
- Learning Disability service transformation revision of the housing support model for adults with a learning disability to maximise value for money.
- Preparing for Adulthood developing new service models for young adults transitioning from children's social care services to adult social care services.
- Brokerage and Commissioning reforming the approach to purchasing care placements
- Partnership working developing alternative approaches to commissioned long-term care and support for people with a learning disability, in partnership with other local authorities and the NHS as appropriate.
- 1.26. Consolidating the savings made to-date alongside the rollout of the transformation programme form the MTFS proposals for adult social care. They build on the work of the past two years which have included the development and implementation of a new direct payments policy, reduction in the usage of short-term beds to aid hospital discharge and expansion of the reablement services and the occupational therapy service to support greater independence amongst older people. The service has also successfully implemented a new charging policy, and the full-year financial benefit of the policy are also built into the MTFS for 2025/26.
- 1.27. In preparing the 2025/26 budget growth of £33.3m has been provided, being funded through a mix of additional grant income, the increase in the adult social care precept and core council tax. This will address the full year impact of projected overspends for 2024/25 on externally commissioned care and staffing. It also includes a provision of £5m for growth arising from demographic changes including an ageing population and increased levels of need for care and support for adults of a working age, during 2025/26. Further work is being undertaken to produce a model of forecast demand through to 2030.
- 1.28. To support long-term strategic direction of the service and the next stage of transformation the service will be working to produce business cases for the development of and extra care housing and the expansion of supported living, which will require capital investment to stabilise the social care revenue position.
- 1.29. The risks for adult social care and therefore the overall council budget are not immaterial. Further inflationary pressures, driven by the National Living Wage and National Insurance changes, are significant whilst there is no indication that demand pressures associated with hospital discharge will abate in 2025. Issues of complexity as described above will also continue.
- 1.30. Finally, it should be noted that government grants for adult social care are allocated using the Adult Social Care Relative Needs Formula. However, when adjusted for full Council Tax Equalisation, Chesire East will experience the largest grant reduction in the north of England. Council tax equalisation is a mechanism that recognises that council tax yields different amounts of income in different local authorities and adjusts grant allocations to take account of that difference. We do not yet know the financial consequence of government decisions in respect of grant allocations.
- 1.31. Full list of change proposals for this committee are noted in the table below.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
	Adults and Health		+21.464	-1.104	+1.516	+1.480
твс	Client Contributions Increase in income from client contributions arising from the inflation increase for pensions and benefits paid to individuals, the full-year effect of charging policy changes and the additional income arising from an increase in placement costs. This is offset against expenditure growth proposals.	Interim Director of Commissi oning	-5.182	-0.879	-1.654	-1.706
твс	Revenue Grants for Adult Social Care Increase to income budget for the 'Market Sustainability and Investment Funding' grant. To match the value of confirmed allocation.	Executive Director of Adults, Health and Integration	-0.220			
твс	Market Sustainability Grant To remove the grant from 2026/27 as allocations not yet confirmed for future years	Executive Director of Adults, Health and Integration		+1.100		
твс	Pensions Cost Adjustment This item relates to pension contributions funded by the Council. This results from a successful financial strategy to secure stability in the funding of future pension liabilities. The effect is a reduction in overheads in pay cost budgets following a change in the employer's contribution rate confirmed by the Cheshire Pension Fund.	Interim Executive Director of Resources	-0.517	-1.019	-0.171	-0.184
TBC	<b>Demand in Adult Social Care</b> Forecast growth, arising from demographic changes including an ageing population and increasing complexity of need for care and support for adults of a working age.	Interim Director of Commissi oning	+5.000	+5.000	+5.000	+5.000
твс	Pay InflationThe pay deal agreed for 2024/25 included a pay increase for individuals of the greater of £1,290 or 2.5%. This growth in budget reflects the shortfall compared to the flat percentage budget increase of 3% within original MTFS for 2024/25 now included in 2025/26 budget increase. Plus 2.5% inflation rate for 2025/26 onwards.National Insurance increase for 2025/26 onwards also included (to be offset in part by a grant from central government).	Interim Executive Director of Resources	+2.251	+1.142	+1.171	+1.200
твс	Funding the staffing establishment Increases in the number of social care staff to maintain safe services and to meet increasing demands.	Director of Adult Social Care Operation s	+3.800			

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MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
твс	Fully Funding current care demand levels 2024/25 Growth, recognising the full year effect of current pressures on the externally commissioned care budget	Interim Director of Commissi oning	+24.500			
твс	Remodel extra care housing catering service Remodelling the catering offer in extra care facilities to remove the funding subsidy.	Interim Director of Commissi oning	-0.300			
твс	<b>Prevent, Reduce, Enable - Older People</b> Continue the work to promote wellbeing, prevention, independence, and self-care for people across Cheshire East improving outcomes and reducing costs.	Interim Director of Commissi oning	-1.500	-2.830	-2.830	-2.830
твс	Learning Disability service transformation Revision of the housing support model for adults with a learning disability to maximise value for money.	Interim Director of Commissi oning	-2.500	-2.500		
TBC	Commissioning and brokerage transformation Reforming the approach to purchasing care placements	Interim Director of Commissi oning	-0.500	-0.250		
твс	<b>Preparing for Adulthood</b> Developing new service models for young adults transitioning from children's social care services to adult social care services.	Director of Adult Social Care Operation s	-0.868	-0.868		
твс	Health and Social Care Partnership Case Review Developing alternative approaches to commissioned long-term care and support for people with a learning disability, in partnership with other local authorities and the NHS as appropriate.	Director of Adult Social Care Operation S	-2.500			

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#### **Corporate Policy Committee**

#### Responsibilities of the Committee: Membership: 13 Councillors

- 1.32. The Corporate Policy Committee will provide strategic direction to the operation of the Council by developing and recommending the Corporate Plan to full Council and making decisions on policies and practice where such decisions are not reserved to full Council.
- 1.33. The Committee's responsibilities include:
  - Formulation, co-ordination and implementation of the Corporate Plan and;
  - corporate policies and strategies, alongside the medium term financial plan (budget) which is the responsibility of the Finance Sub-Committee. In the discharge of those responsibilities the Committee shall determine such matters to the extent that they are not reserved to full Council;
  - Human Resources, Organisational Development and Health and Safety matters affecting the Council; including adopting HR policies and practices and assurance in relation to staffing related matters;
  - making recommendations to full Council in relation to the annual Pay Policy Statement and any amendments to such statement;
  - making recommendations to full Council in relation to decisions affecting the remuneration of any new post where the remuneration is or is proposed to be or would become £100,000 p.a. or more;
  - making decisions in relation to proposed severance packages with a value of £95,000 or more as appropriate (excluding contractual and holiday pay), subject to the need to obtain a approval from full Council and central Government if required;
  - exercising the functions relating to local government pensions, so far as they relate to Regulations made under sections 7, 12, or 24 of the Superannuation Act 1972 or subsequent equivalent legal provisions;
  - determining key cross-cutting policies and key plans that impact on more than one service committee;
  - determining policy matters not otherwise allocated to any other Committee;
  - determining any matter of dispute or difference between any Committees;
  - a coordinating role across all other committees and exercising a corporate view of outcomes, performance, budget monitoring and risk management;
  - determining any matter that has a major impact on a number of Council services or the Council as a whole;
  - oversight and monitoring of the Councillors' Allowances budget and keeping under review the scheme for the payment of allowances to Councillors through the appointment of an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to advise full Council on the adoption and any proposed amendments to such scheme.
  - considering amendments to the Council's Constitution and the recommendation of any changes to full Council for approval except where specifically delegated to the Monitoring Officer;
  - considering recommendations and an Annual Report of the Council's involvement in ASDVs;
  - appointing representatives to serve on outside bodies and organisations (including education bodies and establishments) and reviewing the process for considering appointments to outside organisations;
  - appointing Lay Members (who shall not be Councillors) to serve on the Independent Admissions and Exclusion Appeals Panel as required under the relevant legislation; and
  - approving the payment of a reasonable and proper allowances and expenses for the work undertaken by the Council's Independent Persons.
- 1.34. Oversight, scrutiny, reviewing outcomes, performance, budget monitoring and risk management of the Directorates of Finance and Customer Services; Governance and Compliance Services

#### Appendix A – Draft Revenue Budget Change Proposals

and Transformation including the following functions: Legal, Governance and Compliance; Audit and Risk; Transactional Services; Transformation; Business Change; B4B/ERP; Human Resources, ICT; together with Strategic Partnerships and shared services.

1.35. The Corporate Policy Committee shall be entitled to exercise: any function of the full Council not otherwise allocated; as well as the functions of all other Committees and Sub-Committees, particularly where plans, strategies or activities straddle a number of Committees.

(Extract from Cheshire East Council Constitution - Dec 2024)

#### Overview

- 1.36. The proposals seek to address the underlying financial pressures in Corporate Services. These relate to the impact of pay inflation and increases in demand for enabling support services. The proposed approach seeks to absorb demand pressures where possible and to offset employee costs through vacancy management.
- 1.37. The Corporate Services area includes the new Resources Directorate as well as the Assistant Chief Executive and the Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer areas of responsibility. These are all important to the smooth running of the Council and ensuring that the Council governance is strong and supports sound decision-making.
- 1.38. This area also encompasses important resident focused areas of the Council including customer services and engagement, our welfare and collections services including Revenues and Benefits and is the place where Council Tax and Business rates are collected as efficiently as possible to provide the necessary finances to support the rest of the Council. This area also contains the strategic leadership around our staff, and so is fundamental to the smooth running of all our services.
- 1.39. As was highlighted in the 2024/25 budget setting, the only way this Council will become financially sustainable over the medium term is through transforming the way we work and deliver services, so a transformation plan has been developed and overall leadership of transformation sits within this area too.
- 1.40. Key proposals include investment in ICT to enable the delivery of cross Council digital savings and recognising unavoidable cost increases where budget changes are required. The project to achieve a new model for ICT shared services remains on track. This project is jointly run with Cheshire West and Chester Council and regularly reviewed by the Shared Services Committee.
- 1.41. There will be further across the board efficiencies and reductions in non-essential spending. In some cases, pressures will need to be managed in the short term given the Council's financial position.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
	Corporate Policy		+1.078	+4.396	+1.890	+1.485
TBC	Enforce prompt debt recovery and increase charges for costs Increase charges to debtors to ensure this reflects actual costs of the debt collection process, thereby further reducing net costs to the Council.	Head of Revenues and Benefits and *Acting Head of Customer Experienc e	-0.077			

1.42. Full list of change proposals for this committee are noted in the table below.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
твс	Pension costs adjustment This item relates to pension contributions funded by the Council. This results from a successful financial strategy to secure stability in the funding of future pension liabilities. The effect is a reduction in overheads in pay cost budgets following a change in the employer's contribution rate confirmed by the Cheshire Pension Fund.	Interim Executive Director of Resources	-0.396	-0.685	-0.115	-0.124
твс	<ul> <li>Pay Inflation</li> <li>The pay deal agreed for 2024/25 included a pay increase for individuals of the greater of £1,290 or 2.5%. This growth in budget reflects the shortfall compared to the flat percentage budget increase of 3% within original MTFS for 2024/25 now included in 2025/26 budget increase. Plus 2.5% inflation rate for 2025/26 onwards.</li> <li>National Insurance increase for 2025/26 onwards also included (to be offset in part by a grant from central government).</li> </ul>	Interim Executive Director of Resources	+1.494	+1.531	+1.570	+1.609
твс	Shared Services Review - Move to Hybrid Model for ICT Reversal of temporary resource in 24/25 within	Director of Digital	-0.733			
твс	The achievement of additional Registration Service income, over and above that which is currently identified as required Recognising the additional performance of the	Head of Democrati c Services	-0.350			
твс	Registration service income in the budget.         Recognising the annual receipt of £45k of Police and Crime Panel grant income         An adjustment to service income budget for this grant.	Registratio n and Civic Services Manager	-0.045			
твс	Remove unspent element of phones budgets in corporate services Taking the underspend on phones in corporate services (mobiles and rental) compared to budget	Interim Executive Director of Resources	-0.060			
TBC	Digital Acceleration Revenue Growth Investment in the acceleration of the Council's digital programme to maximise the use of digital technology to provide end-to-end service improvement and efficiencies through the accelerated use of emerging technologies. This includes the use of Artificial Intelligence and robotics capabilities to enhance on-line offering for customers, automated business processing improved reporting and case management.	Director of Digital		+1.150		
ТВС	Digital Blueprint Revenue Growth Investment in the new business cases identified that will accelerate the Council's digital portfolio through fast-track validation and delivery of 30 plus targeted options. This will provide financial and business improvement opportunities across a diverse	Director of Digital		+2.400	+0.435	

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MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
	range of Cheshire East services. Solutions will be council-wide and maximise the use of digital technology solutions					
твс	Transactional Shared Services stabilisation plan Staffing budget increase to enhance capacity and improve service quality standards, pending review of system and operational service support models.	Acting Director of Finance, Deputy Section 151	+0.270			
твс	Additional cost of External Audit Fees Adjusting budget to reflect the latest estimate of external audit fees in 2025/26.	Acting Director of Finance, Deputy Section 151	+0.265			
твс	Reduce Members Allowances budget Reduce Members Allowances budget for excess budget relating to a previous year's pay award that was not taken.	Head of Democrati c Services	-0.100			
твс	Additional Cost of Bank Charges from 2025/26 Adjusting budget to reflect the latest estimate of bank charges in 2025/26.	Acting Director of Finance, Deputy Section 151	+0.120			
твс	Reverse reduction in leadership and management costs as posts are being retained Reversal of 2024/25 budget saving, as superseded by senior management structure and future Target Operating Model savings.	Interim Executive Director of Resources	+0.540			
ТВС	Reinstatement of a one-off saving of £150,000 from election budgets, for the 2024/25 year Planned reversal of a one-off reduction in 2024/25.	Head of Democrati c Services	+0.150			

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MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
	Corporate Policy – Council-wide Transformation		-13.452	-20.730	-11.030	-
твс	Digital Customer Enablement Invest to Save The Digital Enablement Framework is a key enabler for the delivery of the Customer Experience Strategy, putting customer considerations at the centre of service delivery. It also provides transformational capabilities for continuous improvement	Director of Digital (pending reallocatio n to Service budgets)	-0.750	-0.750	-0.700	

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
	providing efficiencies and improvement opportunities within the end-to-end service delivery processes. These savings will be validated and allocated to individual service areas based on business cases agreed with each service manager or Transformation Board.					
TBC	Digital Acceleration Invest to Save Acceleration will maximise the use of emerging Digital technologies to transform ways of working across the entire range of council services. The benefits realised will be council- wide and enabled through the adoption of AI solutions by service operations across the Council including Adults, Health and Integration, Children's Services, Place, Resources (inc Customer Services) directorates, and Chief Executive's Office. These savings will be validated and allocated to individual service areas based on business cases agreed with each service manager or Transformation Board.	Director of Digital (pending reallocatio n to Service budgets)	-0.600	-6.250	-5.250	
ТВС	<ul> <li>Digital Blueprint - Invest to Save The Digital Blueprint initiative will provide financial and quality improvements across Cheshire East services. Benefits realised will be council-wide and enabled through developing priority propositions across several dimensions including;  <ul> <li>Improved quality of service outcomes,</li> <li>Cheshire East operations and customer experience, and</li> <li>Improved efficiency in service delivery, reducing friction and transactional costs</li> </ul> These savings will be validated and allocated to individual service areas based on business cases agreed with each service manager or Transformation Board.</li></ul>	Director of Digital (pending reallocatio n to Service budgets)	-4.000	-6.000	-4.500	
твс	<b>Target Operating Model (TOM)</b> Design and implementation of a new target operating model for the council, setting a framework and principles for how the council functions linked to the LGA's Peer Challenge and Decision Making Accountability (DMA) assessment.	Interim Assistant Chief Executive	-3.000	-7.000		
твс	Agency Staffing Decrease reliance on agency workers through recruitment, potential changes to delivery models, in-house resourcing services / external partnership. Decrease overall expenditure on agency workers through on- going review of agency recruitment, hours worked and rates paid (more closely aligned to job evaluated rate for the job role).	Director of People	-0.352			

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MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
TBC	Workforce Productivity Reduction in sickness absence rates and lost opportunity costs. Reduction in staff turn over Implement improved recruitment and selection processes / practices, enhanced and consistent performance management from start of employment lifecycle. Review of terms and conditions of employment. Review of staffing structures aligning with the target operating model.	Director of People	-1.000			
TBC	Fees and Charges As part of the Transformation Programme, a review of service fees and charges will compare our existing prices with those of other councils across the country, to identify opportunities to maximise income and fully recover costs of delivery. As specific areas of additional income are identified, the related service income budget will be increased.	Acting Director of Finance, Deputy Section 151 (pending reallocatio n to Service budgets)	-0.750	-0.040	-0.040	
ТВС	Third Party Spend As part of the Transformation Programme, a review of spend with suppliers will realise savings and drive increased value for money. As specific areas of saving are identified, the related service income budget will be increased.	Head of Procurem ent (pending reallocatio n to Service budgets)	-3.000	-0.690	-0.540	

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#### **Economy and Growth Committee**

Responsibilities of the Committee: Membership: 13 Councillors

- 1.43. The Economy and Growth Committee will be responsible for developing policies and making decisions on matters relating to delivering inclusive and sustainable economic growth.
- 1.44. The Committee's responsibilities include:
  - Determination of policies and making of decisions in relation to housing management and delivery;
  - Determination of policies and making of decisions in relation to economic development, regeneration, skills and growth;
  - Development and delivery of the Council's estates, land and physical assets policies;
  - Determination of policies and making decisions in relation to the rural and cultural economy; and
  - Compulsory purchase of land to support the delivery of schemes and projects promoted by the Committee.
- 1.45. Oversight, scrutiny, reviewing outcomes, performance, budget monitoring and risk management of the Directorate of Growth and Enterprise including: Facilities Management; Assets; Farms; Economic Development; Housing; Rural and Cultural Management; Tatton Park; Public Rights of Way; Cultural Economy; Countryside; and the Visitor Economy.

(Extract from Cheshire East Council Constitution - Dec 2024)

#### Overview

- 1.46. The proposals seek to address the continuing and challenging financial pressures in the Place Directorate.
- 1.47. These focus on seeking to address and contain increasing prices and cost inflation as much as possible, and by rationalising the property estate, reducing the energy burden and to reduce and control Facilities Management costs including non-essential maintenance throughout the Council's building portfolio.
- 1.48. In response to the impact of pay inflation and continuing the savings made to offset it, the focus will continue to address existing employee costs through proactive vacancy management, prioritising statutory services and income generating roles.
- 1.49. Going forward there is a clear opportunity to address through a restructure plan to better align the related services and management across all of Place, as well as further continuing to explore and identify core efficiencies and restricting aspects of non-essential spend and seek to continue to review contracts.
- 1.50. Following the decision made by Committee around the future of the Westfields office, Sandbach, the Directorate will continue to progress consolidation and reprofiling of the Council's core property portfolio, and to engage opportunities for additional income regeneration.
- 1.51. Managing capacity with the prioritisation of resources across all of the Growth and Enterprise department will enable existing capacity to be sustained and seek to provide focus to maximise access to external funding options and programmes such as UK Shared Prosperity Funding
- 1.52. Full list of change proposals for this committee are noted in the table below.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
	Economy and Growth		+0.534	+0.695	+0.432	+0.328
твс	Office estate rationalisation This item relates to rationalisation of the Council's office space buildings to reflect increased hybrid working, and to secure reduction of business rates and holding costs. Surplus assets will be considered for alternative use to generate income through rental or a capital receipt. Westfields, Sandbach and Municipal Offices, Crewe have been closed in 24/25. Savings will	Director of Growth and Enterprise	-0.150			
	be generated from reduction of expenditure, and income generated from alternative use.					
твс	Pension Costs Adjustment This item relates to pension contributions funded by the Council. This results from a successful financial strategy to secure stability in the funding of future pension liabilities. The effect is a reduction in overheads in pay cost budgets following a change in the employer's contribution rate confirmed by the Cheshire Pension Fund.	Interim Executive Director of Resources	-0.164	-0.313	-0.053	-0.057
ТВС	Tatton Park ticketing and EPOS upgrade	Director of	+0.001	+0.001	+0.001	+0.001
	This relates to maintenance and support of the new electronic point of sale (EPOS) system at Tatton Park which was introduced in September 2024. The new system will future proof both revenue collection, management and financial analysis, and provide better customer insight and targeting capabilities. Streamlining customer transactions will better enable us to maximise revenue at all customer interaction points.	Growth and Enterprise	10.001	10.001	10.001	10.001
твс	CEC Archives	Director of	+0.014	±0 093	+0.004	
	This growth represents the ongoing revenue costs of the new Archives facility being developed in Crewe which is expected to open in late 2026.	Growth and Enterprise	+0.014	+0.035	+0.004	
твс	Rural and Visitor Economy Electricity costs This provides additional funding to manage increased costs. This reflects inflation in the price of materials and the staffing required to maintain a statutory standard of upkeep to existing public rights of way, and to maintain heritage buildings within Tatton Park.	Director of Growth and Enterprise	-0.021			
твс	Minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) - Estates - Revenue Adjustment	Director of	+0.023		-0.055	-0.047
	All the Council's leased out properties will be required to meet new / phased Energy Efficiency Legislation from 1 April 2023 up to 1 April 2030. This means that to continue to lease out properties the Estates Service will need to improve the energy performance certificate (EPC) rating in line with the Government recommendations. After assessment, and in order to obtain a certificate, identified improvements will need carrying out prior to properties being leased out. Cost estimates are based on average current improvement costs, the list of identified	Growth and Enterprise				

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
	properties requiring new EPC certificates, and phasing as determined by the legislation.					
ТВС	Pay Inflation The pay deal agreed for 2024/25 included a pay increase for individuals of the greater of £1,290 or 2.5%. This growth in budget reflects the shortfall compared to the flat percentage budget increase of 3% within original MTFS for 2024/25 now included in 2025/26 budget increase. Plus 2.5% inflation rate for 2025/26 onwards. National Insurance increase for 2025/26 onwards also included (to be offset in part by a	Interim Executive Director of Resources	+1.064	+0.429	+0.440	+0.450
твс	grant from central government). Maintenance and operation of new assets in Crewe town centre New revenue budgets are required to ensure that new facilities / assets / spaces being created in Crewe town centre can be operated and maintained to a reasonable standard to meet user expectations, ensure compliance with statutory requirements and ensure that they are operable for their expected lifespan without the need for closure / removal / replacement.	Director of Growth and Enterprise	+0.205	+0.279	+0.118	+0.006
твс	Land Fill Site Assessments Revenue Adjustment - Estates – Review and Risk Assessment of Council owned Landfill sites (53 sites) Review and Risk Assessment completions The Council must demonstrate safe monitoring and compliance across its property portfolio. The CE Contaminated Land Officer has recommended options following risk assessments on c.53 landfill sites owned by the Council. Essential improvements/ monitoring/management works are essential to understanding and managing risk and	Director of Growth and Enterprise	+0.010			
твс	demonstrating compliant management.         Tatton Park Estate Dwellings Refurbishment         The current 5-year quinquennial plan for the conservation of Tatton Park covers the upkeep of the residents' dwellings on site but there is no provision for response maintenance issues.         Each of the dwellings (8 in total) are in continuing need of attention to rectify problems and additional funding is critical to ensuring these properties meet standards required as part of tenancy agreements and the National Trust lease.	Director of Growth and Enterprise	+0.015			
твс	Improving Crewe Rented Housing Standards To achieve a well-functioning private rented sector that supports the health and wellbeing of Cheshire East residents through improved living standards, it is necessary to carry out targeted activity to inspect homes and carry out enforcement action. This 12-month project will enable us to evidence whether this is sufficient action to avoid the need for a selective licensing scheme.	Director of Growth and Enterprise	+0.188	-0.188		

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
TBC	Maximise potential of Countryside Access Management System Transform the current desk-based system to a digital mobile application and Asset Management database. This will enable cost savings through more efficient planning of works, budget control and Public Rights of Way officer resource. Additional environmental benefits will be realised through reduction in officer car usage and printing.	Director of Growth and Enterprise	+0.020	-0.018		
твс	Assets - building and operational – Energy A reduction in energy budgets is proposed. A budget increase was requested when energy prices were at peak rates, alongside significantly high inflation rates. The unit price rates for gas and electricity have now stabilised and the Council has been able to mitigate the overall impact, particularly on gas, using green, low carbon technologies energy solutions, as well as an overall reduction in the portfolio as properties are being vacated / sold.	Director of Growth and Enterprise	-0.860			
TBC	Assets - building and operational – Maintenance The cost of managing and maintaining the Council's property portfolio continues to rise, with the residual impact of high inflation rates, shortages of skilled labour, availability of key components and material prices, increase the costs of undertaking works. Balancing the condition of premises and overall backlog of maintenance, against available budgets remains a challenge. Cost increases cannot be avoided entirely, and mitigation measures are in place currently to ensure the Council will only spend on maintenance where there is a specific Health and Safety risk that must be mitigated.	Director of Growth and Enterprise	+0.465	+0.533		
твс	Tatton Park - Increase Fees and Charges These planned savings result from income generated through ongoing review and investment in the facilities at Tatton Park, which will improve the visitor experience and reduce the overall subsidy the Council makes to Tatton Park.	Director of Growth and Enterprise	-0.126	-0.021	-0.023	-0.025
твс	<b>Corporate Landlord Model Refresh</b> A review / refresh of the existing corporate landlord operational model is proposed as one of the Council's transformation projects to deliver additional benefits through efficiency savings on a phased programme approach.	Director of Growth and Enterprise	-0.050			
твс	Asset Strategy Refresh A review / refresh of the existing approach to strategic asset management of the Council's land and property assets is proposed as one of the Council's transformation projects. An	Director of Growth and Enterprise	-0.100	-0.100		

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	
	estimated target of revenue savings is proposed based on a list identified as part of the Capital disposals programme and the repurposing of sites for SEN / Housing framework provisions.						
*Values represent a +/- variation to the <u>Cheshire East Council approved budget for 2024/25</u> . Subsequent years are the incremental change from the previous year. Negative numbers represent a							
budget sav	ving or additional income. Positive numbers repres	ent budget gro	owth or reduced	income.			

#### Appendix A – Draft Revenue Budget Change Proposals

#### **Environment and Communities Committee**

#### Responsibilities of the Committee: Membership: 13 Councillors

- 1.53. The Environment and Communities Committee is responsible for developing policies and making decisions on matters relating to the delivery of inclusive and sustainable growth, improving the quality of the environment and delivering improvement in key front-line services.
- 1.54. The Committee's responsibilities include:
  - Development and delivery of the Council's strategic objectives for Environmental Management, sustainability, renewables and climate change;
  - The development and delivery of the Council's Environment Strategy and Carbon Neutral Action Plan;
  - Development and delivery of the Local Development Framework including the Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Documents, Neighbourhood Plans, the Brownfield Land Register, Conservation Areas, Locally Listed Buildings, the Community Infrastructure Levy, and Statement of Community Involvement;
  - Regulatory functions including external health and safety good practice and enforcement including instituting proceedings and prosecutions;
  - Determination of policies and making decisions, in relation to waste collection and disposal, recycling, fly tipping, parks and green spaces, community strategy and community hub, leisure, libraries and sports development, bereavement services, trading standards, environmental health, emergency planning, CCTV, nuisance and anti-social behaviour, public space protection orders, community enforcement, animal health and welfare, food safety, licensing, pest control, contaminated land and air quality;
  - Compulsory purchase of land to support the delivery of schemes and projects promoted by the Committee.
- 1.55. Oversight, scrutiny, reviewing outcomes, performance, budget monitoring and risk management of the Directorate of Environment and Neighbourhood, including: the Planning Service; Environmental Services; Regulatory Services; Neighbourhood Services and Emergency Planning.

(Extract from Cheshire East Council Constitution - Dec 2024)

#### Overview

- 1.56. The past year has been one of considerable decision and change in Environment and Communities, where significant pressures are further being experienced in a number of areas across the departmental budget.
- 1.57. Financial pressure continues to be a challenge:
  - Waste collection and disposal costs this is due to inflation across both internal and externally procured prices, uncertainty caused by the lack of clarity around the National Waste Strategy and also the continued high cost of fuel duty which has had a significant impact on fleet running costs.
  - Pay inflation the nationally negotiated pay awards as well as being applicable to Council staff also apply across the wholly owned companies which collectively have large staffing establishments in their own right.
  - Planning income Increased costs of financing development in multiple sectors, has seen an impact on the number of planning applications generating key income. Of applications that are received each year, currently a high percentage of these are not major applications and therefore this impacts through the shortfall of income against target.

#### Appendix A – Draft Revenue Budget Change Proposals

- 1.58. The budget strategy for this area continues to focus on containing prices and cost inflation as much as possible, through amongst other things enhanced financial monitoring, robust procurement activities and alternative ways of working.
- 1.59. There will be continued alignment to other areas of the Place directorate in providing the response to the impact of pay inflation, the focus will be to seek to offset existing employee costs through proactive vacancy management, prioritising statutory services and ensuring that income generation opportunities are maximised.
- 1.60. Opportunities through restructuring will continue and seek to address further improvement and alignment of related services and management across all of Place, as well as continuing to explore and identify operational efficiencies in how key frontline services interface.
- 1.61. The key areas of focus for Environment and Communities will be:
  - Continuing to deliver on current MTFS budget commitments such as delivery of stage 2 of the Strategic Leisure Review;
  - Development and implementation of a Libraries Strategy;
  - Returning existing wholly owned companies;
  - Rationalising the increasing costs of waste collection, disposal and treatment and;
  - Work to continue to expand commercialisation opportunities to generate additional income for the Council.
- 1.62. Where appropriate, advance opportunities to work with communities, and specifically Town and Parish Councils to explore options to support, supplement, and contribute to, the delivery of services at a local level.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
	Environment and Communities		-2.742	+3.269	+0.982	+6.792
TBC	Strategic Leisure Review (Stage 2) The second stage of the Strategic Leisure Review will focus on the medium-term financial sustainability of the commissioned leisure services. This includes, but is not limited to: reviewing pricing for leisure services across the borough; reduction in corporate landlord costs via asset transfer; exploring potential invest to save capital schemes; removing all current programme allocations that cannot be delivered on an invest to save basis; removal of historical subsidies relating to free car parking; use of public health and other one off grants; and partnership working with Town Councils to secure contributions towards safeguarding provisions in their local area.	Interim Director of Planning and Environme nt	+0.403	-0.203	-0.166	
ТВС	Libraries Strategy - Stage 1 The ongoing impact of the stage 1 review. As part of the Strategy approved by E&C Committee on 27th November 2024, implementation now ongoing with revised opening hours at Tier 3 sites going live from January 2025 and Tier 2 sites as of 1st April 2025.	Interim Director of Planning and Environme nt	-0.100			
твс	Reduce revenue impact of carbon reduction capital schemes Capital financing costs of capital schemes to reduce carbon emissions.	Head of Environme ntal Services	+0.171			

1.63. Full list of change proposals for this committee are noted in the table below.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
твс	Pay Inflation The pay deal agreed for 2024/25 included a pay increase for individuals of the greater of £1,290 or 2.5%. This growth in budget reflects the shortfall compared to the flat percentage budget increase of 3% within original MTFS for 2024/25 now included in 2025/26 budget increase. Plus 2.5% inflation rate for 2025/26 onwards. National Insurance increase for 2025/26 onwards also included (to be offset in part by a grant from central government).	Interim Executive Director of Resources	+2.270	+1.380	+1.409	+1.436
твс	Pension Costs Adjustment This item relates to pension contributions funded by the Council. This results from a successful financial strategy to secure stability in the funding of future pension liabilities. The effect is a reduction in overheads in pay cost budgets following a change in the employer's contribution rate confirmed by the Cheshire Pension Fund.	Interim Executive Director of Resources	-0.159	-0.315	-0.053	-0.057
твс	Explore a Trust delivery model for Libraries and other services Reverse of growth item to cover one off costs relating to implementation of alternative delivery model(s) for libraries service. Aligned to development of Libraries Strategy.	Interim Director of Planning and Environme nt	-0.150			
твс	Land Charge Income Adjustment Due to national legislative changes where some land charges services will be delivered by HM Land Registry, there will a reduction in income to the Council.	Interim Director of Planning and Environme nt	+0.147			
твс	Local Plan Review It is a statutory requirement to review the Local Plan within prescribed timescales. This will determine amongst other things the amount and location of future housing and other economic development in the Borough. It is highly complex requiring significant technical evidence, significant public consultation and three stages of formal examination by Government inspectors.	Interim Director of Planning and Environme nt	+0.315	-0.090	+0.005	-0.005
твс	Review of CCTV service - service efficiencies and income generation from existing services Opportunities for additional income generation – the £40,000 saving in 2025/26 is a current estimate subject to additional service improvements / investment.	Interim Director of Planning and Environme nt	-0.040			
твс	Environmental Services Growth 2025/26 onwards This line recognises the pressures expected within the service from waste volumes, varying recycling income rates, increased costs of service change relating to weekly food waste collections, increased costs of operating the Environmental Hub, fleet etc.	Head of Environme ntal Services	+3.041	+1.882	+0.690	+0.710

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
твс	Environmental Services Savings 2025/26 onwards This growth recognises the savings expected within the service from annual increases in income e.g. green waste, expected transition grants for weekly food waste, efficiencies due to the change of delivery model for currently commissioned services	Head of Environme ntal Services	-2.367	-2.580	-1.181	-0.549
TBC	Environmental Services Growth - Pensions This item is to bring the service budgets for all staffing up to the same point regarding pension contributions. This has a net nil impact for the Council as a whole.	Head of Environme ntal Services	+0.727	-0.395	-0.066	-0.071
ТВС	Environmental Services – expected income from Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging Estimated grant income from the new scheme which tapers out over the life of the MTFS as the scheme is expected to evolve and waste tonnages change. The detail is based on the announcements made at the end of November 2024 and a detailed forecast model of potential future years impacts, to be regularly reviewed.	Head of Environme ntal Services	-7.000	+3.590	+0.344	+5.328
*Values represent a +/- variation to the <u>Cheshire East Council approved budget for 2024/25</u> . Subsequent years are the incremental change from the previous year. Negative numbers represent a budget saving or additional income. Positive numbers represent budget growth or reduced income.						
#### Appendix A – Draft Revenue Budget Change Proposals

#### Highways and Transport Committee

#### Responsibilities of the Committee: Membership: 13 Councillors

- 1.64. The Highways and Transport Committee shall be responsible for developing policies and making decisions on matters relating to highways and transport as they affect the area of the Council taking into account regional and national influences.
- 1.65. The Committee's responsibilities include:
  - Formulation, co-ordination and implementation of corporate policies and strategies in connection with all car parking, transport and accessibility matters;
  - Determination of any matter affecting the Council's interests in relation to national infrastructure matters, for example HS2, Northern Powerhouse Rail and the National Road Network;
  - Discharge of the Council's responsibilities as Highway Authority; local transport authority; parking authority; and lead local flood authority;
  - Determination of policies and making decisions in relation to flooding and accessibility, in co-ordination with the Scrutiny Committee;
  - Compulsory purchase of land to support the delivery of schemes and projects promoted by the Committee; and
  - In respect of public rights of way:
    - discharge all the functions of the Council in relation to public rights of way (except the determination of non-contentious Public Path Order applications which has been delegated to the Executive Director – Place);
    - o discharge of Commons and Town and Village Greens functions;
    - being apprised of, approve, and comment on a range of policies, programmes and practices relating to Rights of Way, Commons, Town and Village Greens and countryside matters including:
    - progress reports on implementation of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (part of the Annual Progress Review for the Local Transport Plan);
    - Statement of Priorities;
    - Enforcement Protocols;
    - Charging Policy for Public Path Order applications.
- 1.66. Oversight, scrutiny, reviewing outcomes, performance, budget monitoring and risk management of the Directorate of Highways and Infrastructure including: Transport Policy; Transport Commissioning; Carparking; Highways; Infrastructure and HS2.

(Extract from Cheshire East Council Constitution - Dec 2024)

#### Overview

- 1.67. The proposals identified in this area provide an ongoing response to seek to address the continuing financial pressures in the Place Directorate.
- 1.68. The Highways and Transport department has responsibility for a number of key service areas with the overall aim of providing a safe, available, integrated and sustainable transport network across Cheshire East and the wider region. Delivering this meets the Council's statutory duties to manage and maintain transport infrastructure, supports the economic growth of the borough and contributes to the Council's net zero climate commitment.
- 1.69. Highway maintenance services are almost entirely either statutory or essential to delivering statutory obligations. The service is significantly affected by the revenue impact of a shortfall in capital investment; reductions to either revenue or capital will have downstream consequences in revenue costs and may risk statutory compliance. The proposed business cases therefore go towards ensuring that those revenue implications are met.

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## Appendix A – Draft Revenue Budget Change Proposals

- 1.70. In response to the impact of pay inflation and continuing the savings made last year to offset it, the focus will continue to address existing employee costs through proactive vacancy management, prioritising statutory services and income generating roles.
- 1.71. Going forward there is a clear opportunity to address through a restructure plan to better align the related services and management across all of Place, as well as further continuing to explore and identify core efficiencies and restricting aspects of non-essential spend, and seek to continue to review contracts.
- 1.72. To support the Council's underlying financial pressures a number of cost saving proposals are being consulted upon, which aim to provide the financial base to enable the continued support and retention of core local services

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
	Highways and Transport		+1.061	+0.152	+0.068	+0.030
твс	Increase parking charges This item relates to the extension of parking charges to formerly free car parks and the adoption of a policy to increase parking tariffs annually in line with inflation.	Director of Transport and Infrastruct ure	-0.450	-0.186	-0.191	-0.197
твс	Safe Haven outside schools (Parking) This items relates to the annual cost of licences for the enforcement of Keep Clear zones at school gates using ANPR cameras.	Director of Transport and Infrastruct ure	+0.010			
TBC	Parking PDA / Back Office System contract - fall out of one off set up cost This saving relates to the cost efficiencies arising from procurement of a new system to manage the electronic payments for parking and the processing of Penalty Charge Notices.	Director of Transport and Infrastruct ure	-0.030			
TBC	Parking - Part-year effect of strategy changes This item relates to the impact (part year) of recent changes to the arrangements for Pay and Display car parking in formerly "free towns" across the borough.	Director of Transport and Infrastruct ure	-0.720			
TBC	Parking - Staff and member parking The Council expects to achieve savings in the costs of staff and member parking permits through changes to the policies on issuing permits to provide better alignment with the Corporate Travel Plan.	Director of Transport and Infrastruct ure	-0.250			
TBC	Transport and Infrastructure Strategy Team – Restructure This item relates to the saving arising from changes to the Strategy Teams, which fill existing staff vacancies and reduce reliance on agency consultancy staff. The approach is intended to improve organisational capacity for transport planning, improving responsiveness and resilience.	Director of Transport and Infrastruct ure		-0.150		
твс	Local Bus This growth relates to the expected changes in the Councils costs of procuring contracts for local supported bus routes, which are expected to be impacted by cost inflation	Director of Transport and Infrastruct ure	+1.545			

1.73. Full list of change proposals for this committee are noted in the table below.

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MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
	arising from higher operating costs, staff and fuel. The expected pressure is £1.5m above existing budgets of £2.8m.					
TBC	FlexiLink Service Improvement Plan - invest to save This item relates to the Council's plans to extend and modernise its demand-responsive transport service – FlexiLink. Investment is needed to adopt a new digital booking system, a dynamic route planning system and modern customer information and publicity. Introduction of fares will lead to the new services generating income in future	Director of Transport and Infrastruct ure	+0.592	+0.294	-0.003	-0.135
твс	years. Advertising Income. Initial project scoping work being undertaken to understand scale/complexity and resourcing needs Maximise opportunities to sell targeted advertising through use of council assets, focusing on high value opportunities. This includes Bus Stop advertising.	Director of Transport and Infrastruct ure	-0.025	-0.075	-0.050	
твс	Pension Costs Adjustment This item relates to pension contributions funded by the Council. This results from a successful financial strategy to secure stability in the funding of future pension liabilities. The effect is a reduction in overheads in pay cost budgets following a change in the employer's contribution rate confirmed by the Cheshire Pension Fund.	Interim Executive Director of Resources	-0.055	-0.108	-0.018	-0.020
твс	Pay InflationThe pay deal agreed for 2024/25 included a pay increase for individuals of the greater of £1,290 or 2.5%. This growth in budget reflects the shortfall compared to the flat percentage budget increase of 3% within original MTFS for 2024/25 now included in 2025/26 budget increase. Plus 2.5% inflation rate for 2025/26 onwards.National Insurance increase for 2025/26 onwards also included (to be offset in part by a grant from central government).	Interim Executive Director of Resources	+0.228	+0.111	+0.114	+0.117
ТВС	Flood and Water Management Act 2010 SuDS and SABs Schedule 3 Implementation The introduction of Schedule 3 mandates local authorities in England to establish SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) Approval Bodies (SABs) for approving and adopting sustainable drainage systems. To prepare, the council, as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) needs to grow and train the team and other services staff in preparation for the additional duties, responsibilities and processes this will bring.	Director of Transport and Infrastruct ure		+0.050	+0.050	+0.100
	Highways: Revenue Service This provides investment in highway infrastructure that will arrest the deterioration of the asset. This will reduce costs of reactive maintenance, improve safety and reduce risks of significant incidents. It will also control revenue budget pressures and work towards	Director of Transport and Infrastruct ure	+0.216	+0.216	+0.216	+0.216

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MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m			
	addressing customer dissatisfaction. Subject to capital investment being available.								
	Highways: Depots The highways depots need investment to reduce the risk that facilities could be unusable for reactive and winter maintenance. Investment will enable some operational efficiencies, providing winter service resilience and a reduction in highways depots from 3 to 2, delivering a capital receipt.	Director of Transport and Infrastruct ure			-0.050	-0.051			
*Values represent a +/- variation to the Cheshire East Council approved budget for 2024/25.									

Subsequent years are the incremental change from the previous year. Negative numbers represent a budget saving or additional income. Positive numbers represent budget growth or reduced income.

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#### Finance Sub Committee (central budgets)

- 1.74. Central Budgets and general Council funding are not specifically related to services that residents use but are important in resourcing the overall budget. The following proposals in the next two tables relate to Council borrowing, investments and forecast income from general grants and local taxation.
- 1.75. Full list of change proposals for this committee are noted in the tables below.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
	Finance Sub (central budgets)		+35.481	+18.510	+7.919	+6.695
твс	Capital Financing - Minimum Revenue Provision The revenue impact of capital spending also results in annual spending. Inflation, high interest rates on borrowing, including the interest that the Council is paying for holding the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit on the balance sheet (£5.6m) and an ambitious capital programme results in increased need for annual revenue.	Interim Executive Director of Resources	+9.695	+3.718	+3.381	+1.542
твс	Use of Earmarked Reserves (reversal of 2024/25 one off use of central EMRs) Reversal of the planned one-year use of central earmarked reserves budgeted to be used in 2024/25.	Interim Executive Director of Resources	+0.579			
твс	Use of General Reserves (reversal of one off use in 2024/25) Reversal of the planned one-year use of General Reserves budgeted to be used in 2024/25.	Interim Executive Director of Resources	+11.654			
ТВС	<b>Top up General Reserves</b> This is a planned annual contribution to General Reserves to replenish up to a minimum target of £20m by the end of the medium term.	Interim Executive Director of Resources	+5.000			
TBC	Creation of Contingency Budget To cover inflation risks across the council including changes resulting from recent national budget changes impacting on our contractors	Interim Executive Director of Resources	+9.280	+11.342	+6.098	+6.363
твс	Risk of unachievable budget savings or growth demands exceeding estimates This is based on 10% of the budget changes related to budget savings in each year.	Interim Executive Director of Resources		+3.450	-1.560	-1.210
TBC	Pension adjustment – linked to E&C growth item This item is to bring the service budgets for all staffing up to the same point regarding pension contributions. This has a net nil impact for the Council as a whole.	Interim Executive Director of Resources	-0.727			

\*Values represent a +/- variation to the Cheshire East Council approved budget for 2024/25.

Subsequent years are the incremental change from the previous year. Negative numbers represent a budget saving or additional income. Positive numbers represent budget growth or reduced income.

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## Finance Sub Committee (funding budgets)

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes (incremental)	SRO/ Director	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
	Finance Sub (funding budgets)		-27.499	-14.451	-19.391	-20.515
твс	Council Tax increase % growth. Council Tax currently provides 76% of the net funding for Council services and is paid by occupiers and owners of domestic property within the borough. The MTFS includes increases of 4.99% in every year from 2025/26 to 2028/29.	Interim Executive Director of Resources	-14.326	-15.290	-16.204	-17.214
твс	<b>Council Tax increase base growth</b> . The Council Taxbase is increasing each year due to ongoing housing development. The calculation of additional Council Tax from the growth in the taxbase also reflects any changes in discounts, exemptions, premiums and Council Tax Support. The increase in housing numbers in the MTFS is currently forecast to be 2,000 in 2025/26 and 1,800 each year thereafter to fall back in line with the Local Plan estimates.	Interim Executive Director of Resources	-5.852	-3.037	-3.187	-3.301
твс	Business Rates Retention – This value relates to the inflationary increase forecast to be received as part of the Settlement Funding Assessment (part of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement due late December).	Interim Executive Director of Resources	-0.495			
твс	Unringfenced general grants change. See Appendix C Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement – Impact for further breakdown	Interim Executive Director of Resources	-3.847	+3.876		
ТВС	National Insurance increase contribution. Grant income estimated to help towards the direct costs associated with the increase in employers National Insurance from April 2025. Final allocations will be announced as part of the Final Local Government Settlement in February 2025. Direct costs have benne estimated to be c.3.7m	Interim Executive Director of Resources	-2.979			
*\/alues.re	present a +/- variation to the Chechire East Counc	annroved bu	idget for $2024/24$	5		

\*Values represent a +/- variation to the Cheshire East Council approved budget for 2024/25.

Subsequent years are the incremental change from the previous year. Negative numbers represent a budget saving or additional income. Positive numbers represent budget growth or reduced income.

## **Corporate Policy Committee**

1.1. Full list of capital proposals for this committee are noted in the table below.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Capital Programme Additions	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	Total £m	Grant	External contribut ion	Internal contribut ion	Borrowin g
	Corporate Policy	+5.356	+3.505	+3.554	+0.200	+12.615				+12.615
TBC	Accelerate Digital – (Digital efficiencies) Capital Acceleration of the Council's ongoing digital programme to maximise the use of digital options to provide end-to-end service improvement and efficiencies through the accelerated use of emerging technologies. Including the use of Artificial Intelligence and robotics capabilities to enhance on-line offering for customers, automated business processing, improved reporting and case management. Associated revenue savings will be allocated to individual service areas based on business cases agreed with each service manager.	+1.532	+1.350	+1.377		+4.259				+4.259
TBC	Digital Blueprint - Capital Development of a strategic fast track opportunities to deliver financial benefits across all directorates. The Digital Blueprint initiative will accelerate the Council's digital portfolio through fast-track validation and delivery of 30 plus targeted options. These options will provide financial and improvement opportunities across a diverse range of Cheshire East Business services. Associated revenue savings will be allocated to individual service areas based on business cases agreed with each service manager	+3.490	+1.663	+1.377		+6.530				+6.530
TBC	Core Business Systems Previously referred to as Core Financials, this relates to the Council's core business systems; mainly Unit4 ERP in respect of HR & payroll, purchasing and sales invoicing as well as accounting. The proposals here include improvements following the HR and payroll health check and anticipated migration to ERPx (the next significant upgrade of the system).	+0.334	+0.492	+0.800	+0.200	+1.826				+1.826

## Economy and Growth Committee

1.2. Full list of capital proposals for this committee are noted in the table below.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Capital Programme Additions	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	Total £m	Grant	External contribut ion	Internal contribut ion	Borrowi ng
	Economy and Growth	+1.758	+3.451	+3.916	+6.899	+16.024	+3.336			+12.688
	Green Structures investment (Public Rights of Way)		+0.300	+0.116	+0.250	+0.666				+0.666
TBC	Capital investment is required on a growing number of structures - currently 30 - which carry Green Infrastructure (Public Rights of Way and Countryside Ranger Service) assets over or adjacent to waterways, for example. Investment is required for replacement or maintenance to comply with statutory duties and for public safety.									
TBC	Disabled Facilities Grant	+0.936	+0.800	+0.800	+3.600	+6.136	+3.336			+2.800
	Statutory Disabled Facilities Grants support people with disabilities to live independently in the home of their choice by making their home more suitable, preventing admission to hospital, residential and nursing care. Grants are means tested and provided to disabled people following an assessment of their physical and health needs.									
твс	Septic Tanks				+0.049	+0.049				+0.049
	Initial capital funding identified to mitigate identified statutory compliance issues with several domestic sewage treatment and septic tanks located around the borough, where the Council has retained management and maintenance responsibilities, post the disposal of former Council housing estates.									
твс	Premises Capital	+0.822	+2.351	+3.000	+3.000	+9.173				+9.173
	Essential funding to ensure the Council's estate is kept in a safe and compliant condition and ensure that premises can remain operational.									

## **Environment and Communities Committee**

1.3. Full list of capital proposals for this committee are noted in the table below.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Capital Programme Additions	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	Total £m	Grants	External Contribu tion/capi tal receipt	Internal Contribu tion	Borrowi ng
	Environment and Communities	+7.402	+0.250	+0.250		+7.902		+1.042	+6.110	+0.750
твс	Weekly Food Waste Collections - Additional Capital Requirement New Statutory obligation on the Council announced under original Simpler Recycling legislation to introduce weekly food waste collections to all properties by April 2026. The funding is required to secure infrastructure investment, fleet and waste bins in order to implement this mandatory service. The costs of borrowing are included within the business plan and hence MTFS growth line item for Environmental Services. Macclesfield Cemetery Second Chapel	+5.510 +0.600				+5.510 +0.600			+5.510 +0.600	
	Investment into creation of a second chapel at Macclesfield Cemetery in order to create additional capacity for bereavement services offered to residents as a known demand, hence securing additional income for the organisation. The revenue costs of borrowing will be covered by increased income generation created as a result of enabling this additional capacity.									
твс	<b>Parks</b> Various infrastructure investment works at park and green space sites across the borough, fully funded from s106 contributions	+1.042				+1.042		+1.042		
твс	Strategic Transport Model This project will provide the evidence base for Council's new Local Plan (Spatial Strategy) and Infrastructure Delivery Plan responding to governments new planning regulations. The approach will ensure that robust	+0.250	+0.250	+0.025		+0.750				+0.750

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Capital Programme Additions	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	Total £m	Grants	External Contribu tion/capi tal receipt	Internal Contribu tion	Borrowi ng
	decisions on site selections, environmental impacts and infrastructure requirements can be made.									

## Highways and Transport Committee

1.4. Full list of capital proposals for this committee are noted in the table below.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Proposed Capital Programme Additions	2025/26 £m*	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	Total £m	Grant	External contribu tion/capi tal receipt	Internal Contribu tion	Borrowi ng
	Highways and Transport	+8.130	+12.422	+12.883	+11.501	+44.936	+7.982	+0.060		+36.894
	Highways Maintenance Capital	+7.340	+11.501	+11.501	+11.501	+41.843	+7.982			+33.861
TBC	This provides investment in highway infrastructure that will arrest the deterioration of the asset. This will reduce costs of reactive maintenance, improve safety and reduce risks of significant incidents. It will also control revenue budget pressures and work towards addressing customer dissatisfaction.									
TBC	Booth's Bridge Plumley	+0.790				+0.790				+0.790
	Relaces the bridge that has been demolished for safety reasons.									
твс	Highways: Depots		+0.921	+1.382		+2.303		+0.060		+2.243
	The highways depots need investment to reduce the risk that facilities could be unusable for reactive and winter maintenance. Investment will enable some operational efficiencies, provides winter service resilience and a reduction in highways depots from 3 to 2, delivering a capital receipt.									

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Grant / income stream	Treatment	Core Spending Power (CSP) Allocation (Dec 2024) £m	Revised Net Revenue Funding Envelope (Dec 2024) £m	Comment on difference between CSP and Net Funding Envelope	Forecast Net Revenue Funding Envelope (CPC Nov 2024) £m	Value / Reason for change in funding compared to November estimate £m / text
Council Tax requirement excluding parish precepts	Unringfenced	305.1	307.3	Difference due to MHCLG assumed taxbase increase included in CSP rather than actual increase	307.3	No change
Settlement Funding Assessment – Baseline Funding Level (excluding RSG)	Unringfenced	46.5	57.1	Shown in MTFS as Business Rates Retention Scheme funding	57.1	No change
Compensation for under indexing the business rates multiplier	Unringfenced	9.4	-	Grant income included in (£57.1m) total above along with proportion of other S31 business rates grants	-	No change
Revenue Support Grant	Unringfenced	0.8	0.8		0.4	+0.4 Extended rights to free transport rolled into RSG (previously outside the CSP calculation)
Social Care Grant	Unringfenced	29.5	29.5		27.3	<b>+2.2</b> Additional funding compared to October Budget statement plus only partial council tax precept equalisation resulting in more grant than estimated
New Homes Bonus	Unringfenced	3.0	3.0		3.0	No change

Appendix C – Provisional Local Government Settlement 2025/26

Services Grant	Unringfenced	-	-		0.3	-0.3m Grant no longer exists from 2025/26
Children's Social Care Prevention Grant	Unringfenced	0.8	0.8			+0.8m New grant from 2025/26
Targeted deprivation funding stream	Unringfenced	-	-		1.6	-1.6m Estimated funding based on October Budget statement headlines. This has been superseded by other named grants
Recovery Grant	Unringfenced	-	-	Do not qualify to receive this grant	-	-
Funding Floor	Unringfenced	-	-	Do not qualify to receive this grant	-	-
Rural Services Delivery Grant	Unringfenced	-	-	Do not qualify to receive this grant	-	-
Housing Benefit Administration	Unringfenced	-	0.7	Not included in CSP	0.7	-
NNDR Admin Grant	Unringfenced	-	0.6	Not included in CSP	0.6	-
Local Reform and Community Voices	Unringfenced	-	0.2	Not included in CSP	0.2	-
Social Care in Prisons	Unringfenced	-	0.1	Not included in CSP	0.1	-
War Pension Scheme Disregard	Unringfenced	-	0.1	Not included in CSP	0.1	-
Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Grant	Ringfenced	0.8	-	Ringfenced income included in ASC service budget – previously outside of the CSP calculation	-	No change
Improved Better Care Fund + Discharge Funding (now rolled together)	Ringfenced	10.7	-	Ringfenced income included in ASC service budget	-	No change
ASC Sustainability and Improvement Fund	Ringfenced	6.3	-	Ringfenced income included in ASC service budget	-	No change

Appendix C – Provisional Local Government Settlement 2025/26

Contribution towards National Insurance employer increase	Unringfenced	-	3.0 (estimated)	Not included in CSP settlement. Will be included as part of the final settlement	-	Costs associated with the increase have been estimated to be c.£3.7m
Core Spending Power Total		413.1				
Net Revenue Budget Funding Envelope			403.2		398.7	+4.5m Net improvement to the funding envelope compared to the position reported to Corporate Policy Committee November 2024
Core Spending per dwelling		£2,173		Based on 190,079 homes		
Net Revenue Funding Envelope per dwelling			£2,105	Based on 190,079 homes		

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Appendix D – Council Tax benchmarking and scenarios

This Appendix provides contextual information in regards to national Council Tax Policy as well as the impact on the finances of Cheshire East Council.

## Local government finance policy statement 2025 to 2026

Published 28 November 2024 (Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government)

#### **Council Tax referendum limits**

Council tax referendum principles must strike a balance between the burden on the taxpayer and funding local authority need, whilst acting as an additional local democratic check and balance. Whilst we recognise that council tax is a critical part of local government's funding, worth more than 50% of the Settlement, the government is also committed to protecting local taxpayers from excessive council tax increases.

The council tax referendum principles we are proposing are consistent with the assumptions made by the previous government and the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). They are not a cap, nor do they force councils to set taxes at the threshold level. The decisions on the level to set, or whether to hold a referendum to go beyond the referendum principle, sit squarely with local authorities, which must consider the pressures many households are facing, as well as their requirement to set a balanced budget. The proposed referendum principles are:

- A core council tax referendum limit for local authorities of up to 3%;
- An adult social care precept of 2% for all local authorities responsible for adult social care services;

#### **Exceptional financial support**

The government is under no illusions about the scale of the issues facing local government, and this Settlement will begin to address the pressures that councils are under. But this is a long-term project to deliver financial security for councils, and we recognise that we may see some continued instability as we adjust to the new system.

Any council concerned about its financial position or its ability to set or maintain a balanced budget should make contact with MHCLG. The government has a framework in place to support councils in the most difficult positions. As part of this, we will not seek to replicate conditions that made borrowing more expensive.

Where a council in need of exceptional financial support views additional council tax increases as critical to maintaining their financial sustainability, the government will continue to consider requests for bespoke referendum principles. Local proposals will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In considering any requests, the government will take account of councils' specific circumstances, for example their existing levels of council tax relative to the average, the potential impact on local taxpayers, and the strength of plans to protect vulnerable people.

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Appendix D – Council Tax benchmarking and scenarios

## Council Tax benchmarking - Cheshire East compared to others

Cheshire East council tax compared to (average of) nearest neighbours – Average Band D of all NNs: £1,827.30 (CEC is 1.94% lower than the average).

Cheshire East core spending power compared to (average of) nearest neighbours – Average CSP per dwelling of all NNs: £2,202.36 (CEC is 5.77% lower than the average).

Council Tax income in 2024/25 if using Cheshire West and Chester Band D rate and CEC taxbase: Would equate to an extra £14.7m in 2024/25.

The chart below shows the amount of council tax foregone due to not raising council tax to the maximum referendum level. Results for this are a cumulative shortall in income since 2011/12 of at least £120m, after taking account of the funding received via the Council Tax freeze grants (the assumption is that each annual grant then rolled into Formula grant/Settlement funding assessment (SFA) in some way with no future funding cuts).

The graph shows that for 2024/25, if we had increased council tax income to the maximum referendum limit every year then by the time we get to the 2024/25 year we would have had £35m more in council tax income for this year (albeit SFA may have been lower. RSG already almost nil).



Appendix D – Council Tax benchmarking and scenarios

## **Council Tax some indicative scenarios**

When raising Council Tax in one year, the impact has a cumulative benefit in future years. Below are a number of indicative scenarios and the impact on the overall funding available to the council if the Council wished to request additional council tax flexibilities as part of its Exceptional Financial Support.

In the tables below, "Taxbase" is the number of "Band D" equivalent properties that the Council has. This will grow over time with housing growth but does also take into account the number of people receiving discounts such as Single Person Discount, Council Tax Support etc.

The increase of 4.99% is made up of both the general Council Tax increase and the allowed Social Care precept. Our current assumptions are that this will remain at this level across the life of the MTFS period.

For Cheshire East, 1% Council Tax rise is equivalent to c.£3m additional funding.

Council Tax	2024/25				
Income	Actual	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Taxbase	160,151.52	163,261.10	164,776.94	166,292.79	167,808.63
	£	£	£	£	£
Band D	1,792.59	1,882.04	1,975.95	2,074.55	2,178.07
Increase	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
Council Tax	£287.1m	£307.3m	£325.6m	£345.0m	£365.5m
revenue					

#### **Current MTFS assumption -**

#### Extra 5% in 2025/26 only

This scenario is based on the same taxbase growth but with a one-off request for an additional 5% Council Tax in 2025/26. In this scenario whilst the current MTFS gap is not fully closed for either 2025/26 and 2026/27, it would close gaps for the years after that. It would reduce the amount of Exceptional Finance Support (and subsequent borrowing required) in the first two years of the MTFS.

Council Tax	2024/25				
Income	Actual	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Taxbase	160,151.52	163,261.10	164,776.94	166,292.79	167,808.63
	£	£	£	£	£
Band D	1,792.59	1,971.67	2,070.06	2,173.35	2,281.80
Increase	4.99%	9.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
Council Tax	£287.1m	£321.9m	£341.1m	£361.4m	£382.9m
revenue					
Additional Council Tax		+£14.6m	+£15.5m	+ £16.4m	+£17.4m
(compared to current MTFS					
assumptions)					
Cumulative 4 year impact					+£63.9m

## Appendix D – Council Tax benchmarking and scenarios

#### Extra 2% in 2025/26, 2% in 2026/27 and 1% in 2027/28

This scenario is based on the same taxbase growth but with a one-off request for an additional 5% Council Tax but spread over the first three years. In this scenario whilst the current MTFS gap is not fully closed for either 25/26 and 26/27, it would close gaps for the years after that. It would reduce the amount of Exceptional Finance Support (and subsequent borrowing required) in the first 2 years of the MTFS. It would provide less overall funding.

Council Tax	2024/25				
Income	Actual	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Taxbase	160,151.52	163,261.10	164,776.94	166,292.79	167,808.63
	£	£	£	£	£
Band D	1,792.59	1,917.89	2,051.95	2,174.86	2,283.39
Increase	4.99%	6.99%	6.99%	5.99%	4.99%
Council Tax	£287.1m	£313.1m	£338.1m	£361.7m	£383.2m
revenue					
Additional Council Tax		+£5.9m	+£12.5m	+ £16.7m	+£17.7m
(compared to current MTFS					
assumptions)					
Cumulative 4 year impact				+£52.8m	





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**Highways & Transport Committee** 

23 January 2025

Local Transport Plan 2025

Report of: Tom Moody, Director of Transport and Infrastructure

Report Reference No: HTC/40/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: All wards

## **Purpose of Report**

- 1 As a statutory Local Transport Authority, the Council is required to maintain an up-to-date Local Transport Plan (LTP). The purpose of this report is to update on the progress of a new LTP for Cheshire East, which will provide a policy framework for transport across the borough and guide investment in the local transport network. Work over 2024 has focused on defining problems and objectives, including production of a draft evidence base and draft vision and objectives for the next LTP.
- 2 This report outlines the work undertaken to date and seeks approval to undertake public consultation on the draft LTP vision and objectives included in Appendix 1. This report also seeks to establish a Member Reference Group to support the preparation of the LTP.

## **Executive Summary**

3 The Local Transport Plan is a key part of the Council's policy framework, as it sets the local policy framework and investment priorities to meet the transport and travel needs of the borough. The current LTP was adopted in 2019 for the period of 2019-2024. Therefore, now the time is right for a new LTP document to ensure that the Council maintains a strategic policy framework that is robust and relevant to both national, regional and local priorities. The LTP will also set the context for future investment plans and prioritising within budget constraints, to contribute to overall policy outcomes including new housing, employment opportunities, sustainability, health and wellbeing.

- 4 The existing LTP 2019-2024 for Cheshire East was prepared prepandemic, and prior to many recent changes in transport policy. As a result, the current LTP is no longer fit-for-purpose as a framework for local transport within Cheshire East. In addition, within the context of recent and emerging changes to policy, for example, the Bus Service Improvement Plan and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans, these raise potential implications and opportunities for local transport. To ensure that the Council has a clear, evidence-based position on these matters there is a need for them to be considered as part of our next LTP.
- 5 To support development of problems and objectives, a draft evidence base was developed in 2024 for the next LTP, noting some gaps which we are looking to fill around travel patterns. The evidence base has been grouped under five headings and this can be found in Appendix 2:
  - (a) Our Community explores the demographics, health and digital connectivity profile across Cheshire East.
  - (b) Improve Transport for All sets out the baseline position for all modes of travel, understanding the potential for mode shift and users experience.
  - (c) Grow the Economy sets out understanding of the economic profile of the borough (e.g., skills, productivity, jobs distribution) and how jobs impact travel behaviour and connectivity requirements.
  - (d) Reduce Environmental Impacts given that transport is a large carbon emitter, it is essential to consider the relationship between travel and the environment within a Cheshire East context.
  - (e) Trends sets out some of the current transport trends and projections, and forecasts for what the future of transport may look like for Cheshire East.
- 6 A draft vision and objectives have also been prepared and are set out in Appendix 1. The draft vision is "A connected, safe and sustainable transport network, accessible to all, that supports a healthy, prosperous Cheshire East". Aims and objectives have been developed around the themes of improving connections, improving the wellbeing our community, reducing environmental impacts and growing the economy.
- 7 In December 2024, the National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) was revised, setting out how planning policy needs to be applied. Our approach to local transport objective-setting was produced prior to the release of this guidance however is flexible and able to adapt to changes in the spatial planning / development landscape for the

borough. The NPPF has three overarching objectives which need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. The three objectives are based around the themes of the economy, social and the environment. Our draft LTP vision, aims and objectives align with these objectives.

- 8 Subject to approval by Committee, an 8-week consultation is proposed in early 2025 to seek the views of stakeholders and residents on the extent to which the public agree with the draft vision, aims and objectives and the role transport will play in achieving these. A Consultation and Engagement Plan and Communications Plan is included at Appendix 3 and Appendix 4.
- 9 Following the consultation, the initial next steps would be to consider the feedback received, refresh the vision, aims and objectives, and produce the LTP strategy. Progress on this would be reported to Committee in due course.
- 10 The report also recommends that an LTP Member Reference Group is established to act as an informal sounding board to support the preparation of the LTP.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Highways & Transport Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the updated Evidence Base for the next Local Transport Plan (see Appendix 2).
- 2. Approve the draft vision, aims and objectives set out at Appendix 1 as a basis for public consultation.
- 3. Approve the proposed approach to public consultation in line with the Consultation and Engagement Plan at Appendix 3 and Communications Plan at Appendix 4.
- 4. Delegate authority to the Director of Transport and Infrastructure to finalise the consultation material and undertake the public consultation.
- 5. Approve that a Member Reference Group is established to support the preparation of the Local Transport Plan with the proposed membership and Terms of Reference as set out in Appendix 5.

## Background

11 The existing LTP 2019-2024 for Cheshire East was prepared prepandemic, and prior to many recent changes in transport policy including, but not limited to: Gear Change (2020), The Transport Decarbonisation Plan (2021), Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy (2022) and Bus Back Better (2021). In addition, there is emerging evidence and strategy at the pan-Northern level by Transport for the North including the Strategic Transport Plan and supporting documentation.

- 12 Local transport provision also needs to be considered in the context of recent and emerging local policy documents. This includes development of several specific local transport strategies, including the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy (EVCIS) and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).
- 13 In addition, there is a need to capture changes in travel patterns that have emerged since COVID-19 and ensure our next LTP aligns to new patterns and habits. Also, we understand that technological advancements in recent years and future technological changes have the potential to change the landscape for transport over the next 10-15 years.
- 14 As a result of the above, the current LTP is no longer fit-for-purpose as a framework for local transport within Cheshire East. All these considerations raise potential implications and opportunities for local transport within Cheshire East. To ensure that the Council has a clear, evidence-based position on these matters there is a need for them to be considered as part of our next LTP. Our draft vision, aims and objectives allow for the above factors in having a robust set of outcomes that we continue to deliver.
- 15 Within the draft LTP evidence base, a broad range of sources have been included across all modes of travel, for example, 2021 Census, National Travel Survey and indices of deprivation in addition to local data the Council has access to. It has been identified that travel related 2021 Census data has limitations given that this was undertaken during COVID-19 where restrictions applied to travel. As a result, we are considering whether a household travel survey would be appropriate to fill this gap in knowledge. Work has also been commissioned to enhance our evidence base through mobile phone data. This will be analysed via Streetlight software which is a user interface to visualise transport data including for example road volumes, speeds and travel times.
- 16 With a draft evidence base and draft vision, aims and objectives now is a crucial time to consult and to gain public input into the LTP process.
- 17 It is important to note the English Devolution White Paper published in December 2024, which highlights the role of transport in many successful devolved authorities, including Mayoral Combined Authorities. While the impacts of this are still to be worked through,

there could be potential for a wider Cheshire and Warrington approach to transport in future.

18 To assist the preparation of the LTP, it is recommended that a Member Reference Group is established to act as an informal sounding board for officers throughout the lifecycle of the LTP development process. Formal decisions regarding the LTP would be made by the Highways and Transport Committee or Full Council. Draft Terms of Reference for the Group are appended to this report (see Appendix 5).

## **Consultation and Engagement**

A period of stakeholder and public consultation is proposed for 8 weeks in early 2025. Views will be sought from across the transport industry for example, the bus industry, service users, Town and Parish Councils, wider stakeholders, local businesses, and residents. The consultation will primarily be online, with several focus groups for targeted engagement, which will include schools and young people for example. A Consultation and Engagement Plan has been developed in conjunction with the Council's Research & Consultation Team (see Appendix 3), as well as a Communications Plan (see Appendix 4).

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 20 Noting work to date on the next LTP, consulting on the vision, aims and objectives and gaining public input at this stage will ensure that the Council is in a strong position to have a robust plan for the future of transport in the borough that the public have fed into.
- 21 It is important that LTP consultation follows the Gunning principles, and consulting on the LTP vision, aims and objectives now will ensure these are followed. The principles include ensuring consultation takes place at a formative stage, that enough time for consideration and response is given to the public and also in relation to any feedback and giving conscientious consideration to points raised where appropriate.
- 22 It would be beneficial to have a Member Reference Group to help guide the production of the forthcoming LTP work.

## **Other Options Considered**

23 As the LTP is a statutory document, there is a requirement to update the strategic policy framework, and consultation is an essential part of policy development. Without consultation at this stage, this could hinder the robustness of the future LTP and risk a lack of public support for it. Consulting now will ensure views are heard and can be incorporated into the next steps.

24 The LTP could be prepared without a Member Reference Group, however the benefit from having an informal Member sounding board to support the development of the LTP would not be achieved.

Option	Impact	Risk
Progress without consultation	Strategy progressed without public input	Lack of public support for the future LTP.
Progress without a Member Reference Group	No informal Member sounding board	Lack of Member buy- in to future LTP which could cause re-work.

## **Implications and Comments**

## Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 25 As the statutory Local Transport Authority, the Council is required to maintain an up-to-date LTP that provides a strategic framework for planning and delivery of improvements in local transport provision.
- 26 Development of the new LTP will need to be in accordance with statutory and legal requirements set out within Part II of the Transport Act 2000 and for Community Engagement, Equalities Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Appraisal.
- 27 Members must be fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered, the equalities implications of the decisions they are taking. This will ensure that there is proper appreciation of any potential impact of any decision on the Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum, this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equality Impact Assessments produced by officers.
- 28 There is no statutory duty to consult on proposals to change the way in which a local authority carries out its duties but there is an expectation enshrined in case law that any local authority making decisions affecting the public will do so fairly and in a way that cannot be said to be an abuse of power.
- 29 It is therefore important to test the fairness of the Council's approach by way of consultation on any changes which would have the effect of withdrawing existing benefits or advantages available to its residents. Such consultation should involve those directly affected by such changes together with the relevant representative groups. The responses to the consultation will need to be conscientiously taken into

account when Highways and Transport Committee makes any future decisions on the LTP.

- 30 It should be noted that breach of a duty to consult would risk the Council being subjected to legal challenge by way of judicial review.
- 31 Any Consultation must be conducted with adherence to the following:

(a) the consultation must take place at a time when the proposals are still at a formative stage;

(b) the proposer must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit of intelligent consideration and response;

(c) adequate time must be given for consideration and response;

(d) the product of the consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising the proposals.

## Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 32 The LTP development work is funded by the Transport Policy and Rail and Transport Integration budgets. This programme of work has been built into the service plan for 2024/25 and 2025/26 and will be delivered within existing revenue budgets and the LTP capital programme with no impact on the MTFS.
- 33 Upon completion and adoption by the Council, the next LTP will provide a policy framework to inform the annual capital programme for transport. The LTP will be implemented utilising applicable funding from a range of sources including: LTP Integrated Transport Block funding; Section 106 & 278; the Council's capital and revenue programmes, oneoff funding programmes and external funding. There is also the opportunity for the LTP to inform and influence other investment programmes across the Council, including public health, regeneration, carbon reduction etc.
- 34 The Council's capital programme remains under review with any schemes requiring Council resources being challenged in order to reduce the call on prudential borrowing.

## Policy

- 35 Having an up-to-date LTP will ensure that the Council maintains a current statement of Local Transport Strategy in accordance with its responsibilities as the Local Transport Authority.
- 36 Cheshire East's Corporate Plan recognises the importance of transport in supporting key strategic objectives such as reducing air pollution,

reducing carbon emissions, enabling housing and employment growth, improving quality of place and protecting the environment. The LTP will also need to align to the emerging Cheshire East Plan, which will replace the Corporate Plan.

- 37 The LTP (2019-2024) outlines the role transport will play in supporting the goals to improve the economy, protect the environment, improve health and wellbeing and the quality of place. However, this will expire at the end of 2024 and therefore production of a new LTP is required in line with latest policies and strategies to have a long-term plan for transport across the borough.
- 38 The LTP draft vision, aims and objectives set out the ambition for "A connected, safe and sustainable transport network, accessible to all, that and supports a healthy, prosperous Cheshire East" and include aims and objectives around the themes of Improve Transport for All, Our Community, Reduce Environmental Impacts and Grow the Economy as seen in Appendix 1.

An open and enabling organisation	A council which empowers and cares about people	A thriving and sustainable place
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	About people Work together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient Reduce health inequalities across the borough	A great place for people to live, work and visit Reduce impact on the environment A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel Be a carbon neutral council by 2025

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

39 The Council will fully evaluate the equality implications of the proposed LTP through an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). The draft EqIA has been developed which focuses on the protected characteristic groups (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership). Whilst the new LTP will impact the entire borough, there is a need to engage with the protected groups to help better understand any impacts and identify mitigation if required. Therefore, a series of focus groups is proposed as part of the consultation period to gain input from some of these groups. The EqIA will be updated following consultation with protected equality groups, particularly young people, older people and people with disabilities. The draft EqIA is included at Appendix 6.

## Human Resources

40 There are no direct implications for Human Resources.

## Risk Management

41 In terms of governance and corporate oversight, a governance structure including a steering group has been established including colleagues from key enabling services. This will ensure that the process of undertaking the LTP is robust, as well providing as oversight of the LTP process. A risk register for the project has been developed and will be maintained throughout the life of the project.

## **Rural Communities**

42 The Corporate Plan outlines targets to reduce areas of the borough not served by public transport. The Corporate Plan also identifies the desire for thriving and active rural communities by 2025. The Council's Rural Action Plan (2022) highlights the importance of public transport links to help small businesses access markets or making it practical for employees to seek work in rural communities. Transport can also bring customers and tourists to local rural businesses such as shops, hotels and B&Bs. The importance of transport for rural communities has been taken into consideration in the LTP evidence base and will be considered further in the next LTP. The LTP will also need to align to the emerging Cheshire East Plan, which will replace the Corporate Plan.

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

43 The next LTP will consider home to school transport, including the current transformation programme that is working to optimise travel to and from schools and colleges. The Corporate Plan outlines the significant pressures in Children's Services, particularly placements for looked after children and services for children with special educational needs, including home to school transport.

## Public Health

44 There are pockets of deprivation in Cheshire East related to income, health and life chances. Transport infrastructure enables a greater proportion of residents to access important services such as health care facilities. The continued delivery of transport infrastructure and having a robust plan in place helps to address the Corporate Plan target to reduce inequalities across the borough. The LTP will need to be coordinated with the Council's wider strategic approaches to addressing public health outcomes. Officers from the Public Health service will be engaged in production of the strategy. The LTP will also need to align to the emerging Cheshire East Plan, which will replace the Corporate Plan.

## Climate Change

45 Cheshire East Council have committed to be carbon neutral by 2027 and to influence carbon reduction across the borough in order to become a carbon neutral borough by 2045. This will be taken into consideration as part of the next LTP and has been considered within the Evidence Base document in Appendix 2.

Access to Informa	Access to Information				
Contact Officer:	Richard Hibbert,				
	Head of Strategic Transport and Parking Service				
	Richard.Hibbert@cheshireeast.gov.uk				
Appendices:	1 – LTP vision and objectives				
	2 – Draft LTP Evidence Base				
	3 – Consultation and Engagement Plan				
	4 – Communications Plan				
	5 – Member Reference Group Terms of Reference				
	6 – Equality Impact Assessment				
Background Papers:	None				



# **Appendix 1**

# Local Transport Plan Vision and Objectives Summary

DRAFT

January 2025



Working for a brighter futures together



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## 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Previous Local Transport Plan work

In 2019, Cheshire East Council (CEC) adopted a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for the period of 2019-2024. This strategy encompassed all forms of transport, providing a framework to support broader policies aimed at enhancing the economy, protecting the environment, and creating attractive places to live, work and play. With the current LTP set to expire at the end of 2024, it is now time to develop a new LTP. It is also needed to create a forward-looking plan, one that takes account of a changing landscape over the last five years, and likely ongoing advances in how and why we travel. The pandemic has changed the way we travel and go about our everyday lives, and developing a new LTP provides an excellent chance to address this and move towards an effective transport network in the borough.

To begin this process, a detailed evidence base has been produced covering a broad scope to ensure that issues and opportunities are thoroughly understood. This evidence base is the foundation of future tasks in developing the LTP, with key findings summarised within Section 2 of this report.

#### 1.2 Overview of the Vision and Objectives Process

Following completion of the evidence base, the next stage in LTP development is defining the vision and objectives that will guide the development of an LTP. This has been designed with Triple Access Planning<sup>1</sup> in mind and adopting a vision-led approach, to ensure we are deciding what is needed to support our communities in their movement and travel choices, rather than predicting what might be required and providing to that. This vision-led, 'decide and provide' approach, means we have a greater chance of tackling challenges, both locally and nationally, and supporting wider policies such as the journey to becoming a carbon neutral borough.

Below shows the key activities within the development of a vision and objectives for the next LTP for Cheshire East.

Reviewing the Evidence Base	Determining key challenges and opportunities to consider for the next LTP		
Workshop 1	To gather input from key internal stakeholders and consider the direction needed for the LTP		
Developing Visions and Objectives	Taking the evidence and internal stakeholder input to develop initial visions and objectives		
Workshop 2	Testing emerging vision and objective options and introducing scenario planning		
Scenario Planning	Undertaking assessment of the vision and objectives across potential future changes		
Defining Vision and Objectives	Refining the vision and objectives based on further internal stakeholder input and scenario planning		
Workshop 3	Seeking feedback on the vision and objectives, followed by refinement and finalising for consultation		
Consultation	Preparing to share and consult with wider external stakeholders and the public		

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> <u>Triple Access Planning</u> - future sustainable urban accessibility can be achieved through the transport system (physical mobility), the land-use system (spatial proximity) and the telecommunications system (digital connectivity); together constituting a Triple Access System (TAS).

## 2. Summary of the Evidence Base

## 2.1 Introduction

A detailed evidence base has been produced for Cheshire East, with data analysis covering a wide range of areas, such as travel, health and wellbeing, demographics, environment and the economy. Transport affects all these areas and so it is important to have undertaken a wide-ranging evidence base to build a picture of the challenges and opportunities for Cheshire East.

The evidence base draws information from a range of data sources and has been grouped under five key themes, as follows:

- **Our Community** which explored the demographics, health and digital connectivity profile of Cheshire East.
- **Improve Transport for All** which sets out the baseline position for all modes of travel, understanding the potential for mode shift and users experience.
- **Grow the Economy** which set out the key details of the economic profile of the borough and how jobs impact travel behaviour and connectivity requirements.
- **Reduce Environmental Impacts** which considers the relationship between transport and the environment within Cheshire East.
- **Trends** which set out some of the current transport trends and projections and forecasts for what the future of transport may look like for Cheshire East.

This section summarises the key findings from the evidence base, which have been used to support the development of a vision and objectives for Cheshire East.

#### 2.2 Our Community

Key demographic findings included:

- Cheshire East is predominately rural in geography but predominately urban in population with 39% of residents living within rural areas and with 61% living within urban areas. Cheshire East's transport system needs to connect these more rural areas to services to ensure individuals have access to key amenities and life opportunities.
- Cheshire East has an increasingly ageing population with the age group of 65+ making up 22.3% of Cheshire East's population (89,225 individuals). This highlights a key demographic trend with a need to ensure older people have access to reliable and affordable public transport and are not excluded from the transport system.
- There are low levels of physical activity generally across the borough and large health inequalities. This can be seen especially in Crewe and Macclesfield where health and wellbeing scores are below the average in England. This shows that there needs to be targeted interventions unique to each area to address the disparities, whilst ensuring there is equitable access to healthcare services, education, employment, and income equality.

• There are key areas in Cheshire East in which residents are at high risk of Transport Related Social Exclusion (TRSE). This is the inability to access opportunities, key services, and community life; thereby, creating obstacles in everyday life. Some areas within Cheshire East, such as north of Crewe, Sandbach, Middlewich, Congleton, north of Macclesfield, Knutsford and Handforth are areas of high TRSE risk with a risk level more than 100% above the local average.

## 2.3 Improve Transport for All

Some of the key findings from the Transport for All section include:

- There is high reliance on car journeys in Cheshire East and this has become more entrenched in recent years with corresponding falls in sustainable modes pre-pandemic. More investment and support need to be given to increasing the number of public transport and active travel trips in the borough, as this will provide many benefits such as improved health and wellbeing and reduced congestion and carbon dioxide emissions.
- The bus network provides access for 86% of residents, however low frequencies and longer journey times for bus are generally not competitive against car. This means the next LTP needs to consider how improvements can be made to bus services within the borough in line with the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).
- Analysis of propensity to travel by bus indicates there are opportunities for patronage growth in some urban areas. Therefore, it is essential urban areas have good bus connections to ensure individuals can access their place of work, education, and key services.
- Accessibility to secondary schools and large employment sites by public transport in Cheshire East is lower than the average for the North of England. To ensure more of the Cheshire East population can access essential services via public transport, it is essential that these barriers to accessing public transport are addressed.
- Analysis of propensity to cycle shows there are opportunities for significant growth in some urban areas, particularly Crewe and Macclesfield.
- There are high and medium capacity areas for modal shift in urban areas of the borough where approximately 61% residents live.
- There is a lack of 5G connectivity throughout the borough. Nearly all the borough has 4G coverage, but 5G connectivity varies depending on the service provider. It is essential that there is sufficient provision of 4G and 5G across the borough, to ensure individuals can benefit from digital connectivity when away from broadband internet access.
- Overall Cheshire East does not face significant issues of digital exclusion; however, there are high levels of digital exclusion in the south east of Macclesfield, which correlates to a low level of deprivation. To bridge this gap, more investment needs to be made to ensure better access to social and economic opportunities online.

## 2.4 Grow the Economy

Key findings related to the economy and growth include:

- Cheshire East has a strong economy which consistently exceeds regional and national averages for metrics such as GVA per capita or percentage of population in employment. An accessible, convenient, and resilient transport network is an enabler of economic growth by providing access to employment and training and therefore this is essential in order to maintain Cheshire East's strong position and enable future economic growth.
- Cheshire East has a more qualified and higher skilled population compared to the North West and the rest of the UK. It is important that transport connectivity links residents to educational opportunities both inside and outside of the Borough to ensure that the Borough's residents remain highly skilled.

## 2.5 Reduce Environmental Impacts

Key findings related to environmental impacts include:

- Transport is responsible for 23% of all the Council's operational emissions and boroughwide 34% of all emissions are from transport. More needs to be done to reduce transport related emissions within the next LTP period, and therefore a shift is required by reducing demand, moving away from private vehicles to public transport, active travel options and electric vehicles etc.
- 11 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) were revoked on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025. There is now one AQMA located in Disley. Travel in and around this area needs to be addressed to support a reduction in the annual mean concentration of nitrogen dioxide.
- Between 2011 and 2017, there have been 264 internal flood incidents recorded in Cheshire East. With the increasing risk and intensity of flooding events the transport system needs to be resilient to withstand flood impacts and ensure that infrastructure can recover quickly after floods to maintain connectivity and minimise economic losses for the borough due to delays to transport.

## 2.6 Trends

Keys findings related to trends include:

- Cars and vans hold the largest proportion of yearly journey types by approximately 75% more journeys than any other modes. More needs to be done in terms of policy and investment to improve the attractiveness of alternative modes of transport to the car or van, for people to shift from driving to public transport or active travel.
- In Cheshire East, the 2021 census revealed home working is more prevalent among those living in rural areas than in urban areas, with Crewe having a significantly lower proportion of homeworkers (20.6%) than any other settlement. If the trends relating to hybrid working continue there will be an impact on transport networks and how the workforce utilises various modes.
- Extreme weather events such as heavy precipitation, flooding and heatwaves can cause damage and disruption and are likely to become more frequent. It is important the borough's transport infrastructure is adapted to be resilient to
climate change, be able to recover quickly, and reduce the impacts of extreme weather events on the transport network to maintain connectivity and minimise economic and social losses for the borough.

• Technology is changing how individuals travel in terms of modes and frequency, for example the improvements in remote working have allowed for hybrid working. Cheshire East must understand these changes in travel habits to be able to adapt policy and the transport offering.

# 2.7 Summary

These key findings have been used as discussion points with internal stakeholders and considered in the determination of a draft vision intended for public consultation.

# 3. Developing the Vision and Objectives

# 3.1 The approach to defining a vision and objectives

A Local Transport Plan's vision can inspire and motivate stakeholders, including residents, businesses, and policymakers, to work together towards a shared future. It creates a sense of purpose and supports development of specific objectives and strategies. It is important to portray the correct image and ideas through wording and putting the top priorities at the centre of the LTP's message.

The initial conception of working visions stemmed from the conclusions of the evidence base that highlighted Cheshire East's main challenges and opportunities and emerging themes that summarised the LTP's main focus points. From this foundation, the approach to developing and refining centred on collaboration and understanding the importance of transport in delivering priorities across the council.

# 3.2 Internal Engagement

To support the development of the vision, three workshops were held with officers from across Cheshire East Council. These sessions allowed the opportunity to consider, shape and refine the emerging vision and objectives. An overview of each workshop objective is shown below.

Workshop	Workshop Objectives
Workshop 1 – 22/08/2024	<ul> <li>To share and discuss high level strategic aims for the LTP and feedback on draft vision statements.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>To ensure the LTP links to existing and emerging strategic priorities and objectives across the borough.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>To consider and develop hypothetical scenarios.</li> </ul>
Workshop 2	<ul> <li>To share and gather feedback on draft vision statements.</li> </ul>
- 05/09/2024	• To gather insights into potential future scenarios and drivers for change in Cheshire East.
	• To test the emerging LTP visions across future scenarios.
Workshop 3 – 16/10/2024	<ul> <li>To share the draft vision statement and objectives and seek feedback on refinements needed.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>To provide an overview of how scenario planning has been used in the development of the vision and objectives.</li> </ul>
	• To share the next steps for the Cheshire East LTP.

# 3.3 Developing and Validating the Vision and Objectives

The collaborative discussion through internal engagement, supported a broad understanding of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats which supplemented the data-led evidence base. Additional discussions also enabled the workshop group to explore potential external factors that might impact the future of travel within Cheshire East, such as political, economic, social, technology, legal and environment impacts. To validate the emerging vision and objectives, the defined Transport for the North (TfN) Future Travel Scenarios were used as part of a scenario planning exercise to explore uncertainty.

# 4. The Emerging Vision and Objectives

# 4.1 The Proposed Vision Statement for Cheshire East

The process undertaken to define the vision for transport in the future for Cheshire East has included internal stakeholder engagement, a detailed understanding of the challenges and opportunities and stress-testing of emerging themes. This has all supported the development of the following vision:

A connected, safe and sustainable transport network, accessible to all, that supports a healthy, prosperous Cheshire East.

To provide further detail, the vision statement has been 'unpacked' to show the key elements and where a sharp focus is required.

- **Connected** Creation of a joined-up, integrated transport network that allows for end-to-end journeys that can rival people's use of private cars in terms of time, ease and efficiency.
- **Sustainable** Supporting a move away from reliance on private cars to more sustainable modes of transport. This will help address the climate emergency and support a carbon neutral borough.
- **Safe** Improving both the perception and actual safety on the transport network for any travel mode.
- Accessible Ensuring an accessible and inclusive network, across all modes, to support individuals' travel choices. This will also address areas of social exclusion and support areas of deprivation.
- **Healthy** Supporting the health and wellbeing of the borough's residents and visitors through increased activity levels and improved transport links to key services.
- Prosperous Promote economic growth by supporting existing and future local businesses and major employers, providing efficient transport links and encouraging/retaining talent in the area.

# 4.2 Aims and Objectives

To deliver on the vision, a set of aims and objectives have been developed under four key theme titles: 1) Improve Connections, 2) Support the Wellbeing of Our Community, 3) Reduce Environmental Impacts, and 4) Grow the Economy. These four themes have been developed from the LTP evidence base following a datadriven approach to inform local transport needs in the context of recent and emerging changes in Cheshire East. These have been used for continuity within the process of formulating the LTP and they align with the needs of the borough.

Each theme's aim and objectives are set out below. These objectives set out specific desires for Cheshire East based on the evidence and feedback from workshops. They cover a broad range of topics within each theme and pinpoint the key issues and opportunities in Cheshire East.

# 4.2.1 Improve Connections

The overarching aim to improve connections is:

To provide transport choices for those who travel in and around Cheshire East and provide attractive alternatives to private cars.

This will be achieved by the following objectives:

- Provide active travel networks that make walking, wheeling and cycling the natural choice for short journeys.
- Improve the reliability, frequency and accessibility of public transport options, including local and on demand services and community transport.
- Support individuals with their personal travel choices, integrating trips and focusing on those areas with the highest travel demand.
- Maintain the existing transport asset, seeking opportunities for cost-effective, safe, sustainable improvements. Targeting investment in the safety and accessibility of the transport network to best achieve the outcomes of the LTP.

There are a number of challenges identified which these objectives will address, specifically:

- Ageing population with reduced active mobility.
- Frequency and reliability of public transport services.
- Transport connectivity, especially in urban centres.
- Sustainability of current services.

# 4.2.2 Support the Wellbeing of Our Community

The overarching aim to deliver for our community is:

# To improve health, wellbeing and inclusion in Cheshire East by supporting people to get to where they need to.

This will be achieved by the following objectives:

- Improve accessibility to essential services such as healthcare, education, employment and leisure.
- Enhance safety and the sense of security for every journey, regardless of the mode of transport.
- Provide the infrastructure and support to increase levels of physical activity to improve wellbeing and reduce health inequalities.
- Support the delivery of affordable transport choices for all.

The challenges that will be addressed are:

- Isolation to key services such as employment, education and health.
- Lack of physical activity linked to limited active travel options.
- Cost of travel on public transport versus private car.

# 4.2.3 Reduce Environmental Impacts

The overarching aim to deliver reduced impacts on the environment is:

To reduce the impact of transport on the environment, managing the effect on climate change, air quality and biodiversity.

This will be delivered through the following objectives:

- Support more environmentally friendly forms of travel, providing local infrastructure and improvements to support decarbonisation.
- Reduce transport related emissions through a reduction in vehicle miles to respond to the climate emergency.
- Providing a resilient transport network to climate change and extreme weather.
- Mitigate the impact of transport improvements and infrastructure on the environment.

In delivering on the objectives, the following challenges will be addressed:

- Meeting climate goals and carbon zero targets.
- Reliance on private vehicles that output carbon emissions.
- Flooding incidents reducing transport infrastructure resilience.

## 4.2.4 Grow the Economy

An overarching aim to deliver growth in the economy is:

# To support Cheshire East's economy by providing a resilient and accessible network that enables education, housing and business development.

The objectives that underpin this are:

- Provide transport networks that support sustainable development and business opportunities.
- Support and grow the local economy through improved physical and digital connectivity.
- Enable recruitment and skills retention through better transport links.
- Facilitate sustainable travel choices to residents of new developments from the day they move in.

The objectives will support the following challenges:

- Links to key businesses to ensure employment retention.
- Lack of fibre broadband in rural regions that reduces digital connectivity.
- New developments being isolated from main transport network to improve inwards attraction.

# 5. Outcomes for the Local Transport Plan (LTP) Development

# 5.1 How will the content shape the LTP

This summary document has detailed the process of reaching the draft vision and set of objectives. The importance of this process cannot be overstated in shaping the correct direction for Cheshire East's LTP. A clear vision and well-defined objectives are crucial for the success of a LTP by meeting the following key points:

- Direction and Focus: A vision statement provides a long-term direction for the transport system, outlining what the community aims to achieve. Objectives break down this vision into specific goals under each theme and helps to focus efforts on key priorities.
- Building Relationships: Developing a vision and objectives involves engaging with stakeholders, businesses and partners. This process helps build consensus and ensures that the transport plan reflects the community's needs and aspirations.
- Strategic Planning: Objectives guide the development of strategies and actions needed to achieve the vision. They help in identifying the necessary projects, policies, and investments, ensuring that all efforts are aligned towards the vision.
- Adaptability: Having a vision and objectives allows for flexibility in planning. As conditions change, the transport plan can be adjusted while still working towards the overarching vision.

By establishing a clear vision and objectives, Local Transport Plans can be more strategic, cohesive, and effective in meeting the community's current and future transport needs.

# 5.2 Next Steps

The vision and objectives will need to be consulted on, to ensure that they resonate and respond to those living, working and visiting the borough. The feedback received will be invaluable and support the future development of the Local Transport Plan, as well as supporting other Cheshire East policy and strategy development, such as the Local Plan.

# Appendix 2 Local Transport Plan Evidence Base Report

# Version: 6

Cheshire East LTP

13 January 2025

OFFICIAL

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#### 1. Introduction

#### Introduction 1.1

In 2019, Cheshire East Council (CEC) adopted a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for the period of 2019-2024. The strategy considers all forms of transport over the plan period, providing a framework for how transport will support wider policies to improve the economy, protect the environment and make attractive places to live, work and play. The LTP therefore outlines the role transport will play in supporting the long-term goals of the council.

To support the LTP, CEC developed Local Transport Development Plans (LTDPs) that set out a range of potential scheme options that could be delivered to improve the transport network to support towns and surrounding areas. The plans identify how a coordinated and integrated transport network can be delivered, covering all forms of transport including walking, cycling, buses, rail, and road traffic.

Given the existing LTP is due to expire at the end of 2024, now is the right time to develop a new LTP, which starts with an evidence base for the borough to ensure issues and opportunities are understood.

#### 1.2 Rationale for producing a new LTP

The Transport Act 2000 introduced a statutory requirement for local transport authorities to produce a LTP every five years and to keep it under review. The Transport Act 2008 updated statutory requirements to give local transport authorities more flexibility about how and when they updated their LTP. Local transport authorities are now free to replace their LTP as they see fit.

The current LTP was prepared pre-Covid and prior to many recent changes in transport policy including, but not limited to: Gear Change (2020), The Transport Decarbonisation Plan (2021), Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy (2022) and Bus Back Better (2021). Numerous non-transport policies have also come forward which impact transport including the Levelling Up White Paper (2022) and Clear Air Strategy (2019) for example. Furthermore, the government announcement to cancel HS2 from Birmingham to Manchester will further impact the borough – particularly Crewe with the potential for alternative schemes to be introduced in lieu of HS2.

CEC is now well placed to undertake a significant update of the LTP so it maintains a document that is robust and relevant to national, regional and local priorities for which this evidence base will underpin.

#### **Purpose of this document** 1.3

The purpose of the evidence base is to provide a baseline of the existing situation to inform and support the development of transport policy and the LTP. A data-driven approach will ensure the LTP and supporting documents are based on a robust evidence base to inform local transport needs in the context of recent and emerging changes in Cheshire East. The evidence base will be used to develop the LTP vision and objectives which will form the basis of the future strategy development and investment.

The evidence base draws information from a range of data sources and has been grouped under six key themes:

- Our community explores the socio-economics, health and digital connectivity profile of Cheshire East;
- Improve transport for all examines travel trends within the borough and the existing situation regarding the transport network;
- Grow the economy sets out key details of the economic profile of the borough and how jobs impact travel behaviour and connectivity requirements;

- Reduce environmental impacts considers the relationship between transport and the environment within Cheshire East; and
- Trends reviews keys trends and likely transport technology pathways alongside potential implications for the borough.

The evidence base concludes with a section which outlines the main issues and opportunities that the LTP strategy should take into consideration.

#### Vision-led approach 1.4

A vision-led approach (also known as 'vision and validate' or 'decide and provide') sets out a clear vision and objectives for transport and then uses this to define the policies and investment required to realise this vision. Developing a placebased and context specific vision will support the development of a high-level strategy and support assessment of scenarios to test future policies.

Figure 1-1 shows the process in which the LTP Vision can inform the high-level strategy and scheme development.



Figure 1-1 Vision-led approach

• developing a place based and context specific vision

• developing high level strategy, policy and defining scenario based assessment to test policies

• defining a priority investment programme • policy fit and deliverability assessment • carbon impacts quantification and assessment

• testing scheme proposals from a technical

As set out in Figure 1-1, there are four key steps associated with a vision-led approach. Firstly, the vision created should incorporate a wider vision and identity (i.e., not just transport focussed) that clearly identifies the role of transport in delivering the vision. This should incorporate wider outcomes, targets and SMART objectives. Secondly, the strategy and assessment phase should consider what is needed to best deliver the vision. The scenario-based assessment will assess whether the policy is robust across a range of scenarios to be considered and agreed. A robust policy would perform well under a range of scenarios. Next, scheme proposals are developed, and an assessment is undertaken on these options. For example, considering deliverability, effectiveness and policy fit. Finally, the proposals are tested via modelling or other means to ensure practicality.

An emerging theme in the transport planning industry is Triple Access Planning (TAP) which looks at how future sustainable urban accessibility can be achieved through three factors which combined create a Triple Access System;

- Transport system physical mobility;
- Land-use system spatial proximity; and
- Telecommunications system digital connectivity.

These three elements and their relationship are shown in Figure 1-2<sup>1</sup>. This highlights that access is not just about physical transport which has traditionally been the focus, but digital connectivity and land use are important elements to consider too. In the past, whilst land use and digital connectivity have been acknowledged by LTPs, there have been challenges with implementation. Land use planning can be optimised to encourage active travel and public transport use and can heavily influence travel choices made. Digital connectivity has become increasingly important since the pandemic, and technology will continue to develop going forwards. Digital technology can heavily influence how we work and access goods and services, which in turn impacts travel behaviour for example how we shop, work, and access healthcare. Therefore, this evidence base considers the transport evidence base through these three linked accessibility considerations.



Figure 1-2 The Triple Access System

<sup>1</sup> https://www.tapforuncertainty.eu/

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# 2. Policy Review

This policy review has been undertaken to set out the key national, sub-national and local policy which the next LTP for Cheshire East will need to align to. By developing this review, it will ensure the LTP aligns with policy across all scales. The review is set out in Table 2-1 below.

In addition to the review set out in Table 2-1 below, it is important to note the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>2</sup> (NPPF) which sets out the government's planning policies for England and outlines how these policies should be applied. First published in 2012 and most recently updated in December 2024, the NPPF emphasises achieving sustainable development through a balanced approach to economic, social, and environmental objectives. It provides a framework for local authorities to develop their own plans, ensuring that they align with national priorities while addressing local needs. This framework is particularly relevant to the CEC Local Transport Plan, as it guides the integration of transport infrastructure with broader planning goals, promoting efficient, safe, and sustainable transport solutions.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> National Planning Policy Framework

#### Key Themes/ Scale National Sub-national / Regional Local Health and Wellbeing The DfT policy document Gear Change (2020) The TfN Decarbonisation Strategy (2021) states a The Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2021-2025 states physical inactivity costs the NHS up to £1bn shift away from private vehicle use and any uptake (2021) prioritises reducing health inequalities per annum, with further indirect costs calculated in active travel is likely to lead to health and across the borough. at £8.2bn. wellbeing benefits. The Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy fo Uniting the Movement (2021) is Sport England's the population of Cheshire East (2023) sets out vision for a country where people live happier, vision with a local focus on prevention and early healthier and more fulfilled lives. They believe intervention, health improvement, and creating being active is one of the most effective and healthy environments that support and enable sustainable ways to achieve this. good physical and mental health and wellbeing and contribute to keeping people independent The policy paper Get Active: a strategy for the and at home for as long as possible. future of sport and physical activity (2023) states the government's intention to help build a The key findings from the Cheshire East Tartan Rug (2023) show that for many residents across healthier nation by tackling high levels of inactivity, and by making sure that the sport and Cheshire East health and wellbeing is similar to o physical activity sector thrives for future better than the England average, other local generations. This strategy sets out how the authorities across Cheshire and Merseyside, and government will work with the sector to achieve geographically neighbouring local authorities. these aims by ensuring that everyone has the However, low levels of physical activity across the board in the UK is an issue for health. Some stark opportunity to be active. health inequalities remain across Cheshire East with some wards in Crewe and Macclesfield experiencing significantly worse health and wellbeing compared to the England average and other areas of Cheshire East. Within the Cheshire East Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy (2018) targets have been set to increase the number of schools participating in promotional campaigns. If the targets set are achieved, then there should be increased health and wellbeing due to the increase in active travel as a mode for travelling school. The Cheshire East Rights of Way Improvement <u>Plan 2011-2026 (2011)</u> sets out the aims to create and enhance routes for active travel use which will promote healthy activity. Accessibility One of the Future of Mobility (2019) principles The TfN Decarbonisation Strategy (2021) states to The Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2021-2025 states that the benefits of mobility innovation achieve significant mode shift, investment will be (2021) mentions pockets of deprivation in urbar must be available to all parts of the UK and all required in bus, rail and cycling infrastructure to communities and their relation to life chances. T segments of society. improve journey times and ensure networks are plan aims to help tackle and reduce these pocket accessible to all. The decarbonisation of transport of deprivation. The Equality Act (2010) includes legislation to also provides an important opportunity for

(TRSE).

ensure access for disabled persons. For example,

this includes making it possible to get on to and

# Table 2-1: Policy Review

reducing transport-related social exclusion

	What does this mean for the LTP?
<u>or</u> a	There is a clear link between health outcomes and being active. This LTP will need to encourage active travel (walk, wheel, cycle) over the next LTP period, as well as help to reduce the health disparities spatially across CEC. Uptake of active travel can contribute to improved health and wellbeing across the borough and reduce health deprivation. This, alongside addressing air quality will also have health benefits as a result of cleaner air.
or	
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to	
า he ts	The LTP should strive to provide accessibility for all communities and abilities to encourage modal shift.

Key Themes/ Scale	National	Sub-national / Regional	Local
	off regulated public service vehicles, rail vehicles and taxis in safety and without unreasonable difficulty. Those in wheelchairs should be able to do so while remaining in their wheelchairs.		
Walking, Wheeling, and Cycling	<ul> <li><u>Gear Change (2020)</u> states that increasing cycling and walking can help improve air quality, combat climate change, improve health and wellbeing, address inequalities and tackle congestion on roads.</li> <li>One of the <u>Future of Mobility (2019)</u>principles states that walking, cycling and active travel must remain the best options for short urban journeys.</li> <li><u>The second cycling and walking investment strategy (CWIS2) (2019)</u> reaffirms the government's commitment to making walking, wheeling and cycling the natural choices for shorter journeys or part of a longer journey.</li> </ul>	The <u>TfN Strategic Transport Plan (2024)</u> has prioritised understanding how the North's highway network and the space available should be used to encourage active travel. The <u>TfN Decarbonisation Strategy (2021)</u> states that local action should be prioritised in implementing policies to enhance dedicated cycle networks, low-traffic neighbourhoods, and activities to promote behaviour change.	The Cheshire East <u>Cycling Strategy (2017)</u> provides a framework to guide future investment in cycling, working collaboratively with partner organisations and local cycling groups. <u>Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans</u> (2021) were adopted for Crewe, Congleton, Macclesfield and Wilmslow. These set out the council's ambitions for a high-quality walking an cycling network within each area. The <u>Cheshire East Rights of Way Improvement</u> <u>Plan 2011-2026 (2011)</u> sets out the aims to create and enhance routes for active travel use which will promote healthy activity.
Public Transport	<ul> <li><u>Bus Back Better (2021) s</u>tates buses need to become more frequent, reliable, easier to understand and use, better co-ordinated and cheaper.</li> <li>One of the <u>Future of Mobility (2019)</u>principles states that mass transit must remain fundamental to an efficient transport system.</li> <li><u>Great British Railways</u> aim to 'make the railway simpler and better for everyone.' GBR believe this aim will be achieved by creating a railway that is: <ul> <li>Easier and better to use</li> <li>Lower cost to taxpayers</li> <li>Better at supporting local and national ambitions</li> <li>A simpler sector to work in and do business with</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	The <u>TfN Strategic Transport Plan (2024)</u> states that to achieve their vision and strategic ambitions they need to address connectivity challenges that enables a safe, reliable and accessible public transport network, both at pan-regional and local level, which enable access to opportunities for all communities across the North. Regarding rail, the plan also states how 'The North requires a fit-for- purpose rail network with strong North-South and East-West connections. This would act as the backbone of a high-quality, reliable, resilient, and equitable passenger network, capable of supporting the future growth of rail patronage, and with the capacity and capability to adapt to modern freight requirements.' The <u>TfN Decarbonisation Strategy (2021)</u> states less than half of car trips in the North are under 5km. Given the short distance, a notable proportion of these trips could be switched to walking, cycling, e-bikes, or public transport. <u>Northern Powerhouse Rail</u> 'is a major strategic rail programme, specifically designed to support the transformation of the North's economy by providing effective and efficient rail connectivity between the North's major economic centres,	The <u>Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2021-2025</u> (2021) sets out that some transport routes are constrained due to congestion and a limited commercial bus network. One of the priorities of the plan is for a safe transport network, the plan states a measure of success for this is having a number of routes connecting with rail or tram services. <u>The Cheshire East Bus Service Improvement Plan</u> 2024 states that since 2010/11 the total number of passenger journeys on local bus services per year has decreased from 5.6 million (2010/11) to 3.8 million in 2019/20, a decrease of 32% in ter years. The BSIP refresh continues to seek to stabilise the bus network with medium and longer-term aspirations to improve Cheshire East bus offer by initiating plans and policies that will drive quality improvements in the local bus market, develop provisions for network growth and in delivering infrastructure improvements to support bus service delivery.

	What does this mean for the LTP?
t	over the next LTP period, investment is needed in high quality active travel facilities to encourage modal shift to walk, wheel and cycle. The next LTP should also aim to reduce inequalities associated with access to active travel so that everyone has access to the benefits related to walking, wheeling and cycling.
d	
	The LTP should consider supporting a more effective and accessible public transport network to encourage modal shift away from car travel.
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Key Themes/ Scale	National	Sub-national / Regional	Local
		offering a faster and more reliable service across the entire region.'	
Electric Vehicles (EVs)	Taking charge: the electric vehicle infrastructure strategy (2022) states the rollout of high-powered chargers and seamless integration of charge points needs to be accelerated.         One of the Future of Mobility (2019) principles states that mobility innovation must help to reduce congestion through more efficient use of limited road space.	<u>TfN Strategic Transport Plan (2024)</u> states how TfN aim to transition rapidly from internal combustion engine vehicles to low and zero emission vehicles. They aim to do this by providing intelligence and supporting collaboration towards the roll-out of electric vehicle charging infrastructure (EVCI).	<ul> <li>The Cheshire East Council EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy (2023) sets out objectives to support EV uptake in Cheshire East, these are: <ul> <li>To support the uptake of electric vehicles by individuals, businesses, and organisations within Cheshire East</li> <li>To contribute towards improved air quality and reduced carbon emissions from transport</li> <li>To guide the provision of infrastructure that is safe, easy to use and represents good value for money both on installatio and throughout its life</li> <li>To help ensure infrastructure makes a positive contribution to the streetscape through sensitive placement and appearance, avoiding any negative impacts on other road users, particularly pedestrians</li> <li>To seek to overcome inequalities in infrastructure provision, enabling our communities to transition to electric vehicles in a timely way</li> <li>Supporting electric vehicles in the contex of a wider transport system that encourages mileage reduction, active travel and public transport</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Highways	<ul> <li><u>The Plan for Drivers (2023)</u> details the plan to create smoother journeys for drivers through measures such as fixing roads faster and harnessing the latest road technology, as well as easier parking through measures such as challenging unfair parking rules and better parking technology.</li> <li>The <u>Highways Act 1980</u> places a duty on the Local Highway Authority to maintain the public highway in a condition that is safe for users, this includes all adopted roads, footpaths and verges.</li> <li>The code of practice '<u>Well Managed Highway</u> <u>Infrastructure' (2016)</u> provides guidance to councils regarding the management and maintenance of local roads. Cheshire East Council</li> </ul>	<u>TfN Strategic Transport Plan (2024)</u> states how TfN work collaboratively with National Highways to inform and influence the Road Investment Strategy. The strategy highlights how TfN will invest in the road network and states how highways should be reliable, resilient, safe and conducive to movement by all travel modes. Improvements to facilities for pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport should be equally important as for the movement of cars, vans and lorries.	The Cheshire East Council <u>Highway Asset</u> <u>Management Policy (2023)</u> sits below the LTP ar Corporate Plan and states that local highway network and its management to asset management principles supports the authority's vision and its strategic priorities. The document outlines specific objectives and priorities that will be followed to achieve the vision for the borough The Cheshire East Council <u>Highway Infrastructure</u> <u>Asset Management Plan (2022)</u> links directly to the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance Documents 14 recommendations and provides the basis for the Council to adopt a risk- based approach founded on sound asset management principles which guides the

	What does this mean for the LTP?
5	The LTP should aim to promote a switch towards Electric Vehicles and alternative modes of travel to the car.
s	
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xt	
nd	The LTP should aim to maintain the highways assets to provide a safe, high quality and available asset for the residents and visitors of Cheshire East. It is important that the LTP
1.	ensures the delivery of financially sustainable highway infrastructure. This involves supporting the growth and development of the highway asset through effective financial planning and
<u>•</u>	provision to ensure that it can continue to be maintained.
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Key Themes/ Scale	National	Sub-national / Regional	Local
	follow this guidance as best practice to deliver an efficient and effective service that is safe in all conditions, including winter.		maintenance and management of the highway asset. The HIAMP forms part of a suite of documents which define Cheshire East's Asset Management approach.
	The National Highways <u>Route Strategies Initial</u> <u>Overview Reports (2023)</u> are one of the key steps of initial research in the development of the Road Investment Strategy. They set out the mid to long term strategies and needs for the network. In regard to Cheshire East, the 'London to Scotland West (North)' route along the M6 starts at the south of Crewe and connects Scotland, North West England and the West Midlands. The 'South Pennines (West)' route connects into Cheshire East via the M56 and provides access to the city regions of Liverpool and Greater Manchester, and other cities and towns in Lancashire and Cheshire. It also provides trans- Pennine connectivity to West Yorkshire, serving Huddersfield, Bradford, and Leeds.		The Cheshire East Council <u>Highway Asset</u> <u>Management Strategy (HAMS)</u> sets out how the council will best manage the Highway Network taking into consideration customer needs, local priorities, asset condition and the best use of available resources through invest to save initiatives to realise the benefits of early intervention. The Cheshire East Council <u>Code of Practice for</u> <u>Highway Safety (2021)</u> has been developed following the recommendations of the WMHI. T document forms part of the Council's wider Asset Management Strategy and helps to deliver an asset management led approach. Condition data from Highway Safety Inspections helps to inform future maintenance programmes, supporting the overall objectives of the Council's Asset Management Strategy.
Grow the Economy	The <u>National Infrastructure Strategy (2020)</u> sets out how the government will boost growth and productivity across the whole of the UK. The <u>Future of Freight (2022)</u> has a vision for freight to be valued by society in a way that reflects its critical importance to the wider economy. The vision will deliver a strong, efficient and green freight sector that will power UK economic wellbeing and global influence. The <u>Levelling Up (2022)</u> White Paper sets out how 'levelling up' will require the country to boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging and spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest.	The <u>TfN Strategic Transport Plan (2024)</u> sets out a vision for transforming economic performance in the north and the role that transport can play in supporting this growth. The <u>Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise</u> <u>Partnership Strategic Economic Plan (2017)</u> details ambitions to see the economy grow to at least £50 billion per annum of Gross Value Added and be 20% more productive per resident than the UK average. It also aims to create 120,000 jobs and build up to 127,000 new homes.	<ul> <li><u>Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2021-2025 (2021</u> states Cheshire East has thriving and successful sectors - life sciences, advanced manufacturing, digital and carbon zero industry. The plan sets or aims to reduce inequalities, promote fairness an opportunity for all and support the most vulnerable residents.</li> <li>The Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030 (2010) details how economic prosperity is fundamental a healthy and sustainable borough.</li> <li>The <u>Cheshire East Economic Strategy 2019 to 2024 Draft (2019)</u> sets the ambitions to grow th Cheshire East Economy to at least £15 billion, create an additional 7,240 jobs, build up to 11,065 new homes and be 4% more productive than the UK average.</li> <li>The <u>Cheshire East Visitor Economy Strategy 2022 - 2028 (2023)</u> details its ambition to see the val of the Cheshire East Visitor Economy grow to being worth over £1 billion.</li> </ul>
Reduce Environmental Impacts	<u>Gear Change (2020)</u> states that meeting the targets to double cycling and increase walking	The <u>TfN Decarbonisation Strategy (2021)</u> highlights the need to ensure that climate change	<u>Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2021-2025 (2021</u> states urgent action is needed to avoid

	What does this mean for the LTP?
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2	employment opportunities and support the
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)	Decarbonisation is an important topic, therefore the LTP should consider the importance of

Key Themes/ Scale	National	Sub-national / Regional	Local
Key Themes/ Scale	Nationalwould lead to savings of £567 million annually from air quality alone and improve green spaces and biodiversity.The Future of Freight (2022) sets out a vision for supporting broader environmental objectives for air quality and noise reduction. It also sets out a vision for a net zero freight and logistics sector by 2050.The Clean Air Strategy (2019) shows how the government will tackle all sources of air pollution, making our air healthier to breathe, protecting nature and boosting the economy.The Decarbonising Transport (2021) document states that the government will invest £2 billion over five years to deliver a bold future for cycling and walking to make it the natural first choice for many journeys. The aim is that by 2030 half of journeys in towns and cities will be cycled or walked. It also states a fleet of fully zero emission road vehicles will remove the source of 91% of today's domestic transport greenhouse gas emissions.One of the Future of Mobility (2019) principles states that new mobility services must lead the transition to zero emissions.The National Infrastructure Strategy (2020) sets out how the government will Put the UK on the path to meeting its net zero emissions target by 2050.The Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener (2021) policy document sets out a vision for a decarbonised economy by 2050. The document states this will be done by following the four principles:	Sub-national / Regional adaptation and resilience is a key consideration in policy and project development. It also highlights the importance of considering the localised impacts of decarbonisation policies and measures. The strategy builds upon their Strategic Transport Plan by being able to understand the full range of clean growth opportunities within the North because of transport decarbonisation. They also want to integrate decarbonisation measures into existing and future programmes and projects. The <u>TfN Strategic Transport Plan (2024)</u> sets out a vision for the rapid decarbonisation of our transport system.	Local         temperatures increasing to dangerous levels leading to extreme weather events.         The Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030 (2010) sets out how a stronger economy and sufficient housing of the right type to meet our future need will be delivered in a way that is appropriate environmentally and socially.         The Cheshire East Council Environment Strategy 2020-2024 (2018) sets out the council's stratege goals and summarises the key strategies and action plans to ensure these goals are delivered. also provides a policy framework for the council evaluate all emerging strategies, policies, action plans, and projects to consider the environmenta and climate change impact and how they can contribute positively to the goals of this strategy The goals set out are: <ul> <li>Cheshire East Council will be carbon neutral by 2025 (since updated to 2027)</li> <li>Reduce waste</li> <li>Improve air quality</li> <li>Ensure new development is sustainable</li> <li>Increase sustainable transport and trave</li> <li>Protect and enhance our natural environment</li> </ul> <li>The Carbon Neutrality Action Plan states that in May 2019 the council declared an environment and climate emergency, and committed to becoming a carbon neutral council by 2025. This target has since been pushed back to 2027.</li> <li>The Cheshire East Carbon Neutrality Action Plan 2020-2025 (2020) is focused on actions that CE should consider deploying directly in support of the carbon neutral target.</li> <li>Cheshire East are aiming to become a carbon</li>
	<ul> <li>principles:</li> <li>we will work with the grain of consumer choice;</li> <li>we will ensure the biggest polluters pay the most for the transition;</li> <li>we will ensure that the most vulnerable are protected through Government support; and</li> <li>we will work with businesses to continue delivering deep cost reductions in low carbon tech.</li> </ul>		the carbon neutral target. Cheshire East are aiming to become a carbon neutral borough by 2045 the council are now in the process of setting up an action plan for the first five years. The aim of the <u>Cheshire East Air Quality Strategy</u> (2024) is to provide a strategic framework to deliver local air quality improvements within Cheshire East. This will be done by engaging in a practicable opportunities to improve air quality through the transport and spatial planning

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	What does this mean for the LTP?
ds	decarbonisation and reducing emissions. This could consider encouraging the uptake in electric vehicles and supporting behavioural change away from car travel to other more sustainable forms of transport. More broadly, the LTP should aim to reduce environmental impacts.
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Key Themes/ Scale	National	Sub-national / Regional	Local	What does this mean for the LTP?
	<u>Climate Change Act (2008)</u> is a UK legislation that sets a legal framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. The <u>Plan for Drivers (2023)</u> details the government's plan to help transition to zero emission driving through measures such as easier on-street and ChargePoint charging and installation.		<ul> <li>processes and through wider policy initiatives, such as climate change and health improvement programmes. It also states there are a number of AQMAs across the borough, with high levels of nitrogen dioxide, relating to traffic levels and congestion.</li> <li>Within the <u>Cheshire East Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy (2018)</u> if the targets they have set are achieved then there should be a reduction in vehicle emissions and an overall improvement in air quality.</li> </ul>	



# 3. Our Community

Cheshire East is a unitary authority area based in North West England, bordering with other areas including Cheshire West and Chester, Greater Manchester, the Potteries, Shropshire and Derbyshire, as shown in in Figure 3-1<sup>3</sup>.

Cheshire East is home to approximately 412,500 residents and more than 175,000 households. It contains the major towns of Crewe, Macclesfield, Congleton and Wilmslow with populations above 20,000. There are also a number of other significant centres of populations over 10,000 in Sandbach, Poynton, Nantwich, Middlewich, Knutsford and Alsager. However, Cheshire East in terms of its geography is predominately rural and semi-rural, and these areas have their own distinct characteristics and needs.

Whilst the population is predominantly white British, Cheshire East is becoming an increasingly diverse borough due to its proximity and transport links to Manchester, Birmingham and London. There are also numerous migrant communities within the borough.

Whilst most residents enjoy a good standard of living, there are pockets of deprivation, which impact on the quality of life and opportunities for some people. Average life expectancy varies from 74 years in the most deprived areas to 83.3 years in the more affluent areas<sup>4</sup>. Cheshire East has an ageing population which brings particular challenges for the way the council provides services, however following national trends and considering impacts from the pandemic, there are increasingly complex needs across all age ranges.

Table 3-1 Principal Towns, Key Service Centres and Local Service Centres in Cheshire East as identified in the Local	
Plan Strategy	

Settlement	Town
Principal Town	Macclesfield
	Crewe
Key Service Centre	Alsager
	Congleton
	Knutsford
	Middlewich
	Nantwich
	Poynton
	Sandbach
	Wilmslow
	Handforth
Local Service Centres	Alderley Edge, Audlem, Bollington, Bunbury, Chelford, Disley, Goostrey, Haslington, Holmes Chapel, Mobberley, Prestbury, Shavington and Wrenbury



Figure 3-1 Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (2010 - 2030)

<sup>4</sup> Cheshire East Corporate Plan

#### Demographics 3.1

#### 3.1.1 **Population estimates**

The population of Cheshire East has increased by 7.7% to 398,772 between the 2011 and 2021 Census. The 2023 midyear population shows a further increase to 412,500<sup>5</sup>. Table 3-2 illustrates town and village populations in Cheshire East by settlement. Population growth for Cheshire East was higher than the North West (up 5.2% since the 2011 Census), and England (up 6.6% since the 2011 Census).

Table 3-2 Population of Cheshire East 2011 - 2021<sup>6</sup>

Settlement Name	Total population 2021 Census (usual residents)	Total population 2011 Census (usual residents)	Population Percentage Change 2011-2021
Alderley Edge	5,267	5,276	-0.2%
Alsager	13,386	11,775	13.7%
Audlem	4,414	3,946	11.9%
Bollington	7,943	7,593	4.6%
Bunbury	2,287	2,136	7.1%
Chelford	1,528	1,219	25.3%
Congleton	28,482	26,482	7.6%
Crewe	75,720	72,717	4.1%
Disley	4,945	4,444	11.3%
Goostrey	3,994	3,846	3.8%
Handforth	7,031	6,570	7.0%
Haslington	4,637	4,737	-2.1%
Holmes Chapel	6,669	5,605	19.0%
Knutsford	13,256	13,191	0.5%
Macclesfield	53,164	52,186	1.9%
Middlewich	14,426	13,595	6.1%
Mobberley	3,119	3,050	2.3%
Nantwich	18,778	17,885	5.0%
Poynton	12,865	13,016	-1.2%
Prestbury	3,431	3,398	1.0%
Sandbach	21,924	17,976	22.0%
Shavington	5,600	3,822	46.5%
Wilmslow	25,355	23,662	7.2%
Wrenbury	2,110	1,976	6.8%

Settlement Name	Total population 2021 Census (usual residents)	Total population 2011 Census (usual residents)	Population Percentage Change 2011-2021
Other Settlements and Rural Areas	58,443	50,024	16.8%
Overall	398,774	370,127	7.7%

The largest settlements in Cheshire East are Crewe (75,720) and Macclesfield (53,164), whilst the smallest settlements are Chelford (1,528) and Wrenbury (2,110). There were eight towns that had an above average population increase for Cheshire East. Most prominent was Shavington, where the population increased by 46.5% - albeit this was from a small base (population increase circa.1.8k). These increases were likely as a result of housing development between 2011 and 2021. There were three towns however that experienced a population decrease, the largest population decrease in Cheshire East was Haslington, where the population decreased by -2.1%.



Figure 3-2 Percentage increase in population of Cheshire East from 2011 to 2021

<sup>5</sup> ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates, England and Wales, July 2023

<sup>6</sup> Census2021\_PopAndHholds\_BySettlementAndRuralUrbanClass\_SummaryVersion\_Issued281122

Figure 3-2 shows the mid-year population estimates for Cheshire East<sup>7</sup>, compared to the North West of England and England. Both England and the North West have shown a steady increase in population between 2011 and 2021. Cheshire East's population grows steadily until 2020/21 where the population then increases at a much higher rate. This is likely to be as a result of housing growth across the borough.

#### 3.1.2 **Population forecasts**

Figure 3-3 shows the population forecast for Cheshire East compared to the North West and England between 2018 and 2043<sup>8</sup>. Since 2018, Cheshire East has experienced population growth each year and this is forecast to continue at a higher percentage compared to the North West of England; however, growth of Cheshire East is expected to be at a similar rate when compared to England.

To accommodate forecasted population growth, it is essential the LTP promotes sufficient capacity on the transport network through sustainable planning. Without this, there will be direct implications to the population and transport network in terms of accessibility, ability to travel, increased delays and reduction in journey quality placing additional pressures on the network, including managing traffic congestion on key strategic routes in the borough.



Figure 3-3 Population projection as a percentage of the 2018 population in Cheshire East compared to the North West and England

#### **Population density** 3.1.3

Figure 3-4 shows population density across the borough. This shows that more densely populated areas in Cheshire East are located in urban areas, such as Crewe, Macclesfield and Nantwich where there is a population density of between 5,000 and 6,400 people km<sup>2</sup>. This shows that a majority of the population live in and around the principal towns and key service centres. Generally, in areas outside of the principal towns in Cheshire East population density is significantly lower. This can be seen in Holmes Chapel, Chelford, Haslington and Audlem. Overall Cheshire East is much less densely populated when compared to the North West or England, as illustrated in Table 3-3.

Table 3-3 Average population density of Cheshire East compare			
Cheshire East	North West		
329 inhabitants per km <sup>2</sup>	497 inhabitants per km <sup>2</sup>		



Figure 3-4 Population density in Cheshire East by MSOA (sourced from Cheshire East BSIP)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Estimates of the population for England and Wales - ONS

The towns across Cheshire East play an important role in providing the essential amenities for the surrounding rural areas. The LTP should therefore play a crucial role in improving urban sustainability in line with the principles of Triple Access Planning – these principles facilitate resident's access to key services, job opportunities and other amenities through an integrated system of transport planning, land-use and digital connectivity. Efficient planning can influence spatial proximity enabling better transport connections in both densely and sparsely populated areas to improve accessibility for all, and ensure developments are in suitable locations; moreover, as detailed in Section 4.10, digital connectivity also plays a significant role in shaping the transport and land-use system.

#### 3.1.4 Rural vs urban classification

Figure 3-5 shows the rural and urban classification of Cheshire East from the latest available data in the 2011 Census. It shows the majority of Cheshire East is made up of 'rural village and dispersed' classification; this is defined as areas which have an average population density of around 0.5 people per hectare. Areas of 'urban city and town' where less than 26% of the population are living in rural settlements and hub towns, are found surrounding the major settlements such as Nantwich, Crewe, Knutsford and Congleton.



Analysis of the 2021 Census<sup>9</sup> shows that the population of Cheshire East's rural areas has increased by 17,430 residents between 2011 and 2021, which equates to 12.7% growth. Cheshire East's urban population increased by 11,171 residents, which is a 4.8% increase. The much higher level of rural population growth compared to urban population growth may in significant part be explained by the allocation of housing land at the edge of the borough's towns and larger villages in the Local Plan. In practical terms, these sites effectively become part of the urban area once they are developed. According to analysis undertaken by CEC<sup>8</sup>, the proportion of Cheshire East's population living in communal establishments is higher in rural areas (1.4%), compared to urban areas (0.9%). A communal establishment is an establishment with full time or part time supervision providing residential accommodation such as student halls of residence, boarding schools or care homes. Alongside this, the population of communal establishments decreased by 13% between the years of 2011 and 2021. This contrasts with growth of household populations which was 8% between 2011 and 2021.

Figure 3-5 Rural vs urban classification of Cheshire East (2011 Census)



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> 2021 Census tables TS001 (Number of usual residents in households and communal establishments), TS041 (Number of Households) & TS017 (Household size), Office for National Statistics (ONS), NOMIS (nomisweb.co.uk). 2011 Census tables KS101EW (Usual resident population), QS113EW (Household composition - Households) & QS406EW (Household size), 2011 Census, ONS, NOMIS.



## Figure 3-6 Cheshire East Rural Urban Split (mid-2022 population estimates)

Figure 3-6<sup>10</sup> shows that 39% of Cheshire East's residents live in rural<sup>11</sup> areas. It is therefore important that the transport network within Cheshire East seeks to provide regular and reliable transport connections in order to reduce the reliance on the private car within rural areas.

<sup>10</sup> Mid-year population estimates ('Population estimates by output areas, electoral, health and other geographies, England and Wales: mid-2022' statistical release), Office for National Statistics (ONS), March 2024. ONS Crown Copyright.

<sup>11</sup> The rural-urban classification used here is the 2015 Rural-Urban Classification for Cheshire East (at Lower Layer Super Output Area level), produced by the Research & Consultation Team, Cheshire East Council. At its most detailed, this classification involves 6 classes: "Rural", "Predominantly rural", "More rural than urban", "More urban than rural", "Predominantly urban" and "Urban". However, the council's analyses

(including the statistics presented in this file) commonly condense these into 2 broad classes: "Rural" (covering the 3 mainly or entirely rural classes from the 6-category system) and "Urban" (covering the other 3 classes).

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# 3.1.5 Age profile

Figure 3-7 shows the age profile of Cheshire East utilising data from the 2021 Census. Some key analysis of the age profiles is set out below along with a comparison between 2011 and 2021 age structure:

- Between 2011 and 2021, the average age of people living in Cheshire East has increased by two years from 43 to 45 years of age;
- The number of people aged 50 to 64 increased by 13.9% in comparison with the previous Census. The growth in 50 to 64-year-olds contrasts with a 9.1% decrease in the number of residents aged between 35 and 49;
- In the 2021 Census, the age group with the highest population is between the ages of 50 to 59 which makes up 15.2% of the borough's population;
- The age category 50 to 64 rose by 13.9% between the 2011 and 2021 Census; and
- In 2021, 10.6% of Cheshire East's residents were aged 75 and above compared to 9% in 2011.



## Percentage of population in each age profile in Cheshire East, 2021 Census

Figure 3-7 Percentage of population in each age profile in Cheshire East, 2021 Census

The data shows there is a significant proportion of the Cheshire East population in the 65+ age category which has increased since the 2011 Census. Cheshire East has a larger proportion of the population in the older age category of over 65 (22.3%) compared to Cheshire West (21.3%), the North West (18.7%) and England (18.4%) which demonstrates that Cheshire East has a higher ageing population.

It is necessary to ensure residents can access the key services and facilities that are needed in everyday life, such as GPs, hospitals, supermarkets and leisure opportunities. This is increasingly important for older people and more vulnerable groups, helping to reduce social isolation. It is important to recognise that different ages groups have differing needs for transport. Younger adults prioritise convenience and affordability, whereas working age adults commute for work

and therefore need reliable travel. However, older, more elderly adults face mobility issues, and therefore rely on more specialised transport services such as community shuttles to maintain their independence. The three figures below show the breakdown of three different age groups within Cheshire East: The Young Age Group (under 15), Working Age Population (16-64) and the Older Population (over 65).

Young population (under 15s)



Figure 3-8 Distribution of Cheshire East's young population (under 15)

Figure 3-8 shows the percentage of the young population (under 15) within Cheshire East by Middle Super Output Later (MSOA). In 2021, 16.2% of Cheshire East's population was under 15 years old compared to 17.3% in England. This shows that Cheshire East has a lower proportion of under 15-year-olds compared with England. Figure 3-8 shows the highest concentrations of a younger population are MSOAs in the vicinity of Crewe, Sandbach, Congleton and west of Wilmslow where the young population ranges between 20-24%. Across Cheshire East, most MSOAs fall into the category of having 18-20% of a young population, which include Audlem, Sandbach and Holmes Chapel.

## Working age population (16-64)



Figure 3-9 Distribution of Cheshire East's working age population (15 to 64)

Figure 3-9 shows the percentage of working age population within Cheshire East by MSOA. The working age population is aged between 15 and 64 and accounts for 61.1% of Cheshire East's population (240,248 individuals). This compares to England, which has a working population of 64.1% and shows that Cheshire East has a lower percentage of working age population compared to England. Figure 3-9 also shows the areas with the highest concentrations of working age population are Crewe and the surrounding areas to the north and west, central Macclesfield and Middlewich. These areas have a range 65-70% of the population being between the ages of 15 to 64.

It is important that good transport links exist to enable people to access a wider net of employment and education. Without good transport connectivity, opportunities for individuals can become limited and adversely impact economic opportunities and growth in the area.

## Older population (over 65s)



Figure 3-10 Distribution of Cheshire East's older population (over 65s)

Figure 3-10 shows the percentage of elderly population (over 65) throughout Cheshire East by MSOA. The older age group of 65+ makes up 22.3% of Cheshire East's population (89,225 individuals). By comparison, England has 18.4% of people within this older age category which shows that Cheshire East has a higher proportion of elderly population compared to England. The majority of Cheshire East MSOAs range from 25-30% of the population of age 65 and older which include Audlem, Mobberley, Chelford and Goostrey. Areas in Poynton, Nantwich and Prestbury have around 30-35% of their population in the age category of 65 and older.

An ageing population brings many complex challenges that need to be addressed, such as a more accessible transport system with direct and reliable transport links to key services including healthcare. A study on transport accessibility for the elderly<sup>12</sup> found that the majority of the older population stop driving personal vehicles at around 75 years old<sup>13</sup> due to poor health. Along with this, confidence and anxiety about public transport increases the feeling of not being able to use the services. Therefore, it is essential that the needs of the elderly are considered when it comes to developing transport schemes which align to the needs of an ageing population and follow the Triple Access Planning principles.

<sup>12</sup> Fatima, Kaniz & Moridpour, Sara. (2019). Measuring Public Transport Accessibility for Elderly. 259. 03006. 10. 1051/matecconf/201925903006

<sup>13</sup> Older car drivers | AA (theaa.com)

#### 3.1.6 Index of Multiple Deprivation

Figure 3-11<sup>14</sup> shows the Index of Deprivation (IMD) across Cheshire East. The IMD is an official measure of the levels of deprivation across England and is split down into Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) level.

The IMD can be split into seven different types of deprivation, these are;

- 1. Income;
- 2. Employment;
- 3. Education;
- 4. Health;
- 5. Crime;
- Barriers to Housing and Services; and 6.
- 7. Living Environment.

All these factors combine to create a score for each LSOA in England. These range from 1, being the most deprived area, to 32,844, being the least deprived area<sup>15</sup>. For Cheshire East, the overall IMD Decile Score is mapped. This ranks the 32,844 LSOAs from most deprived to least deprived, where LSOAs that fall into the category of 1 are in the top 10% most deprived LSOAs nationally and those that fall into decile 10 are in the top 10% least deprived LSOAs in England.

Figure 3-11 shows that in Cheshire East there are areas with higher levels of deprivation around key towns such as Crewe, east of Congleton and south of Macclesfield. These fall into some of the most deprived areas nationally due to their low IMD Decile Score.

Cheshire East overall is seen to be relatively affluent with the map showing the majority of the borough scoring above 6 on the IMD Decile Score and are in the 40% least deprived areas nationally. However, there are areas of deprivation and transport needs to promote equal opportunities throughout the borough.



Figure 3-11 Cheshire East Index of Deprivation (Cheshire East BSIP)

<sup>15</sup> The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 (publishing.service.gov.uk)



# 3.1.7 English as a first language and ethnicity

Figure 3-12 shows the percentages of households in Cheshire East that speak English as their first language. This shows that the majority of Cheshire East's households speaking English as their first language are between 90 and 100%. The areas with a lower percentage are some LSOAs in and around Crewe, with around 60% to 90%.

In addition, the ethnicity breakdown in Table 3-4 shows that Cheshire East has a larger percentage of white population compared to the North West and England, being 6.5% higher than the North West and 10.7% higher than England.

Table 3-4 Ethnicity breakdown in Cheshire East	compared to the North West and England
------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------

Category	Cheshire East	North West	England
White	96.7%	90.2%	86%
Mixed – Multiple Ethnic groups	1%	1.6%	2.2%
Asian/Asian British	1.6%	6.2%	7.5%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	0.4%	1.4%	3.3%
Other ethnic group	0.2%	0.6%	1%



Figure 3-12 Percentage of each ethnicity in Cheshire East compared to the North West and England

# 3.1.8 Place and people types

Transport for the North (TfN) has recognised that the region is a diverse area that has a mix of transport related needs, challenges, and opportunities. Therefore, they have created nine distinct place types across the North in their Draft Strategic Transport Plan<sup>14</sup> to help provide a framework that can be used to inform the LTP process. The data below breaks down the different place types within Cheshire East and the different areas of focus in relation to transport within these areas. Transport for the North has also outlined the North's people typology. The largest people typologies are made up of urbanites (15%), hard pressed living 2 (15%), with rural residents (8%) and inner-city cosmopolitans (3%) making up the smallest percentage of the North's population. The comparison to Cheshire East can be found in Table 3-6.

Table 3-5 below shows the breakdown of place types within Cheshire East. A majority of Cheshire East is made up of 'Transformational Places' and 'Other Urban' (both 47%). 'Transformational Places' categorise areas that have a lower population and high productivity growth and low unemployment levels. In the North there are 959 LSOAs that fit into this category, with 111 of them being located in Cheshire East<sup>16</sup>. 'Other Urban' categorises areas that have the second

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Transport for the North Agglomeration and Clustering Research 2019

highest population density and are made up of low numbers of people working in traditional industries and a higher number of people working in the public sector<sup>17</sup>.

Table 3-5 Place types in Cheshire East (data provided by TfN<sup>18</sup>)

Type of Area	Percentage of Cheshire East
Visitor Centres, Industrial Places, Former Metropolitan Countrie <b>s</b> , Large Conurbations, Commuter Towns	0%
Rural Town and Fringe	3%
Transformational Places	47%
Rural Village and Dispersed	3%
Other Urban	47%

Transformational Places are home to a wide range of different people typologies including a mix of suburban and rural people segments<sup>14</sup>. This can be seen in Table 3-6 overleaf where, based on 2015 population estimates, 39% of Cheshire East's population live in small town suburbs, 26% higher than the North as a whole and made up of 18% urbanites, 3% higher than the North. This is categorised by older individuals that do not have children, located outside metropolitan areas, and often live in detached and semi-detached owner-occupied properties. Please note this data uses 2015 population estimates. These individuals need to travel more due to living further away from urban centres and employment centres. They are therefore reliant on transport infrastructure and services.

Other Urban Areas are home to predominantly sub-urban car dependent segments including hard pressed living <sup>14</sup>. This can be seen in Table 3-6 overleaf where 17% of Cheshire East's population is home to hard pressed living 1, 4% higher than the North. This is categorised as families, having a high percentage of no qualifications and living in smaller towns and cities outside of metro areas in terraced and semi-detached houses. These individuals travel less and shorter distances, however, affordable public transport needs to be provided in order to connect these individuals to economic and educational opportunities. Areas with higher levels of deprivation need to be connected to sustainable transport to ensure equal opportunities throughout the borough.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan 2023

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> This information is licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0 (<u>Open Government Licence (nationalarchives.gov.uk)</u>

# Table 3-6 Transport for the North's people typology data for Cheshire East compared to the North (data provided by TfN<sup>19</sup>)

Segment	Percentage of the North's Population (2015 population estimates)	Percentage of Cheshire East Population (2015 population estimates)	Key Demographics	Key Property/Geography Characteristics	Key Trav
Urbanites	15%	18%	Employed full-time in middle occupational roles. Families with children and couples with no children.	Smaller towns and outer fringes of larger cities. Semis and terraces, majority owner occupied.	Travel m propens
Hard Pressed Living 1	13%	17%	Families with children. High percentage with no qualifications. Working in manufacturing.	Smaller towns and cities outside metro areas. Terraced houses and semis - around half rented.	Travel le much hi
Hard Pressed Living 2	15%	0%	Families with children. Lower occupations in public admin and education. Relatively high percentage no qualifications.	Inner suburbs and small towns within metropolitan areas. Approximately half owner-occupied, living in terraces or semis.	Travel le much hi and rail.
Small Town Suburbs	13%	39%	Older and without children.	Outside metropolitan areas. Detached/semis majority owner occupied.	Travel m ownersh
Metro Suburbs	13%	0%	Older, employed in high occupations. More likely to be employed full-time and aged 45-59.	Outer suburban areas of metropolitan areas. Majority owner occupied. Semis/detached.	Travel m ownersh and trav
Multiculturals	11%	2%	High percentage families with children. Younger with more children in households.	Larger towns and cities. Around half rented.	Travel le have no
Constrained City Dwellers	9%	6%	High percentage singles divorced or widowed. High percentage with no qualifications, unemployed and long-term sick.	Densely populated, large towns and cities. High percentage social rented and flats.	Fewest f rail. Mot commut
Rural Residents	8%	17%	Older, married, better educated. Working in primary industries.	Rural, less dense, detached houses.	High car
Inner City Cosmopolitans	3%	1%	~50% students. Young, well educated, single.	Dense inner cities, private rented flats.	Significa ownersł

## vel Characteristics

nore, travel more by rail, less bus. Own car and greater sity to commute by rail.

ess, shorter journeys, considerably less by rail but igher bus. Greater car ownership.

ess and shorter distances. Slightly higher rail and igher bus. ~30% no car. Commute more likely by bus

nore, travel further, less public transport. Greater car hip and travel further by car. Significantly less bus use.

more and further by car and rail. Much lower bus. Car hip higher. More likely to have 1-2 cars in household vel to work by car.

ess, shorter journeys. Much higher bus. Almost 50% o car.

trips, shortest distance, much more bus, much lower bre than 50% have no car. High walking/bus lte.

ownership and car commuting.

antly above average rail. Low car usage and hip - almost 50% have no car.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> This information is licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0 (Open Government Licence (nationalarchives.gov.uk)

#### Health and wellbeing 3.2

#### 3.2.1 Life expectancy



Figure 3-13 Average life expectancy of males and females in Cheshire East compared to the North West and England

Figure 3-13 shows the average life expectancy for males and females across Cheshire East between the years of 2017 and 2019<sup>20</sup> compared with the North West and England. On average Cheshire East residents have a higher life expectancy compared to the North West and England. Females in Cheshire East have a higher life expectancy compared to men with a life expectancy of 84 compared to 80. A breakdown of the life expectancy for males and females on an electoral ward level can be found in Cheshire East's Tartan Rug<sup>21</sup>. Areas such as Crewe and Macclesfield (lower than 80 in some areas) have much lower life expectancies compared to areas such as Wilmslow and Poynton (above 80 in most locations).

Figure 3-14 Life expectations for males and females in the United Kingdom, 2023 to 2060 (2020)

Figure 3-14 shows the life expectancy for males and females in the United Kingdom from 2023 to 2060. This shows that life expectancy is predicted to increase each year. For example, for females, this is expected to increase from nearly 84 today to 87 by 2060. As set out in section 3.1.5, Cheshire East has a higher elderly population compared to the North West and England so an ageing population and people living for longer is particularly relevant in the borough. This pattern of people living longer in the UK shows the importance of providing accessible transport for all which should be a key consideration of the next LTP. This is due to the elderly having reduced mobility due to complications with age, and this means they are more likely to rely on public transport to access key services. Therefore, there is a greater need to improve access to public transport in order to access key services.

#### 3.2.2 **Cheshire East Local Authority Health Profile**

Table 3-7 lists the range of health indicators for the whole of Cheshire East, compared to the North West and England<sup>22</sup>, including mortality rate, smoking prevalence and obesity levels.

Cheshire East has a lower rate (per 100,000) compared to the North West and England for mortality from all causes, cardiovascular diseases, cancer and smoking prevalence. Overall Cheshire East, the North West and England all have low levels of physically active adults. There is a strong link between low levels of physical activity and ill health, therefore, it



Life expectations for males and females in the United Kingdom, 2023 to 2060 (2020) 88.0 86.0 84.0 a ₩ 82.0 80.0 78.0 76.0 2023 2024 2025 Males Females

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Life expectancy for local areas of the UK - ONS

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Cheshire East Tartan Rug 2022

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Local Authority Health Profiles - Data - OHID (phe.org.uk)

is important to ensure there is provision of active travel throughout Cheshire East to encourage more individuals to become physically active, and therefore reduce ill health in the borough.

Table 3-7 Cheshire East's Local Authority Health Profile (Public Health England)

Indicator	Cheshire East	North West	England
Under 75 mortality rate from all causes (rate per 100,000 population) 2021	303.7	431.4	363.4
Under 75 mortality rate from all cardiovascular diseases (rate per 100,000 population) 2021	64.8	92.8	76
Under 75 mortality rate from cancer (rate per 100,000 population) 2023	109.5	136	121.5
Smoking Prevalence in Adults (18+), %, 2022	9.40%	13.40%	12.70%
Adults (18+) classified as overweight or obese, %, 2021/22	62.50%	66.70%	63,8%
Physically active adults, %, 2021/22	67.30%	65.30%	67.30%

Whilst Cheshire East has a lower mortality rate than the North West - it is important to ensure sufficient provision of accessible active travel throughout the borough to promote better health outcomes. A study conducted by The Health Foundation in 2021<sup>23</sup> found that an estimated average of 125 early deaths per year can be prevented from increased walking and 58 early deaths per year can be prevented from increased cycling. This demonstrates active travel can deliver significant health benefits such as maintaining a healthy weight, reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease, cancer, and depression. Additional benefits also include improved morbidity/absenteeism rates and improved air quality for the borough. Finally, it is important to ensure good access to healthcare services – especially for vulnerable groups such as the elderly due to higher risks discussed earlier. Table 3-7 shows that even though physically active adults for the years of 2021/22 is similar for Cheshire East, North West and England, the overall levels of physically active adults is low. Despite existing initiatives, additional measures are needed in Cheshire East to encourage physical activity among adults in the borough.

<sup>23</sup> Source: Health Foundation analysis using Department of Transport, National Travel Survey (NTS), Table TSGB0101, ONS, UK population estimates, 1838 to 2018 • Note: Private transport includes: cars, vans, taxis and motor cycles; Rail includes: national rail, metros, trams

Table 3-8 Percentage of children overweight and obese in Cheshire East compared to the North West and England (Cheshire East Borough Profile)

Area	Percentage of children overweight (including obese) ages 4-5	Percentage of children overweight (including obese) ages 10-11
Cheshire East	21.6	30.2
North West	23.9	35.5
England	22.4	34.3

As shown in Table 3-8, obesity rates in children have remained at a similar level since 2009-2010 to 2018<sup>24</sup> and are lower in Cheshire East compared to the North West and England. Even though obesity levels are lower in Cheshire East, the overall percentage of children overweight in the age categories for 4-5 and 10-11 are still high. Despite existing initiatives, additional measures are crucial to tackle childhood obesity and promote healthier lifestyles among children. In order to address this Cheshire East needs to encourage programmes and initiatives as well as improve existing walking and cycling networks, as covered in 4.1 and 4.2, to encourage children to walk or run to school in order to help reduce the number of children classes as overweight.

#### 3.2.3 **Annual Personal Wellbeing Estimate**

Annual Personal Wellbeing Estimates are taken from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2023 data and provide estimates of life satisfaction, feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile, happiness and anxiety in the UK, including analysis on the characteristics that are most likely to impact personal well-being<sup>25</sup>.

A scoring system of 0 to 10 is given where 1 is a low score and 10 is a high score. Individuals are asked to respond on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely"<sup>26</sup>. The Annual Personal Wellbeing Estimates are shown in Figure 3-15 below.

<sup>25</sup> Annual personal well-being estimates - ONS <sup>26</sup> Personal well-being in the UK - ONS

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Cheshire East Borough Profile <u>Borough Profile (2019/20) (arcgis.com)</u>





The scores for life satisfaction, worthwhile and happiness are relatively high; however, there is opportunity for improvement to ensure individuals are feeling worthwhile, happy, and satisfied with life. Anxiety can be seen to be lower, scoring just above three in each location, this shows that overall, individuals feel a low sense of anxiety, but again, there is opportunities for improvement.

Overall, the wellbeing of Cheshire East is on similar levels to the rest of the nation as life satisfaction, worthwhile and happiness are high, and anxiety is low.

# 3.2.4 Physical Inactivity

In Cheshire East, there are significant proportions of the population who are physically inactive. The UK government recommends adults do at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week, however, as can be seen Figure 3-16<sup>27</sup> only 67.1% of Cheshire East residents achieve this figure with 22.4% physically active for less than 30 minutes per week. As set out in section 3.2.2, 62.5% of adults in Cheshire East are classified as obese or overweight and worryingly this is increasingly seen in children with 21.6% of children aged 4-5 and 30.2% aged 10-11 falling into this category. Car dependency and the associated low levels of walking, cycling and public transport use is a contributory factor to these health issues and the associated burden on health services from treating related conditions.



Figure 3-16 Levels of activity in Cheshire East (Sport England)

# 3.2.5 Thriving Places Index

The Thriving Places Index is a UK-wide tool to provide a new way to look at the strengths and challenges of the place where people live. It shows whether the conditions are in place for people to thrive – in a fair and sustainable way and helps inform local policy and decision making<sup>28</sup>. The Thriving Places Index for Cheshire East is shown in Figure 3-17.





Local conditions in the Thriving Places Index are rated 5.60 out of 10. When broken down into individual elements, Place and Environment has a score of 5.12 and Transport has a low score of 3.87. Looking at the category of mental and physical health, the overall health status of Cheshire East is rated 5.52 out of 10. This medium score, for Cheshire East is the same as or very similar to the England and Wales average<sup>29</sup> and reinforces the need to provide more active travel throughout the borough of Cheshire East. This will ensure individuals are encouraged to use active modes where possible, so that walking and cycling are chosen as the preferred and easier mode. For those who cannot engage in active travel, due to age or accessibility needs, sustainable transport needs to be made more attractive to reduce car dependency levels in the borough – a key issue explored in the next section. The LTP should look to address areas which score poorly in the Thriving Places Index to help shape future policy/plans to improve wellbeing through improved active travel infrastructure and better accessibility.

#### 3.2.6 **Cheshire East Tartan Rug**

The Tartan Rug for the borough<sup>30</sup> shown in Figure 3-19. The Tartan Rug provides analysis of health and wellbeing of Cheshire East, and how this varies by ward across the borough. Overall reported health and wellbeing levels in Cheshire East are similar to England. However, there are large inequalities across the borough, especially in areas such as Crewe and Macclesfield - where health and wellbeing scores are below the England average.

For example, hospitalisations in Cheshire East have worsened for;



<sup>30</sup> Cheshire East Tartan Rug 2022

- Emergency admissions aged 0-4 years;
- Emergency admissions all causes; and
- Hospital stays for self-harm.

Figure 3-18 shows how the health and wellbeing picture in Cheshire East compares to other local authorities in Cheshire and Merseyside, this is taken from the Cheshire East Tartan Rug.



## Figure 3-18 How does the health and wellbeing picture across Cheshire East compare to other local authorities in Cheshire and Merseyside? Cheshire East Tartan Rug<sup>27</sup>

Figure 3-18 shows that Cheshire East generally perform better than other local authorities in terms of health and wellbeing. Cheshire East has the lowest percentage of wards in the worst 40% of wards across England the highest percentage of wards in the best 40% of wards across England. However, it is within Cheshire East where there are significant disparities in health and wellbeing.

Areas in Cheshire East which have deteriorating health and wellbeing levels are Nantwich, Congleton, Holmes Chapel, and Knutsford. Areas of improvement include Chelford, Handforth, Alderley Edge, Wilmslow, Bollington, Disley and Poynton. An analysis of Cheshire East's Tartan Rug<sup>31</sup> shown in Figure 3-19, shows that Cheshire East compared to other local authorities in Cheshire and Merseyside and surrounding Local Authorities has the highest proportion of wards in the best performing 40% across England. However, Cheshire East has 33% of the borough's wards within the worst 40% of wards across England. This score of 33% shows that there are still many inequalities within Cheshire East, meaning the transport system throughout the borough needs to provide accessible and reliable services so people can access the health and care services that they need.

Figure 3-19 shows the Tartan Rug for Cheshire East. It shows that six areas in Crewe are in the top 20% most deprived wards nationally for:

Deaths from respiratory diseases;

- Emergency admissions of all causes;
- Admissions for alcohol;
- Excess weight of 10–11-year-olds;
- Children in poverty;
- Pensioners living alone; and
- Male and female life expectancy.

Similar scores putting these areas in the top 20% most deprived wards nationally, can be seen in two areas in Macclesfield (Macclesfield Hurdsfield and Macclesfield South). These areas are in the highest 20% of wards nationally for:

- Male life expectancy;
- All deaths under 75;
- All new cases of cancer;
- Binge drinking in adults; and
- Emergency admissions for ages 0-4.

As shown and analysed in Figure 3-13, Cheshire East has a higher life expectancy compared to the North West and England. However, when breaking this down to the towns and key service centres within the borough, areas in Crewe and Macclesfield are in the top 20% most deprived wards nationally for female (Crewe average 80.08) and male (Crewe average 76.8) life expectancy. Compared to Wilmslow, which sits in the top 20% least deprived wards nationally, which has an average life expectancy of 86 for females and 81.4 for males. In Cheshire East there have been efforts to enhance health and wellbeing, however there is still room for improvement to address specific challenges in specific areas of the borough such as life expectancy, to ensure inclusive access to health services for the entire population.

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				Nantwi	ch		<u> </u>			0	rewe					Qui ACLI											n	Knut	tsford				Wilms	low						Macclesf	ield		Poynton					T T T	
	Defa Type	Time Period	Audom	Nantwich North and West	Nantwich South and Stapeley	Wrenbury	Crewe Contral	Crewo East	Crewe North	Crews South	Crewe St Barnabas	Crowe West	Laighton	Shavington Willaston and Rope	Wistes tom	Wybunbury	and the state of t	Bremoton Runal	Hastington	Middlewich	Odd Rode	Sandbach Ewone Sandbach E titley Has th and Whe dock	S andhach No ath and Ea st	Sandbach Town	Congresson East	Congresson West	Dano Valley	HghLogh	Mautoficer of Model ben riev	A Information Education	Chafford	Nu ndňort h	Aunopau Au	Witnstow Dean Row Witnstow East	Witmstow Lacey Green	Witn slow West and Chorley	Broken Cross and Upton	Ga wsworth	Maccie streed Cantral Maccie stiedd East	Macdosfield Mundsfield	Ma octe sfield South	Ma ocie stied i Tyther ington	Ma odes field West and Ivy	Bollington	Distoy	Poynton East and Pott Shrigley	Poymon West and Adington	C he shrine East	
1 Total Population	Numbe	2019	\$702 \$5	64 8581	9609	4748	6952	15408	4627	12490	5862	10689 5	107 4	519 4961	8876	5629	12215	6218	8402	14130 8	218 53	91 5215	4404	\$745	13427	13209	9692 4	4422 13	095 471	12 50	4001	9475	4309	4869 453	4835	10092	8902	1966 9	58 438	4 4409	8448	8675 7	996 41	11 8623	4654	7581	294 38	4152 5628	6961
2 BME Population	%	2011	1.4 0.	2 1.0	2.4	1.2	7.3	3.7	3.3	8.5	4.1	44 3	3.9 1	1.7 1.6	1.9	2.8	2.4	1.0	1.4	15 1	.1 2	2 2.0	1.4	2.2	1.7	2.3	1.9	32 3	15 23	5 6.	0 2.5	1.4	17	11.9 8.4	6.6	3.8	5.9	14 0	3 23	3.2	17	15	2.8 1	3 1.6	21	1.4	2.3		4.6
a Proficiency in English	%	2011	0.1 0	2 0.2	0.1	0.1	51	1.0	1.6	4.9	2.5	21	0.7 0	12 0.2	6.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	a3 (			مە	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2 0	12 01	5 0.		0.3	0.1	0.6 0.0	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.1 0	5 0.3	0.5	0.6	0.1	0.2 0	. 0.1	9.1	0.1	0.1	16 1	,
A Population under 16		2019	16.9 17	1 16.6	10.7		22.6	19.6	21.0	19.1	26.5	20.6 2	20.0	7.8 17.7	15.0		17.6	19.4	15.8		10 10	10 10 5	14.5	17.0		14.8	16.4	17.0 1			. 154	19.0		10.5 17		20.1	20.2		12 12	10.3	20.1	14.7	12 1	17.0	16.8	15.1	7.0		
r Population and 65 and over		2010						10.1	10.0															22.2	24.0			10.0 1				10.0				20.1	20.2				10.1								
<ul> <li>Population aged to and over</li> </ul>	~	2010					10.9	19.1	19.8	11.9	10.5	16.0		4.4 25.5	4.1	20.1	413						41.5	46.4	24.0		201	23.0 2				20.3	34.0				20.3	10.4			19.3	11.9							
6 Pensioners living alone	*	2011	23.3 21	5 40.4	30.0	22.6	46.4	31.6	32.7	15.6	20.4	34.3	15.7 1	1.5 24.4	26.5	21.3	32.1	21.8	25.1	30.2 2	4.7 2	7.4 28.2	37.7	28.8	25.6	30.5	27.1 2	21.7	2.6 21	.7 34	27.9	19.6	24.0	22.5 30.	2 28.6	31.5	21.4	21.8	2.3 34	9 45.2	28.1	29.4	5.6 2	.2 113	27.3	24.9	5.1 1	0.0 31	5 6
7 Older people with low income	%	2019	6.4 6	10.7	7.1	7.9	26.4	12.8	11.8	15.7	28.9	13.3	4.9 (	LI 4.0	6.5	6.0	6.9	6.5	6.4	9.4 (	5.4 5	.6 8.3	10.6	6.1	9.6	10.0	5.1	5.1 1	11 5/	6 6.	4 6.0	16.2	1.0	4.8 2.0	10.7	5.5	6.7	46 3	6.7 9.3	17.3	13.6	44 1	5.7 0	.1 7.5	5.4	5.8	6.1	16 10	.2
s People with low income	%	2019	5.1 5.	11.2	4.9	6.6	20.7	13.6	14.9	15.0	23.6	12.7	3.8 3	5.0 3.3	5.8	14	7.7	6.6	4.3	1.2 (	5.2 5	4.9	10.2	-	11.2	8.2	4.1	4.4 7	7.6 1.1	1 1.	4 5.6	11.7	2.4	3.4 1.4	10.4	3.4	7.3	1.1 1	1.0 9.7	15.5	13.6	4.0 1	3.0 4	.4 6.3	5.1	4.8	5.4	13 13	
9 Children in poverty	%	2019	6.6 7	1 15.6	5.5	8.9	26.7	22.3	21.0	20.3	28.1	17.9	5.4 5	5.1 3.6	7.6	2.9	10.0	7.9	4.4	10.2 1	A.1 B	.6 1.1	14.6	15	16.0	7.5	4.3	5.3 1	1.5 2.1	1 2	5 5.1	15.0	2.5	3.5 0.5	13.4	2.8	9.2	3.1 1	2.3 10.	5 19.5	15.9	4.4 1	4.3 2	.9 7.3	6.2	4.8	6.1 1	0.7 1	a š
10 Long term unemployment	Rate	2019/20	0.0 0.	2.1	0.0	0.0	6.3	2.3	1.8	2.8	4.6	2.4	0.0	1.9 0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	1.0	0.6	1.1 0	.0 0.7	2.0	0.0	0.9	1.7	1.0	0.0 1	1.0 0.1	0 0.	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.7 0.1	0.0	0.8	2.0	0.0	14 1.1	4.1	2.8	1.0	14 1	.3 1.0	1.2	0.1	0.2	13 3	2 5
11 Fertility rate	Rate	2015 - 19	45.9 53	.1 63.4	48.3	50.3	78.0	60.4	65.8	61.5	77.1	65.0 5	52.0 7	0.9 46.9	56.2	47.3	54.5	71.2	56.9	61.0 S	7.4 7	1.0 76.9	62.0	55.4	71.6	58.9	52.1	63.3 7	0.4 64	6 56	63.4	65.8	45.4	59.5 63.	2 56.8	60.9	60.6	SD.4 6	2.5 66.	6 62.9	63.0	49.0 7	2.1 5	5.6 61.1	74.9	53.3	6.9 0	1.4 60	16
12 Low birth weight	%	2015 - 19	4.3 7	6.7	4.9	7.5	7.1	7.3	4.7	8.7	6.1	-	5.9 1	1.7 2.4	5.8	9.5	7.3	5.7	6.0	6.0	1.2 4	4.0	8.5	5.3	6.3	9.3	4.0	2.6 5	5.7 5.1	6 S.	.1 4.5	5.3	_	6.0	3.2	4.4	5.8	4.9 (	.0 5.1	7.6	1.5	5.3	7.2	.6 3.2	4.8	6.7	4.7	61 6	.9
13 Deliveries to teenage mothers	%	2015/16 - 19/20	0.0					1.7		1.9		2.4	0.0 0	0.0 0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0			1.0		0.0			1.7	0.0	0.0	0.1	0 0.	0.0		0.0	0.1	,			0.0						0.0	0.0		0.0	1.6 0	.7
14 A&E attendances age 0-4	Rate	2017/18 - 19/20	152.9 42	457.2	417.5	455.7	\$74.5	550.7	580.7	540.9	631.5	579.2 4	08.2 SS	466.	\$16.7	146.6	416.0	681.8	412.9	531.9 43	21.9 43	6.0 616	464.2	411.6	436.2	159.0	361.0 4	462.5 36	10.9 316	.0 335	9.4 117.7	490.3	405.4	404.2 107	1 519.4	386.6	436.7	94.3 44	4.6 485	8 464.1	412.0	411.0 4	60.4 35	a.s 200.3	7 402.2	376.3	14.3 4	ie.s 64	2.5
15 Admissions for injury age 0-4	Rate	2015/16 - 19/20	11	7 12.8	13.0		15.7	14.3	16.3	13.6	22.8	15.2 1	16.8 1	2.8 16.0	11.3	18.2	11.8		13.6	12.6 1	2.1 1	5.2 16.3	13.5		21.5	14.5	10.1	12.0 1	1.6 12		.4 19.9	15.6	19.3	18.5 17.	1 21.9	17.5	16.6		0.3 17.	2 19.0	19.2	17 2	1.5 1	5.7 14.4	11.5	15.0	3.2	5.4 13	4
16 Emergency admissions age 0-4	Rate	2017/18 - 19/20	117.6 23	208.2	205.4	184.7	207.9	236.3	259.7	232.1	282.0	220.0 1	68.1 24	44.1 241.3	231.6	168.1	179.9	340.9	209.4	261.1 20	13.1 22	0.9 323	251.1	251.5	245.6	238.6	209.2 1	183.4 20	12.6 182	1.6 160	9.7 196.1	245.1	159.0	269.5 182	3 256.6	226.9	262.0	72.7 20	7.5 396	1 1111	305.9	298.4 2	52.5 22	8.5 241.3	3 204.2	178.6	57.1 2	18.7 16	2.1 8
17 Child development at age 5	%	2013/14	60.1 61	4 61.7	64.0	59.1	51.9	50.7	41.2	50.6	94.5	57.1	46.6 G	1.5 61.6	56.8	66.0	59.3	63.7	68.9	62.4 6	5.2 7	2.5 69.5	66.7	76.0	57.8	53.0	68.6	60.2 6	4.0 61.	4 69	5 61.6	59.5	71.7	65.2 78.	67.7	80.7	64.1	60.7 S	5.9 60.	6 61.1	55.4	76.9 6	0.5 S	a. 617	67.2	71.4	2.0 0	1.8 60	4
18 GCSE achievement	%	2013/14	77.5 77	7 54.0	65.1	77.5	41.1	49.5	41.6	42.8	31.5	45.1	57.0 S	1.5 65.1	65.4	76.3	68.1	71.3	71.9	56.9 6	8.0 71	1.1 69.4	61.7	71.1	56.4	64.6	69.7 7	71.1 6	6.1 71	.1 71	7 72.2	52.2	10.4	51.9 73	56.0	74.5	74.8		1.2 41	46.7	41.8	75.9 5	1.9 6	12 66.2	62.0	71.1	5.7 0	2.2 5	40 M
19 Excess weight age 4-5	%	2017/18 - 19/20	28.6 17	6 32.3	20.6	25.0	23.8	25.7	29.2	29.4	30.6	27.7	22 2	1.1 23.5	17.9	26.3	21.3	21.1	25.0	25.4 2	5.9 20	17.4	25.0	20.0	27.9	22.0	17.9	28.6 1	1.5 14		7 112	16.7	20.0	14.1 16	7 116	16.1	19.0		10 12	17.6	24.4	21.4 2		14 212	17.4	11.5		22 2	
20 Excess weight 10-11	5	2017/18 - 19/20	42.1	4 12.1	12.7	26.7	47.9	40.0		42.0	47.1		17.5	11 261	12.1	24.0	15.6		41.9	28.6 1		25.0	211	15.0	12.2		25.6	28.6 2				11.0		26.7 27	211	16.7	30.8		14 21	37.5	29.7	20.0 2		10 17.9	35.0	23.1			
11 Smokers and 11-15		2009 -																					- 10	10	10			10				4.7				10									10				. –
21 Onloke's age 11-15		2009 -																					4.3																										-
22 Smokers age 16-17	70	2006-	14.5 15	.9 18.1	15.0	15.9	26.3	16.0	16.1	17.6	111	16.7		1.4 12.1	12.6	13.3	14.8	14.5	13.9	15.3	4.5 11	1.6 14.2	16.5	15.3	15.9	15.4	21.1	15.3 1	5.5 14	.7 14		19.8	12.9	11.5 12.	15.4	11.0	11.7	15.4	/.2 16	0 20.4	17.7		7.2 1	15 16.1	11.9	12.5	1.5	5.2 1	-
23 Heatiny Eating (adurs)	70	2006-	34.3 31	9 30.3	10.7	34.4	22.5	24.0	23.6	25.0	10.5	24.3	4.2 2	1.9 32.1	29.1	33.2	32.8	32.0	31.5	28.5 2	3.3 3.	25 29.0	29.3	11.1	29.5	30.2	37.0 3	17.7 1	e.5 37.	.7 38	2 37.9	29.6	40.1	32.1 40.	2 35.9	19.1	31.5	11.1 3	24	6 28.3	26.9	34.9	9.2 3	11 111	15.6	36.7	6.2 1	1.4 21	3
24 Obese adults	%	2006	21.1 20	9 22.5	22.0	21.1	27.1	25.8	26.8	24.9	27.4	25.5 2	24.7 2	3.7 22.1	23.0	21.0	18.7	22.0	23.2	23.5 2	3.3 21	1.3 21.4	21.1	21.9	23.6	23.2	19.0	19.9 1	7.9 19.	5 17	2 18.5	21.0	16.5	20.1 15.	7 19.0	16.1	20.2	19.2 2	2.3 21.	6 21.8	21.9	18.2 2	2.4 1	9.7 20.0	20.5	20.5	9.6 2	1.5 24	<u>1</u>
25 Binge drinkings (adults)	%	#N/A 2013/14 -	20.6 20	.8 21.1	21.0	20.6	24.2	21.8	23.0	26.7	23.1	24.5 2	23.2 2	3.0 21.2	19.5	21.7	21.3	19.2	25.7	21.8 1	9.5 20	0.6 21.6	21.2	19.1	20.0	22.3	21.4 2	20.8 2	0.9 20.	6 19	4 20.1	21.9	16.6	22.9 20.	7 22.7	20.7	24.9	17.9	1.1 25.	5 24.7	25.5	21.8 2	3.4 1	1.2 21.3	25.0	20.5	11.1 2	2.3 20	<u> </u>
26 Admissions for alcohol	SAR	17/18	74.5 75	.9 111.2	99.2	76.3	161.2	144.0	147.1	154.3	146.5	136.0 1	02.2 9	1.0 84.8	89.7	79.9	97.0	77.1	86.7	121.0 8	2.5 93	5.2 100.	1 110.8	93.8	15.5	86.5	66.0 7	72.5 7	1.9 71.	.2 64	.4 68.4	101.2	\$1.5	84.9 55.	1 70.4	56.2	78.7	62.2 10	8.8 113	5 113.9	126.2	65.3 1	15.6 7	1.9 78.8	80.3	75.2	6.9 5	1.1 1	0 B
27 Self-reported bad health	%	2011	5.4 4	6.5	43	4.4	6.7	6.0	6.2	5.0	7.9	6.9	2.3 5	.4 3.6	4.6	11	5.0	1.4	4.9	5.3 5	1	4 42	6.4	5.3	5.0	5.6	1.7	4.7 4	L4 5.	5.	0 3.8	6.3	3.2	2.6 2.1	6.0	2.9	4.4	3.6 4	.7 4.1	7.2	5.9	3.3	6.2 4	4.6	4.4	4.8	4.3	1.9 5	5
28 Self-reported illness	%	2011	18.6 14	.9 21.4	16.6	16.1	19.0	19.9	19.2	15.6	19.1	19.5	9.9 2	0.8 16.4	18.2	11.1	19.5	15.4	18.3	17.1 2	0.2 34	6.0 14.2	22.4	19.7	18.1	19.6	15.0	15.7 1	7.2 21.	.5 17	4 14.8	19.8	14.9	11.6 13.	5 19.0	13.2	15.0	17.2 1	5.5 15.	21.7	19.4	14.6 2	1.6 1	7.8 17.1	17.3	18.4	7.0 1	7.5 17	<u>.</u> 6
29 Hospital stays for self-harm	SAR	19/20	70.5 64	.6 203.9	87.9	41.8	239.2	170.0	207.2	211.5	231.0	204.8	91.2 1	66.4 67.1	119.1	73.3	161.2	90.5	72.7	175.4 7	8.3 12	7.0 126.	118.9	\$4.7	120.4	86.6	70.9	26.1 7	0.9 27.	.1 62	.4	113.3	36.8	48.1	108.5	23.5	91.3	73.7 13	4.9 151	4 119.2	144.1	73.7 1	05.8 4	1.7 48.2	54.8	46.0	2.3 1	11.6 1	<u>0</u>
30 Emergency admissions heart attack	k SAR	19/20	76.1 11	101.3	71.1	100.6	206.8	121.5	104.1	148.3	162.0	152.4	9.5 9	1.4 91.8	93.6	76.7	96.5	93.9	72.0	97.8 8	9.5 10	1.6 75.2	82.1	103.3	96.6	109.5	80.0	94.8 8	6.8 71.	.0 66	3 75.3	141.2	90.4	59.9 75.	112.6	12.7	88.2	68.0 11	5.7 65	4 128.1	99.0	96.3 9	5.9 6	1.6 89.8	93.6	87.4	0.1 5	6.2 1	0
31 Emergency admissions stroke	SAR	19/20	88.6 93	4 119.8	89.2	63.6	185.1	100.7	118.1	141.4	159.0	126.1 1	41.1 8	9.5 111.	100.4	90.5	98.5	126.2	90.0	111.9	3.5 10	8.1 123	6 119.0	120.1	110.1	112.3	86.3	14.2 11	10.9 121	.1 17	1 64.0	92.1	78.6	69.4 71.	6 106.9	90.7	112.5	03.5 9	1.0 81.	3 78.9	120.1	59.7 1	15.0 7	1.9 81.1	61.2	107.6	5.1 1	10.0 1	a
32 Emergency admissions respiratory	SAR	19/20	54.5 43	4 71.4	45.6	64.4	380.2	166.0	109.6	236.0	291.4	135.7 1	94.9 6	5.4 27.1	63.4	68.1	66.9	19.7	42.9	107.9 4	4.2 50	67.5	71.7	46.3	48.7	59.8	32.7 1	19.5 2	9.7 48.	.1 27	2 24.8	96.9	13.5	40.0	63.8	\$5.1	63.4	25.4 7	.9 51.	200.6	101.5	47.3 1	20.8 2	1.6 51.9	44.4	48.1	2.1 7	0.6 1	<i>x</i> 0
33 Emergency admissions hip fracture	SAR	19/20	126.0 74	5 107.0	124.0	117.0	136.6	121.3	78.6	89.8	115.8	111.0	12.2 11	19.4 75.4	19.1	158.9	86.2	88.1	85.0	<b>813</b> 9	4.8 10	2.0 72.0	115.7	81.7	141.7	102.3	87.2 1	113.9 7	1.3 150	1.6 111	10 71.6	15.1	76.5	40.0 76.	131.4	96.3	145.6	17.2 1	1.9 75.	110.0	111.6	72.1 9	5.1 7	1.7 91.9	84.7	100.7	11.0 1	12.3 1	<u>s</u> a
14 Emergency admissions all causes	SAR	2015/16 - 19(20	92.6 11	10 125.9	111.1	84.5	194.7	152.0	149.1	157.2	180.7	141.5 1	15.0 11	4.0 98.3	106.8	95.8	103.3	95.5	95.4	136.1	5.6 10	1.0 110	114.8	103.7	13.1	85.5	77.2 1	77.8 7	5.9 69.	.9 62	7 71.6	105.2	\$3.2	73.9 61.	2 99.9	68.6	84.8	65.3 9	.5 86.	2 107.2	102.8	70.5 1	01.0 6	15 76.5	85.7	77.1	2.3 9	9.9 1	ao ≧
35 New cases - breast cancer	SIR	2014 - 18	94.7 11	98.1	116.9	66.7	71.1	98.0	71.1	81.3	46.9	69.1	15.2 8	5.5 65.1		94.1	70.6	117.9	86.9	15.4 1	15.3 93	1.3 101.0	112.1	90.9	110.2	102.6	120.0	93.5 11	16.1 107	.9 98	JB 98.7	130.6	86.9	64.0 87.	5 106.2	94.3	111.1	0.0	5.7 136	9 105.9	111.0	101.3	26.1 7	18 15.1	129.4	108.4	6.7 5	<b>6.5</b> 1	00
36 New cases - bowel cancer	SIR	2014 - 18	90.5 61	0 95.8	70.3	72.4	149.6	110.7	71.3	140.7	116.3	112.2 7	11.5 11	18.7 104.	122.7	119.4	105.9	98.8	94.1	119.3 9	4.0 12	4.2 77.1	68.5	116.1	112.3	113.4	107.8	14.2 11	12.2 104	.6 17	.7 90.6	108.1	124.0	48.1 69.	8.03	115.0	94.6	76.2 11	3.4 59.	2 114.6	70.8	109.6	2.8 9	1.6 70.6	104.1	125.9	H.O 1	11.0 1	30
17 New cases - lung cancer	SIR	2014 - 18	72.6 61	5 94.9	61.2	64.4	231.8	131.5	186.5	145.1	207.6	146.6	6.S 4	4.9 70.3	61.5	51.6	\$7.6	\$7.0	81.0	114.0	44 7	90.0	120.4	58.8	84.6	100.7	65.7	56.5 9	0.5 74	4 40	.1 70.6	115.6	35.0	51.2 26.	80.5	75.8	62.3	6.7 S	64	242.1	125.2	46.5 1	a	12 79.5		53.2	a.2 I	4.8 1	20
18 New cases - prostate cancer	SIR	2014 - 18	98.9 91	4 61.6	94.0	112.7	31.1	81.5	66.7	92.9	66.5	48.6 1	06.7 8	2.6 129.	94.8	10.1	94.1	108.8	113.3	64.7	0.0 83	1.5 98.6	108.7	91.9	79.3	86.7	98.8	82.0 10	115	100	0.1 103.5	81.9	105.0	111.3 92.	2 69.2	71.1	99.9	50.7 5	7.4 122	1 86.8	90.9	82.6 1	09.3 11	2.2 67.3	97.7	101.8	14.9 1	0.2 1	ao 👔
19 All new cases cancer	SIR	2014 - 18	95.9 97	3 92.8	95.3	80.7	115.6	107.7	102.7	106.0	102.4	106.5 1	010	6.1 95.6	94.4	94.6	87.A	91.8	90.0	97.3 9	4.0 97	7.9 91.5	98.5	93.0	95.9	98.2	96.1	15.2 9	0.5 101	1.6 11	2 89.3	100.3	80.6	81.6 75	3 86.3	93.9	97.5	15.2	5.0 99	318.5	112.5	87.6 1	08.5	2.3 80.9	99.9	94.4	H.A. 3	5.2 1	i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i
40 Cancer deaths under 75	SMR	2015 - 19	99.5 75	3 90.2	72.5	(8.1	195.3	115.2	150.3	139.7	146.8	120.4	1.2	1.4 106	72.1	68.0	91.0	54.0	74.7	94.1 9	2.3	1.2 19.0	104.9	73.8	86.1	117.5	77.2	56.6 9	6.7 96	6 51		101.2	34.8	62.3 54	7 101.2	72.5	72.3	73.1 10	0.5 85	112.4	121.4	71.0 1	04.4	2.8 84.3	86.4	62.4	9.6	9.4 1	
41 Heart deaths under 75	SMR	2015 - 19	15.4 7		116.0	17.1	225.4	122.1	158.0	100.0	254.4	1412	1.6	10.7 10.5	15.3	10.5	62.3	72.7	60.2	92.0	35.0	1.6	159.4	72.6	13.6	105 8	55.5	49.9	6.6 84		2 114	81.9	79.0	764 20	1 202.0	57.5	56.5	67.6 a		7 95.9	145.2	94 .	1.6 0	1.2 70.1	71.5	79.9	4.0	9.9	
42 All deaths under 75	SMP	2015 - 10	94.7	2 102.6	14.0	711	215.0	120.3	139.2	145.5	150.2	122.5	20.7	1.2 20.3	79.6	66.2	75.9	61.2	78.5		51	22 70	124.2	75.0	16.2	110.7	62.6	52.5	11 12				4.5	55.4		50.3	15.7	19.5			141.7	67.4		16 17 1	15.1	60.2		9.2	
43 Deaths from respiratory diseases	SMP	2015 - 19	110.6	4	78.0	100.7	200	152.2	139.5	150.7	157.2	145.1	05.7			101.4	71.2		102.0	114.2	15.9		1	109.5	91.7	105.4	74.0	161				95.3	82	104.1			117.4				125.2	100.2				77.0		75	
44 All deaths all areas	SMP	2015 - 10	121.5				1000	11/1	112.2	177.5	122.0	125.0		51						106.0				-	96.6	102.7	77.7	90.1	2.0								112.2		20		110								
er Eamala Ha averationer	Veer	2015 - 40	67	94.6	10.6		1010			-	-										10		12.4	-	70.5	1011	1																	921					
as Male He expectancy	Vers	2015 40				64.7	76.8		-									-	111				69.1		89.1	22.8						-													SAL5				
No ware are expectancy	rears	4414 * 18	78.4 82	- 79.6	1 81.1	10.3	121	79.1	11.4	11.4	10.7	11.0	14.7 B	221 123	81.2	81.6	315	88.0	81.8	11.1	1.6 9	14 10.7	17.8	80.5	80.2	78.2	10.0		0.3 17.		82.3	80.8	11.4		77.5	1.14	10.7	sul.a 7	na 90.	17.5	14.7	24.7	w/4 8		19.0	84.6	1.4	v.a 7	<u>ar</u> 📫

Figure 3-19 Cheshire East Tartan Rug Analysis


Figure 3-20 takes information from the Tartan Rug in Figure 3-19 to show the differences between the two principal towns and key service centres in the borough.



Figure 3-20 How does the health and wellbeing picture vary across towns and key service centres in Cheshire East (Tartan Rug, 2022)

This figure shows that two locations, Crewe, and Middlewich, have a higher proportion of areas in worst performing wards, compared to best performing wards. Figure 3-20 shows that Crewe has 58% of wards in the worst 40% of wards nationally. However, there are other key service centres in Cheshire East, such as Wilmslow and Poynton which have a large percentage of wards in the best 40% of wards nationally.

This uneven split in Cheshire East in terms of health and wellbeing shows that there is a lot of inequalities between the different towns. This shows that there needs to be targeted interventions unique to each area to address the disparities, whilst ensuring there is equitable access to healthcare services, education, employment, and income equality.

#### Accessibility 3.3

#### 3.3.1 Transport-related social exclusion

Transport-related social exclusion (TRSE) is the inability of being able to access opportunities, key services, and community life; thereby, creating obstacles in everyday life. There are many causes of TRSE, and these can include:

- Fragmentation;
- Unreliability of transportation;
- High costs within the public transport system;
- Poor conditions for walking, cycling, and wheeling in car dominated environments; and
- High levels of dependency that results from poor conditions for walking, cycling, and wheeling.



#### Figure 3-21 What is included within the TRSE calculation (TfN)

Figure 3-21 shows the different information that TfN include in calculating TRSE. This includes four domains of access, including employment, education, healthcare, and key services to analyse accessibility and journey times and number of destinations of these services. For vulnerability, each element of the index is re-weighted to match the four accessibility domains and are then matched to transport impacts.

Transport for the North have a TRSE tool as shown in Figure 3-22 that can be used to assess how the risk of TRSE varies across local areas<sup>32</sup>, which is based on 2019 data. For Cheshire East, 7.1% of the population live in areas with high risk of TRSE, which is much lower than 18% for England.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Transport-related social exclusion in England - TfN

Figure 3-23 shows how the risk of TRSE varies in Cheshire East, compared with an area average. A higher risk means that a greater proportion of residents are likely to be affected by TRSE, and that those affected are likely to be more severe. Figure 3-23 shows that north of Crewe, Sandbach, Middlewich, Congleton, north of Macclesfield, Knutsford and Handforth are areas of high TRSE risk with more than 100% above local average. This demonstrates that the barriers for accessing transport within Cheshire East may be resulting in significant transport-related social exclusions that need to be addressed within the borough. This impacts access to job opportunities, can contribute to poverty, stress, and anxiety. Therefore, an equal, accessible and efficient transport system is required to ensure nobody is left behind by reducing TRSE. Further information on how Cheshire East can create an accessible transport system can be found in section 4.

More recently in 2022, TfN carried out research where 3,000 individuals from diverse areas and communities were asked different questions to provide an in-depth empirical examination of TRSE across the North. Those with mobility difficulties have experiences issues with pavement conditions such as broken and uneven pavement surfaces. This has led some individuals not being able to travel independently and in some cases inhibiting their ability to independently access public transport. Data published by DfT shows that average public transport costs have consistently increased above the level of inflation and wage growth, and above the equivalent costs for car use. Increases in cost prohibits necessary journeys and have knock on effects and consequences for the social inclusion of those still able to travel. Some individuals described having to give up work due to the cost of commuting to work via public transport being too high and having to sometimes choose between accessing work and heating their homes.

It is expected that TfN will refresh the TRSE information at the end of 2024 and it is expected that even in areas that were previously lower risk areas, the issue will become more widespread. There is evidence that cuts to local public transport systems across the north of England and rising pressures on household finances are causing significant and entrenched social exclusion<sup>33</sup>.

#### Transport-related social exclusion: Nationally high risk areas in Cheshire East

Approximately 1,500 residents (Census LSOA centre point)

National TRSE risk category Higher risk: 8% of England High risk: 6% of England Highest risk: 4% of England

TRSE is where residents have poor access to opportunities, key services, and community life, and face excessive financial, time, and wellbeing impacts from their everyday trips. This map shows areas of Cheshire East where the risk of TRSE is higher than most other local areas of England. In these areas, residents are more likely to be affected by TRSE, and these effects are likely to be more severe when compared with most other areas of England.

27,437 people in Cheshire East (7.1%) live in areas with a nationally high risk of TRSE, compared with 18% for England as a whole.

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Figure 3-22 Nationally high-risk areas of TRSE in Cheshire East



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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Transport and social exclusion in the North in 2023/24 - TfN



Figure 3-23 Local TRSE risk variations in Cheshire East

#### 3.3.2 Average number of trips by mobility status

The National Travel Survey (NTS) 2021<sup>34</sup> in Table 3-9 shows the average number of trips by mobility status (trips per person per year) and main mode of transport for ages 16 and over<sup>35</sup>. For individuals with mobility issues, driving a car or a van is the most popular mode of transport, whilst cycle, bus and rail have the lowest number of trips per year. This illustrates that individuals with mobility issues tend to choose to travel by driving by car or van rather than sustainable transport; this often engenders high private car usage. This can be perceived as being more convenient, direct, and less likely to face physical barriers compared to travelling via public transport. For example, the lack of mobility provisions such as lifts, step-free access to train station platforms or lack of ramps to get on and off buses. This is covered in more detail within section 4.

Interestingly there is little difference between the number of trips taken by bus for those with and without mobility difficulties. However, the number of trips by rail, car, cycle, and walking are significantly lower for those with a mobility difficulty compared to those without. Therefore, it is essential that well connected, accessible bus routes, active travel routes, rail stations and services are provided around Cheshire East to better serve those with mobility difficulties. Table 2.9 Average number of tring by mobility status (tring per person per year)

Mobility Status	Walk	Cycle	Car or van driver	Car or van passenger	Bus	Rail
Mobility difficulty	131	2	177	119	19	2
No mobility difficulty	243	17	389	97	18	14

#### 3.3.3 Lived experiences of barriers to accessing transport

Flexi Link<sup>36</sup> is provided by Cheshire East Council and it is a flexible bus service for Cheshire East residents who are either disabled, over 80 or cannot use public transport. However, this service has some limitations:

- Advanced booking where individuals must book at least 24 hours in advance; and
- Reduced operating hours between 9:30am-2:30pm, therefore individuals may feel they can become isolated due to not being able to use this service outside of these hours.

The Cheshire East Community Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) Report<sup>37</sup> has further findings of negative experiences of public transport that disabled individuals and the elderly have experienced. These include:

- Not enough suitable seating on public transport for those who cannot stand for long periods of time;
- Bus stops not having suitable timetables; and
- Dropped kerbs at stops which causes issues for wheelchairs.

#### 3.3.4 Disability

The information in Figure 3-24 shows the percentage of individuals in each LSOA that are classed as Disabled under the Equality Act<sup>38</sup>, taken from the 2021 Census. Cheshire East has a lower proportion of residents who have a registered disability compared to the North West, however it is similar to the national average of 17.3%.

Figure 3-24 shows areas with the largest number of individuals who are classed as Disabled under the Equality Act and have no access to a car or van are concentrated around Crewe, south of Macclesfield, Handforth and Congleton. There is a correlation between high levels of disability and areas of deprivation. This should be considered when developing transport schemes that are inclusive in these areas of strategic need. The LTP should look to address these existing challenges to ensure a more inclusive transport network. More information on the current transport network can be found in section 4.

<sup>37</sup> Community JSNA Transport Project 2020 <sup>38</sup> Disability by car or van availability - ONS

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> National Travel Survey: 2021 - GOV.UK

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Average number of trips by mobility status and purpose 2021

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Cheshire East Flexible Transport Service





Table 3-10 Percentage of individuals with a disability and those with no access to a vehicle in Cheshire East

	Cheshire East	North West	England
Percentage of individuals disabled under the Equality Act	17.0%	19.4%	17.3%
Percentage of individuals disabled under the Equality Act who have no access to cars or vans in household	20.7%	30.6%	27.9%

Table 3-10 shows that 20.7% of individuals that are disabled in Cheshire East have no access to a car or van in their household; whilst this is lower than the North West and England, it presents a challenge for this vulnerable group. It highlights the need for a cohesive, accessible public transport network for all in the borough – including those with disabilities which the previous data has shown suffer a higher risk of social isolation and poor standards of living.

#### 3.3.5 Access to key amenities

Figure 3-25 shows the percentage of the North and Cheshire East's population able to access key services within a certain timeframe, provided by TfN.

The data shows that the majority of Cheshire East's population (over 99%) can access an employment centre with at least 5,000 jobs in 30 minutes and that the entire borough's population can access a hospital in 30 minutes by car.

However, for accessing an employment centre with at least 5,000 jobs in 30 minutes via public transport the percentage of the population being able to access is 55% which is much lower. When accessing a hospital, 100% of Cheshire East can access a hospital within 30 minutes by car and 95.51% by public transport.

Comparing the North and Cheshire East shows that for the majority of services, both populations have a very similar percentage of the population that is able to access the services. However, a much smaller percentage of the North can access a hospital in 30 minutes via public transport, 37.5% in the North and 95.51% in Cheshire East. This shows that in terms of hospitals, there are good links connecting individuals to this service compared to the North.

In order to ensure more of the Cheshire East population can access essential services via public transport, it is essential that the barriers to accessing public transport are addressed. This can include integrating public transport with other modes (e.g., walking, cycling) by improving footpaths, cycle lanes, and seamless connections between buses and trains. Further analysis on how Cheshire East can improve modal share via walking and cycling can be found in Sections 4.1 and 4.2.



Figure 3-25 The percentage of the North and Cheshire East's population able to access services via different modes of transport (TfN)

#### Journey time

Journey time statistics<sup>39</sup> look at the time it takes to access key local services, for example employment centres, educational establishments, GPs, and town centres. It is essential that if journey times take too long to walk to these key local services, accessible public transport and active travel is available so everyone can access services no matter where they live. Maps for these various services can be found on the pages below.

#### Journey Time to the Closest Town Centre

Figure 3-26 and Figure 3-27 show travel time in minutes to the closest town centre via cycling and walking. As would be expected the areas closest to towns within Cheshire East have the shortest distance to travel to the closest town centre. As distance increases from these urban areas and into more rural areas, cycling and walking time significantly increases. This can be seen in Audlem, Holmes Chapel and Goostrey where is takes 25-50 minutes to cycle and 90-120 minutes to walk to the closest town centre. Due to this long journey time, it is essential individuals can access towns via public transport, so they are able to access the essential amenities located within the town centres. Further analysis of accessibility of the transport network can be found in section 4.



Figure 3-26 Travel Time in Minutes to Nearest Town Centre by Cycling



Figure 3-27 Travel Time in Minutes to Nearest Town Centre by Walking

#### Travel Time to Closest GP Surgery

Figure 3-28 and Figure 3-29 show travel time in minutes to the closest GP by walking and cycling. The maps show that journey times for walking and cycling to the closest GP Surgery is shorter compared to journey times to town centres. In terms of cycling, LSOAs surrounding towns are around a 5 to 15-minute cycle from their closest GP, but LSOAs located on the outskirts are up to 25 minutes away from their closest GP via cycling. With an improvement in active travel, cycling has the chance to become a viable option for individuals to access healthcare facilities. In terms of walking, those LSOA in towns within Cheshire East are around a 0 to 10-minute walk away from their closest GP Surgery, for example Nantwich, Knutsford, Sandbach, Macclesfield, Bollington etc. LSOAs that are further away from town centres have a much longer walking and cycling journey time. This can be seen in areas west of Nantwich, west of Crewe, south of Macclesfield etc where it would take 60-75 minutes to walk to the closest GP Surgery. Therefore, it is essential that the public transport network in these areas provides regular accessible services into the towns of Cheshire East, so individuals can access healthcare facilities if they cannot walk or drive their own private vehicle. Further analysis of accessibility of the transport network can be found in section 4.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Journey time statistics, England: 2019 - GOV.UK



Figure 3-28 Travel Time in Minutes to Nearest GP by Cycling



Figure 3-29 Travel Time in Minutes to Nearest GP by Walking

#### Journey Time to the Closest Employment Centre

Figure 3-30 and Figure 3-31 shows the travel time in minutes to the closest employment centre with 500 to 4999 employees. The maps show that journey time for walking and cycling to the closest employment centre is shorter for LSOAs closer to urban areas within Cheshire East. This can be seen around Knutsford, Nantwich, Haslington and Macclesfield; where individuals only have to walk 10 minutes to their closest employment centre. For cycling those individuals living in Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich, Crewe, and Macclesfield only have to cycle 5 to10 minutes to reach their closest employment centre. In comparison, the further away LSOAs are from urban centres in Cheshire East the longer the journey time is to individuals' closest employment centre. Towns such as Audlem, north of Crewe and south west of Nantwich have a cycle time of 20-25 minutes and a walking time of 50 to 70 minutes. Therefore, it is essential there is an extensive and accessible public transport network within Cheshire East so individuals who live too far to walk or cycle to work can access employment opportunities and are not excluded from employment opportunities within the borough. Further analysis of accessibility of the transport network can be found in section 4.



Figure 3-30 Travel Time in Minutes to Closest Employment Centre by Cycling



Figure 3-31 Travel Time in Minutes to Closest Employment Centre by Walking

#### 3.3.6 Capacity for mode shift

Figure 3-32 shows the capacity for mode shift across Cheshire East, which comes from the Transport for the North (TfN) Clean Mobility Tool<sup>40</sup>. The model is described by TfN as follows: "*The capacity for mode shift model identifies areas* where mode shift & demand management policies are more likely to be effective and suitable." TfN derive capacity for mode shift from population density, income and health deprivation and public transport access. Typically, areas with a low capacity for mode shift have two or more of the following features:

- Lower population densities
- Higher levels of income deprivation and health deprivation •
- Relatively poor access to key destinations with the public transport options available

A low capacity for mode shift "means that residents are less able to choose alternatives to car use, and that significant support and investment may be required to enable mode shift & demand management policies".

40 TfN Clean Mobility Tool



Figure 3-32: TfN - Capacity for Mode Shift

31% of residents in Cheshire East have a low capacity for mode shift, which equates to 119,087 residents. As shown in Figure 3-32, these residents are primarily located in rural and semi-rural areas, as well as Middlewich and Audlem. It is more likely this low capacity for mode shift is due to lower population densities and relatively poor access to key destinations with the public transport options available. Significant investment and support may be required to enable mode shift and demand management policies in these areas as residents are less able to choose alternatives to car use.

40% of residents (153,661 residents) have a medium capacity for mode shift, and as shown in Figure 3-32 these residents are located in locations such as Knutsford, Poynton, Holmes Chapel, Congleton, Sandbach and Alsager. According to the Clean Mobility Tool, urban cities, and towns with a medium capacity for modal shift typically have two of the following features:

- Lower population densities
- Lower levels of income deprivation and health deprivation
- Relatively good access to key destinations with the public transport options available

As shown in Figure 3-4 population density is relatively low in these areas compared to other towns in Cheshire East, it is also likely that these areas have lower levels of income and health deprivation, which is evidenced in Figure 3-11, and relatively good access to key destinations with the public transport options available. As set out by TfN, medium capacity areas "means that residents should be able to choose alternatives to car use for some journeys if appropriate policies are implemented."

29% of Cheshire East's population (111,405 residents) has a high capacity for mode shift, and as shown in Figure 3-32, these residents are in the centre of areas such as Macclesfield, Crewe, Nantwich, Wilmslow and Alderley Edge. According to the Clean Mobility Tool, urban cities, and towns with a high capacity for modal shift typically have all three of the following features:

- Higher population densities
- Lower levels of income deprivation and health deprivation •
- Relatively good access to key destinations with the public transport options available

This means that these areas typically have higher population densities, lower levels of income deprivation and health deprivation and relatively good access to key destinations with the public transport options available. TfN suggest that in high-capacity areas "this means that residents are more able to choose alternatives to car use for everyday journeys if appropriate policies are implemented. Relatively faster and larger change may be possible in these areas, depending on local factors."

# 3.4 Summary

A summary of the findings in this chapter and implications for the LTP are described in the table below.

#### Table 3-11 Summary

Section	Key Findings	Implications for the
3.1.1	The Cheshire East population is growing at a faster rate compared to North West and England.	This places additional stress on the transport system to accommodal sustainable growth, the LTP should implement strategies to ensure alongside ensuring the LTP and forthcoming Local Plans are complete
3.1.4	Cheshire East's rural population has increased by 12.7% between 2011 and 2021.	Cheshire East's transport system needs to connect these more rural a key amenities and life opportunities.
3.1.5	Cheshire East has an aging population with 18.4% of the population are aged 65 and older.	This highlights a key demographic trend with a need to ensure older transport and are not excluded from the transport system.
3.1.6	The IMD demonstrates large differences in Cheshire East with most areas falling into the affluent categories, however there are also some of the most deprived areas nationally within the borough (e.g., areas of Crewe).	Better transport connections and infrastructure are required to ensur and education for deprived areas. In particular, more deprived areas should be considered further in the LTP.
3.1.8	Cheshire East is very varied across the borough in terms of people types.	The difference in people types and places across the borough shows in relation to travel and transport across the borough and ensure it is are also cultural aspects to consider in terms of varying viewpoin sustainable modes of transport.
3.2.2	Adult obesity in Cheshire East, North West and England has similar prevalence rates. Child obesity levels are slightly lower compared to the North West and England. Although these figures are in line with other areas this is still relatively high and leads to multiple health issues.	By providing a cohesive transport network and improving active tra wellbeing can be increased, in turn reducing the obesity and morbidi
3.2.6	According to The Tartan Rug, in terms of health and wellbeing, Crewe has 58% of wards in the worst 40% of wards nationally. However, there are other key service centres in Cheshire East, such as Wilmslow and Poynton which have a large percentage of wards in the best 40% of wards nationally.	This uneven split in Cheshire East in terms of health and wellbeing s different towns. This shows that there needs to be targeted intervent whilst ensuring there is equitable access to healthcare services, education
3.3.1	7.1% of areas within the borough are at a high risk of TRSE.	This impacts job opportunities with increased risk of poverty, financia transport system and good digital connectivity with particular focus of economic activity and overall standards of living.
3.3.2	Areas with the largest number of individuals classed as disabled under the Equality Act who have no access to a vehicle are concentrated around Crewe, south of Macclesfield, Handforth and Congleton. 17% of the population is classed as disabled under the Equality Act, which is lower compared to the North West and England. Of the 17% of individuals disabled under the Equality Act, over 20% of individuals have no access a vehicle in their household.	Ensuring transport is inclusive and accessible – especially in areas of transport, walking and cycling.
3.3.3	Driving a car or a van is the most popular mode of transport for those with mobility issues, with bus use being a similar level to those without mobility difficulties.	The transport network needs to be accessible and provide options for and public transport to ensure they can access their daily needs. Thi travel services, ramped access to rail and bus stations and step free a no matter their disability can use the transport system within Cheshir
3.3.5	As would be expected areas closest to urban centres have a shorter journey time to town centres, GP practices and employment centres. More rural areas have longer journey times to these amenities which may limit the ability of individuals to access these services.	Ensure those areas with longer journey times to key services such as transport connections alongside digital connectivity to these key serv
3.3.7	The majority of residents in Cheshire East have a medium capacity for modal shift, these residents are located in lower population density areas such as Knutsford, Poynton, Congleton, Sandbach and Alsager. The rest of the population is approximately evenly split between areas of low and high capacity for mode shift. The areas	If appropriate policy is implemented in areas with a high capacity for journey modes may be possible.

#### LTP

ate anticipated growth and future developments. For re a more reliable and accessible transport system, ementary.

areas to services to ensure individuals have access to

people have access to reliable and affordable public

re equal opportunities for access to jobs, healthcare, s are more reliant on non-car-based travel, and this

the need for Cheshire East to cater for all individuals accessible, efficient, and reliable for everyone. There ints of travel choices and propensity to use more

avel infrastructure, individuals' physical activity and lity rates in the borough.

shows that there is a lot of inequalities between the ntions unique to each area to address the disparities, cation, employment, and income equality.

al hardship, or anxiety. A well-connected accessible on areas with high risk of TRSE would improve

f strategic need – and with a focus on public

r those individuals with disabilities to use active travel his can be in the form of providing demand response access to all modes of travel to ensure all individuals, ire East.

s GPs and Town Centres have accessible and reliable rvices.

for mode shift, relatively faster and larger change in

Section	Key Findings	Implications for the
	of high capacity for mode shift are situated in the centres of relatively higher density towns such as Macclesfield. Crewe, Nantwich, Wilmslow, Poynton and Alderley Edge.	

# e LTP

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# 4. Improve Transport for All

The transport system for Cheshire East should serve the needs of its communities and the borough's economy through a range of networks, from walking, wheeling and cycling, rail, highways, electric vehicles (EVs) and bus network. This section sets out a baseline position for all modes of travel and sets out an understanding of the potential for mode shift and user experience.

# 4.1 Walking and Wheeling

## 4.1.1 Benefits of active travel

Walking and wheeling for transport purposes involves moving as a pedestrian, whether that is walking or wheeling alone, aided by another person, or using some form of mobility aid such as a walking stick or wheelchair. Walking is increasingly promoted as a key form of transport as it derives multiple benefits for the user, their surrounding environment and decarbonisation efforts.

Regular physical activity benefits both physical health, mental health, and wellbeing. The NHS recommends adults aged between 19 - 64 participate in at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity a week<sup>41</sup>. This can be spread evenly over 4 to 5 days a week or every day. Commuting for 30 minutes as a pedestrian five days a week is one simple way people can achieve this goal.

Beyond health benefits, increased walking is a very cost-efficient way of reducing transport emissions. It improves road network efficiency, reduces congestion, and increases footfall<sup>42</sup>.

Walking or wheeling is often a smaller part of a longer multi-modal journey. For example, as part of the first or last mile of journeys utilising public transport. Therefore, by providing an accessible and extensive walking network, the public transport system as a whole will also benefit from enhanced use associated with improved accessibility.

## 4.1.2 Walking infrastructure

Cheshire East benefits from an extensive public rights of way network, as set out in 4.1.3, in addition to facilities alongside highway infrastructure. However, there is room for improvement to achieve a higher quality of facilities, and there are issues that need to be addressed for those with mobility issues such as wheelchair and pram accessible footpaths. This can include ensuring there are dropped kerbs, high quality surfaces, tighter junction mouths that minimise speed and distances to be crossed, and tactile paving throughout the borough. Cheshire East is actively working on improving the walking network through various initiatives;

- Active Travel Fund (ATF): DfT allocated funding to enhance walking and cycling routes in line with government design guidance, with Cheshire East receiving almost £2.8m from this fund;
- Annual capital programme with investment to improve walking and wheeling routes through the Active Travel, Sustainable Modes of Travel to School and highways maintenance workstreams; and
- Plans for an improved walking network through Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs), the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) and Local Transport Development Plans (LTDPs).

A number of towns have adopted LCWIPs including Crewe, Wilmslow, Congleton, and Macclesfield. These areas were selected for the development of LCWIPs based upon an evidence-based review which identified these areas as having the highest potential to increase walking and cycling. The proposed walking network improvements offer a significant opportunity to increase levels of walking across the borough.

As well as ensuring the walking network is of high quality, it is important to ensure the walking network is well connected to all other modes of travel such as rail and bus. This is due to most modes of travel having some aspect of walking; therefore, it is important to ensure all modes of travel are integrated within each other.

The footway network length in Cheshire East is approximately 2,204km and it split into four categories:

- Type 1 primary walking routes 25km
- Type 2 secondary walking routes 587km
- Type 3 link footways 520km
- Type 4 local access footways 1072km

CEC carries out an annual carriageway survey of the network in order to monitor the current condition of the network and assist with the development of annual programmes and lifecycle planning. Currently 33% of the footway network is considered to need maintenance over the next 12 months.

<sup>42</sup> Cycling and walking can help reduce physical inactivity and air pollution, save lives and mitigate climate change

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> NHS Physical activity guidelines for adults aged 19 to 64



# 4.1.3 Public Rights of Way





Figure 4-2 Public rights of way in Cheshire East

Figure 4-2 shows the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network throughout Cheshire East. The PRoW includes<sup>43</sup>:

- Footpaths for walking, running, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs;
- Bridleways for walking, horse riding, bicycles, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs;
- Restricted byways for any transport without a motor and mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs; and
- Byways open to all traffic (BOATs) for any kind of transport, including cars.

PRoW provide many benefits to individuals who use them, including providing leisure routes as well as providing access to work, education, and local facilities in some areas. This in turn can benefit the local economy due to an increase in footfall to local businesses. Due to individuals having access to the borough via the PRoW network, walking can be an option instead of using private vehicles, therefore reducing congestion, improving air quality and the lifestyle of individuals within Cheshire

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> <u>Rights of way and accessing land: Use public rights of way - GOV.UK</u>

East. As well as this, PRoW allow individuals to improve health and wellbeing due to being able to access the outdoors and take part in physical activity.

Figure 4-1 shows the composition of the PRoW network within Cheshire East, compared with England. As shown Cheshire East has a large proportion of public footpaths, making up 93.7% of the PRoW network. Figure 4-1 shows that Cheshire East has a higher proportion of public footpaths compared to England as whole and a smaller proportion of routes available to other types of users. Cheshire East's PRoW are made up of 1787.8km of public footpaths, 104.4km of public bridleway and 42.3kms of restricted byways and byways open to all traffic<sup>41</sup>. The borough is well connected in terms of footpaths which helps facilitate walking more effectively due existing walking infrastructure.

Cheshire East published a Rights of Way Improvement Plan for 2011 – 2026 which assesses the accessibility of local PRoW and their ability to meet the present and future needs of the public<sup>44</sup>. It can be difficult to assess the quality of the PRoW Network, however a Best Value Performance Indicator was developed to make an overall assessment of Cheshire East's PRoW network; this can be found in Figure 4-3. This assessment was conducted by PRoW Officers assessing 5% of the network which was selected at random. As shown in Figure 4-3, 70-88% of Cheshire East's PRoW is 'easy to use', and this is above the average result for England across all years apart from 2005-06 and 2007-08. It must however be noted this assessment was conducted some time ago. An enhanced quality of the PRoW network that is accessible for all and easy to use will increase the attractiveness of the PRoW network, and therefore encourage uptake of walking.



Figure 4-3 Best Value Performance Indicator Results for Cheshire East 2002 - 2010 (Cheshire East) ROWIP)

#### 4.1.4 Walking statistics





Taken from DfT household survey on walking statistics that is carried out by Sport England, Figure 4-4 shows the percentage of individuals within Cheshire East, the North West and England that walk over 10 minutes by any purpose (leisure and travel) five times a week<sup>45</sup> between years 2016 and 2022.

The data in Figure 4-4 shows that the proportion of adults walking in Cheshire East was higher than the North West and England for all years apart from 2016 and 2019. For Cheshire East, the proportion of adults walking by any purpose five times a week peaked in 2021 at 33%. This may have been due to the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions at the time, resulting in more time spent at home and therefore an increased likelihood of walking for leisure purposes. Cheshire East having a higher proportion of adults walking links to Section 3.2.2 which shows that Cheshire East has a lower percentage of overweight and obese adults compared to the North West and England.

Figure 4-4 shows that there is still room for improvement in the walking levels within Cheshire East, given that in 2022, only 30-35% of adults are walking five times per week. It is important that walking infrastructure and facilities are attractive

<sup>44</sup> Cheshire East Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2011 - 2026

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Walking and Cycling (TSGB11) - GOV.UK



to try and increase this percentage. Improved infrastructure could come in the form of benches for rest stops, lighting, and an accessible network such as dropped kerbs and wide crossing for example.

Figure 4-5 shows similar data but for walking once per month, once a week, at least 3 times a week and at least 5 times per week. The data shows that the highest proportion of adults walking for any purpose is 'at least once a month' and the lowest is 'at least 5 times a week'. Over time, there has not been substantial change in the proportion of adults walking these different frequencies. If walking is to become the natural choice for shorter trips and increase the modal share, this suggests that more needs to be done to encourage uptake of walking and wheeling and promote the benefits of this mode of travel.

Census data also helps us to understand walking proportions. Table 4-1 shows the methods of travel to work taken from the 2011 Census for Cheshire East, the North West and England<sup>46</sup>. The 2021 Census was carried out during the COVID-19 Pandemic; therefore, data may be skewed and not reliable as many people worked from home. Therefore, the 2011 provides a more accurate representation on the percentage of the employed population that cycle to work. However, 2021 Census has been included for comparison.

Table 4-1 Percentage of population walking to work taken from the 2011 and 2021 Census - Cheshire East, North West and England

Method of Travel to Work	Cheshire East	North West	England
On foot – 2011 Census	10%	11%	11%
On foot – 2021 Census	7.2%	7.6%	8%

Table 4-1 shows that in the 2011 Census, 10% of individuals walk to work in Cheshire East. This percentage is similar to the North West and England where 11% of individuals walk to work. Data from the 2021 Census<sup>47</sup> shows that 7% in Cheshire East walk to work. This shows there has been a decrease in the number of individuals walking to work compared with 2011. This is supported by Figure 4-6 and Figure 4-7 overleaf which show the number of individuals walking to work in 2021 has decreased compared to 2011. This is likely to be as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic as a significant proportion of people were working from home at the time.

As shown in Figure 4-6 and Figure 4-7 overleaf, higher numbers of individuals walking to work are located around urban areas such as Macclesfield, Crewe, Congleton and Nantwich. This highlights how walking levels are inevitably highest in urban areas. This may be due to there being higher densities of employment and residential areas. It is essential that these areas have good walking facilities throughout the area to ensure individuals can access work easily by walking. Conversely, across most of the borough, which is predominantly rural, walking levels are low. This may be a result of workplaces being located further away from more rural areas, therefore making it difficult to walk to work, hence the lower numbers of individuals walking to work.

Figure 4-5 The proportion of adults walking by any purpose for different frequencies between 2016 and 2022 in **Cheshire East** 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Method of Travel to Work (2011 Census)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Method of Travel to Work (2021 Census) Proportion of adults walking by any purpose for different frequencies between 2016 and 2022 in Cheshire East

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans - Technical Guide



Figure 4-6 Number of Individuals Walking to Work - 2021 Census (ONS)

Figure 4-7 Number of Individuals Walking to Work - 2011 Census (ONS)

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## 4.1.5 Collisions and casualties involving walking

Figure 4-8 Reported Pedestrian Road Casualties for the past 5 years (DfT)

Figure 4-8 shows the latest five-year reported pedestrian collision injury statistics between January 2018 and December 2022 utilising DfT data<sup>48</sup>. Total collisions in Figure 4-8 shows that the total pedestrian collisions stayed at a similar level between 2018 and 2022, apart from 2020, where there was a significant decrease in the number of pedestrian collisions. This is likely to be a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as lockdown restrictions meant there were fewer vehicles on the road, therefore creating a safer environment for pedestrians. As shown, although low to begin with, fatal collisions from 2020 onwards are even lower, suggesting improved safety for those walking within Cheshire East. However, due to the low numbers involved, this trend may not be statistically significant. The number of serious and slight collisions dipped during 2020 but have remained relatively static otherwise. Clearly, any injury sustained has a human cost, particularly serious and fatal casualties, and there is an imperative to minimise this to the lowest level possible.

Figure 4-9 Fatal and serious collisions throughout Cheshire East between 2018 and 2022

Figure 4-9 shows the location of the fatal and serious collisions in Cheshire East, taken from DfT data and downloaded from Bike Data<sup>49</sup>. As shown, there is a higher proportion of serious collisions and some fatal collisions in and around the town of Crewe. In addition, a majority of collisions occur along A Roads throughout Cheshire East, which is expected given the higher flows of traffic along these routes. Figure 4-8 shows there were 15 fatal casualties between the years of 2018-2022, with these locations including Crewe at Macon Way and Sandbach Road and Station Road in Handforth.

# 4.1.6 Strava Metro

Strava Metro is an online tool which analyses data taken from Strava users who track their rides, walks, and runs with GPS on their phones to evaluate and improve bicycle infrastructure<sup>50</sup>. Due to Strava Metro relying on individuals to track their activities on the app, it does not cover the entire population and is typically more associated with leisure activities due to individuals using the app to track their runs, walks or cycle trips. Despite this being 'opt-in' data, some independent



C OperStreetMap Contributors, CC-BY-SA.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> DfT Reported road casualty statistics in GB: interactive dashboard, from 2018

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> <u>Bikedata</u> <sup>50</sup> <u>Strava Metro | Walk</u>



academic studies have analysed this relationship, and it has been found to be representative of the overall population. Figure 4-10 shows the number of leisure walking trips taken across Cheshire between 2020 and 2023.

Figure 4-10 Number of leisure walking trips for Cheshire between 2019-2023 - Strava Metro

As shown in Figure 4-10, before the COVID-19 Pandemic walking levels for leisure in 2019 were low at below 60,000 trips. However, when the COVID-19 Pandemic occurred and the whole of the UK was placed in a lockdown in March 2020, walking trips rose at a significant rate from 93,000 in March 2020 to 185,000 in April 2020. The number of trips per month staved at a high rate until May 2020 where levels started to drop off but walking levels still remained high, above 115,000 trips in a month. Therefore, there was a much higher number of trips between the months of January to March of 2021 compared with 2020, this may be a result of better weather, encouraging more individuals to get out and walk. However, it can be seen from the graph that walking trips for leisure have not increased at a significant rate, therefore more needs to be done regarding the accessibility of the walking network within Cheshire East to encourage the population to walk more and walk instead of using their private vehicle.

#### National Travel Survey (NTS) walking statistics 4.1.7

Figure 4-11 shows the results for the mode share of trips in England by main mode of transport<sup>51</sup>. The figure shows walking is the most popular mode of travel for trips under one mile. However, between one mile and under five miles, car and van is the preferred main mode of transport. It takes an average paced individual around 20 minutes to walk one mile<sup>52</sup>, therefore individuals may not choose to walk longer than this due to time it would take. Therefore, in order to increase the number of individuals walking between one to five miles, Cheshire East need to ensure there is sufficient provision of walking network that is of high quality and accessible for walkers and wheelers to encourage people to walk longer distances.



Figure 4-11 Mode share of trips by main mode of transport, England 2022 (NTS)

Figure 4-12 shows the percentage of trips per person per year by main mode of transport for the North West of England<sup>53</sup>. This shows that the main mode of transport for the North West is the car at 61%, and then walking at 35%. This shows that while walking is the second largest mode of transport, there is still a large gap between car and walking. Therefore, more needs to be done to encourage the population to walk instead of using their personal vehicle. By improving the quality of

<sup>53</sup> NTS9903: Average number of trips by main mode, region and rural-urban classification of residence

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> NTS0308a: Average Number of Trips by Length and Main Mode (Trips Per Person Per Year)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> How long does it take to walk a mile? (runnersworld.com)

the walking network, more individuals will be encouraged to walk and therefore in future walking levels for the North West could be improved.



Figure 4-12 Percentage of Trips Per Person Per Year by Main Mode of Transport for the North West - National Travel Survey NTS9903a

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# 4.1.8 Summary

A summary of the findings in this chapter and implications for the LTP are described in the table below.

Section	Key Findings	Implications for
4.1.3	There are 1787 kms of public footpaths in Cheshire East, making up 93.7% of the borough's Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network. 70-88% of Cheshire East's PRoW are 'easy to use'.	CEC needs to improve the accessibility of the PRoW for all indir and mobility scooters. This will encourage individuals to use of the network.
4.1.4	The proportion of adults who walk by any purpose five times a week in Cheshire East was higher than the North West and England in 2017-2018, 2020-2022. However, there is still room for improvement given that this is in the region of 30-35%.	There are some excellent walking routes in the borough w improvements are needed more generally in order to improve
4.1.4	10% of individuals in Cheshire East walk to work, compared to 74% using a car. This percentage of the population is similar to the North West and England where 11% of the population walk to work.	Walking infrastructure needs to be improved so that there are to work. As well as this, it is essential to understand the poten
4.1.4	Higher numbers of individuals walking to work are located around more urban areas such as Macclesfield, Crewe, Congleton, and Nantwich.	These urban areas are home to densely populated resident individuals can access destinations more easily, hence these a work. Furthermore, in urban areas there are some instances of individuals to walk to work.
4.1.5	The number of fatal collisions in Cheshire East is low, making up a small proportion of the total number of collisions. However, due to the low numbers involved, this trend may not be statistically significant. The number of serious and slight collisions dipped during 2020 but have remained relatively static otherwise. Clearly, any injury sustained has a human cost, particularly serious and fatal casualties, and there is an imperative to minimise this to the lowest level possible.	It needs to be ensured that all facilities are safe for all walkers communities to walk instead of using their private vehicle. Wel reduce pedestrian related casualties.
4.1.7	In the North West, 35% of individuals trips per year are carried out by walking, compared to 61% of annual trips carried out by car or van.	Improvement in the quality of the walking network around Ch to encourage individuals to walk instead of using their private

## the LTP

ividuals in the borough including wheelchairs, prams, the ProW due to the accessibility and attractiveness

with the Middlewood Way a key example. However, we walking levels throughout the borough.

e attractive alternatives to driving for those travelling ntial for modal shift to walking.

tial areas with higher densities of jobs. This means areas having higher number of individuals walking to f better walking infrastructure, therefore encouraging

s and wheelers throughout the borough to encourage ell-designed walking facilities are likely to help further

neshire East to ensure the infrastructure is accessible vehicle.

#### 4.2 Cycle

#### 4.2.1 Benefits of active travel

Cycling is increasingly promoted as a form of transport as it derives multiple benefits for the user, their surrounding environment, the economy and wider society.

Regular physical activity benefits both physical and mental health and wellbeing. The NHS recommends adults aged between 19 – 64 participate in at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity a week<sup>54</sup>. This can be spread evenly over 4 to 5 days a week or every day. Commuting for 30 minutes as a cyclist five-days a week is one way people can achieve this goal.

Bevond health benefits, increased cycling is a cost-efficient way of reducing transport emissions, as it improves road network efficiency and reduces congestion. Cycling is often a smaller part of a longer multi-modal journey. For example, as part of the first / last mile of journeys utilising public transport, this can be undertaken by cycling. Therefore, by providing an accessible and extensive cycle network, the public transport system as a whole will be able to be accessed by a wide range of the population. Maintaining a good general highway condition particularly benefits cyclists, as they are road users most affected by poor surfacing.

It is important to recognise that cyclists are not a homogenous group and there are many different types of users, including people with disabilities using non-standard cycles. This has important implications for the supporting infrastructure required, however providing high quality facilities as detailed in Local Transport Note 1/20 will encourage a wide range of users to deliver the benefits sought.

#### 4.2.2 Cycling infrastructure

As noted in the walking section, CEC has developed a range of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans. Crewe, Congleton, Macclesfield, and Wilmslow were selected for the development of LCWIPs to date based upon an evidencebased review which identified these areas as having the highest potential to increase walking and cycling. The proposed cycling network improvements offer a significant opportunity to increase levels of cycling across the borough.

As well as LCWIPs, Local Transport Development Plans (LTDPs) have been developed by the council. These LTDPs set out a range of potential schemes to improve the transport network to support towns and surrounding areas by identifying ways to deliver an integrated transport network. LTDPs have been developed for the two principal towns of Crewe and Macclesfield and nine Key Service Centres in Cheshire East<sup>55</sup>.

#### Cycle parking audit

An audit of publicly available cycle parking facilities in the borough's town centres was undertaken in 2023 to help improve access to active travel infrastructure across Cheshire East. The facilities were mapped and will be used to develop a programme for future installation of cycle parking and complementary facilities at key destinations.

Table 4-2 shows that Wilmslow has the largest number of cycle parking locations, with 152 parking facilities at 25 parking locations. The number of individuals travelling to work via bike in Wilmslow are low, however the Manchester Road scheme and other improvements should create a more conducive environment to enable cycle journeys into Wilmslow town centre. In Crewe there are 109 parking facilities in ten different locations; this larger number of parking facilities correlates with historically higher levels of cycling within the town. There are a few areas which have low numbers of parking locations, such as Disley and Prestbury where there are less than ten parking facilities in these locations. In order to attract more individuals to cycle in these areas, the parking infrastructure throughout Cheshire East needs to be increased and improved to make it easier for individuals to get around the borough by bike.

Table 4-2: Cyc	le audit results
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Town Centre	Number of parking	Total number of parking	Proportion of sheltered
	tocations	lacifices	Tacifices
Alderley Edge	6	24	42%
Alsager	10	44	Unknown
Bollington	10	30	13%
Congleton	12	94	11%
Crewe	10	109	Unknown
Disley	2	5	0%
Handforth	6	19	0%
Holmes Chapel	6	40	40%
Knutsford	6	21	24%
Macclesfield	8	54	Unknown
Middlewich	6	29	55%
Nantwich	10	78	Unknown
Poynton	6	23	0%
Prestbury	1	5	0%
Sandbach	10	56	0%
Wilmslow	25	152	37%

#### Existing cycle network

Many routes within Cheshire East are on road or shared with traffic. These types of facilities are less attractive for cyclists as they are exposed to significant levels of motorised vehicles which can result in poor perception of safety and discourage new cyclists. Cheshire East also has some off carriageway routes with a number of Greenways and Trails that provide an excellent level for service such as the Middlewood Way and the Crewe - Nantwich Connect 2 route. There are a variety of shared paths which is some circumstances can be appropriate for cycling, however in more urban areas where pedestrian footfall is higher and there are frequent interactions with side roads, they may not provide the level of service set out in Local Transport Note 1/20. CEC is prioritising the delivery of high-quality cycle routes and there are a variety of schemes due for construction in the coming years. This includes the Manchester Road scheme between Wilmslow and Handforth that will deliver a cycle route segregated from pedestrians and motorised traffic, funded through the Active Travel Fund and contributions from CEC.

55 Local Transport Development Plans

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> NHS Physical activity guidelines for adults aged 19 to 64





Figure 4-13 shows the National Cycle Network (NCN) for Cheshire East. The NCN maintained by Sustrans "is a UK-wide network of signed paths and routes for walking, wheeling, cycling and exploring outdoors"56. The figure shows that most of the NCN is located towards the centre and south of the borough with one route through the north which connects Bollington and Macclesfield to the central and southern area of the borough. For the NCN, this means that the southern and central regions of Cheshire East are better connected than the northern area, however there is opportunity to develop new NCN routes in collaboration with Sustrans that provide the level of service needed. A key example of a recent improvement to the NCN is the Hurdsfield Road / Black Lane scheme that improves links between Macclesfield and the Middlewood Way, which was funded by Sustrans and a local contribution by CEC. Apart from NCN, there is a large number of local and regional cycle routes located around the whole borough, however the level of service offered is variable. In total there is 724km of cycle network throughout Cheshire East.

#### **Cycling statistics** 4.2.3

Figure 4-14 visualises the proportion of adults who cycle at least once a week for travel between 2016 and 2022. Travel refers to cycling to get from place-to-place, for example travelling to work or going to the supermarket. This data is taken from the DfT walking and cycling participation in local authority statistics<sup>57</sup> based on the Active Lives Survey.

Figure 4-14 compares the proportion of adults cycling for any purpose at least once a week in Cheshire East, the North West and England<sup>58</sup>. The graph shows that for the years 2016 and 2019 cycling percentages were lower in Cheshire East and the North West compared to England. However, in 2017 the percentage of adults cycling was significantly higher than the percentage in the North West and England. Apart from 2017, the percentage of those cycling has remained relatively similar from 2016 to 2020 in the range of 8-10%. However, in 2021, the percentages in the North West and England dropped whilst Cheshire East remained the same; this also happened in 2022. As a result, the proportion of those cycling for any purpose was higher in Cheshire East than the North West and England in 2021 and 2022.



Figure 4-14 Proportion of adults who cycle at least once a week for any purpose – CW0302

This shows that there is still room for improvement regarding cycling levels in Cheshire East, given that 8-10% of adults are cycling once per week, and this has remained relatively unchanged since 2017. Therefore, it is important that cycle infrastructure is of high quality, in line with LTN 01/20 and suitable for all individuals to use.

<sup>56</sup> The National Cycle Network Sustrans

<sup>57</sup> Participation in walking and cycling (local authority rates)

<sup>58</sup> CW0302: Proportion of adults that cycle, by frequency, purpose and local authority: England

Figure 4-15 shows the proportion of adults who cycle at least once a week for travel purposes in the North West and England. Travel purposes refers to cycling to get from place to place, for example commuting, going to the supermarket or to the doctor etc. Data is not available for Cheshire East specifically due to the low frequencies of trips<sup>59</sup>. The graph shows that the proportion of adults cycling at least once a week for travel purposes is lower in the North West than for the whole of England for 2016 - 2022. In 2020, the percentage of adults cycling at least once a week for travel purposes fell, with a more significant decrease in England compared to the North West. This is likely to be as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. For both regions, the percentage fell further in 2021 however began to recover in 2022, although both areas still have lower percentages of cycling for travel purposes than pre-pandemic in 2019.



### Figure 4-15 Proportion of adults who cycle at least once a week for travel

Table 4-3 shows the Census data relating to the method of travel to work for Cheshire East, the North West and England from the years 2011<sup>60</sup> and 2021<sup>61</sup>. In 2011, cycling as a method of travelling to work in Cheshire East was 0.4% higher than in the North West and 0.1% lower than the whole of England. In 2021 the North West and England experienced a reduction in cycling as a method of travelling to work due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however in Cheshire East it was 0.1% higher than in the North West and 0.3% lower than England. Whilst these levels are similar overall to the North West and England, there is still work to be done to improve cycling infrastructure and encourage more people to cycle.

able 4-3 Comparison of cycling as a method of travelling to work (ONS)					
Method of Travel to work	Cheshire East	North West	England		
Bicycle – 2011 Census	1.8%	1.4%	1.9%		
Bicycle – 2021 Census	1.8%	1.7%	2.1%		

Figure 4-16 shows the 2011 Census data highlighting the number of people who cycle to work for each area in Cheshire East. The figure shows that cycling as a method of travel to work is highest within the principal town of Crewe and its surrounding areas. Higher levels of cycling to work can be seen in and around Nantwich, within Macclesfield and to the southeast of Macclesfield. Apart from these areas, levels of cycling to work is lower, particularly in areas further away from key town and economic centres in the more rural areas of the borough. This may be a result of workplaces being located further away from more rural areas and limited routes, therefore making it difficult to cycle to work. Figure 4-17 shows the 2021 Census data highlighting the number of people who cycle to work for each LSOA in Cheshire East. Despite this being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, this still can show us where cycling was more popular within the borough. Similar to 2011, the number of people using cycling as a method of travelling to work is highest in and around the principal town of Crewe and to the southeast of Macclesfield. Away from these areas, similar to 2011, cycling numbers are lower.



Figure 4-16 Number of individuals cycling to work - 2011 Census

59 CW0302: Proportion of adults that cycle, by frequency, purpose and local authority: England

<sup>61</sup> census 2021 Method of travel to work

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> census 2011 Method of travel to work



Figure 4-17 Number of individuals cycling to work - 2021 Census

#### National Travel Survey (NTS) cycle statistics

The trends described below have been taken from the National Travel Survey<sup>62</sup> (NTS), the NTS is a household survey of personal travel by residents of England travelling within Great Britain.

Figure 4-18 shows the average number of cycling trips made per person per year in England between 2002 and 2022<sup>63</sup>. The average number of cycle trips across England has remained relatively similar between 2002 and 2022 with this being between 15 and 18 trips per person, per year since 2002. There was a slight increase in average trips in 2020 to 20 trips per year per person when the COVID-19 pandemic began, however this decreased again in 2021 and 2022. This suggests that Cheshire East need to ensure there is sufficient provision of cycling network that is of high quality and accessible for cyclists to enable individuals to cycle instead of travel by their private vehicle. As well as ensuring a high-quality network, more need to be done to ensure women feel safe whilst using the cycle network.



Figure 4-18 NTS Average cycling trips made, and miles travelled per person per year: England 2002-2022

Figure 4-18 shows that average cycling miles have experienced a general upward trend from 2002 to 2022. There was a significant increase in miles travelled in 2020 to 88 miles, likely as a result of there being more people cycling for leisure during the COVID-19 pandemic. There was then a fall from this spike in 2021 which has remained similar in 2022. Since 2002, average cycling miles have increased by 46% which is the equivalent of 39 miles per person. Even though cycling miles have increased it does not mean that more people are cycling. This rise in miles cycled could be due to existing cyclists riding longer distances or many other reasons. It is essential to consider other factors, like the total number of cyclists or participation rates, to get a more accurate picture of cycling trends. Even though an increase in cycle miles does not directly correlate to more cycling trips, it is still a positive sign.

Figure 4-19 shows the proportion of cycling trips per person per year, by trip purpose in England between the years of 2019 and 2022<sup>64</sup>. This shows that in 2022, the most common purpose for cycling trips was leisure with 36% of all cycling trips. Commuting was the second most common purpose with 30% and education third with 13%. Since 2020, the proportion of leisure cycling trips have reduced, and the proportion of commuting and education trips has increased. This highlights that cycling trip purposes are returning to pre-pandemic reasons in 2019.

<sup>64</sup> NTS0409 - Proportion of cycling trips by trip purpose

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> National Travel Survey 2022: Active Travel

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> NTS0303 - Average Number of Cycling Trips



Figure 4-19 NTS Proportion of cycling trips per person per year, by trip purpose: England, 2019 to 2022



#### Figure 4-20 5-year cycle collision history by severity, 2018-2022

Figure 4-20 shows the latest five-year reported cyclist collision injury statistics between January 2018 and December 2022 utilising DfT data<sup>65</sup>. Total collisions have remained relatively similar across the past five years, however in 2020 there was a slight increase in collisions. This increase occurred due to a higher number of fatal and serious collisions compared to prior years. Causality is difficult to establish however this may be due to a higher number of people taking up cycling during the COVID-19 the pandemic, which may have resulted in an increased likelihood of collisions occurring. In 2022, the number of serious collisions was significantly higher than previous years, increasing by 78%. However, fatal, and slight collisions were lower, so the total number of collisions shows little change.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> <u>DfT Reported road casualty statistics in GB: interactive dashboard, from 2018</u>



Figure 4-21 Fatal and serious cycle collision locations, 2018-2022

Figure 4-21 shows the location of fatal and serious collisions in Cheshire East, taken from Bike Data<sup>66</sup>. As shown, there is a higher proportion of serious collisions in and around Crewe and one fatality occurring in this area. This may be due to there being higher levels of cycling in this area, as seen in Section 4.2.4.

### 4.2.5 Strava Metro



Figure 4-22 Strava Metro data for cycle trips for commuting and leisure, 2019-2023

Strava Metro is an online tool which analyses data taken from Strava users who track their rides with GPS on their phones to evaluate and improve bicycle infrastructure<sup>67</sup>. Due to Strava Metro relying on individuals to track their activities on the application, it does not cover the entire population and is typically more associated with leisure activities due to individuals using the app to track their runs or cycle trips, however some journeys to work and for other everyday purposes are also captured.

Figure 4-22 shows the number of cycle trips taken across Cheshire between the years 2019 and 2022 for leisure and commuting purposes. The data is not broken down to a Cheshire East level. The graph shows a significant peak in leisure trips in Cheshire in May 2020. This coincides with the COVID-19 pandemic, when there was better weather, and more individuals were leaving their homes and exercising. This peak in the summer months, shows a relationship between cycling and the time of year. Leisure cycling levels recorded significantly decreased between September 2020 and May 2021 over winter. Commuting levels recorded in Strava have stayed very similar over the past four years with there being a slight increase during the summer months which is likely a result of the better weather encouraging more to cycle.

67 Strava Metro | Walk

# 4.2.6 Propensity to Cycle Tool (PCT)



Figure 4-23: Propensity to cycle fast routes – Government Target (Near Market)

Figure 4-23 shows 'fast routes' data from the Propensity to Cycle tool<sup>68</sup>; this shows the likelihood a route will be used for a cycle trip based on the 2011 Census. The fast routes are those that would get the cyclist to their destination in the shortest time. The PCT tool has been used for the scenario of Government Target (Near Market). This scenario models a doubling of cycling nationally by 2025. The Government Target (Near Market) models the increase as occurring as a function of trip distance and hilliness, plus socio-demographic and geographical characteristics.

The map shows that routes in Crewe and Macclesfield have the highest propensity to cycle. This may be due to these areas having a higher density of jobs and residential area due to the urban nature, therefore easier for individuals to cycle as they are closer to work opportunities. This can also be seen in Nantwich, Middlewich, Congleton, Wilmslow, Knutsford and Handforth. This means it is easier for individuals to cycle due to being located closer to essential amenities that are of higher densities in urban areas, such as work opportunities. However, more rural areas such as Audlem, Alsager, Poynton and Prestbury have lower propensity to cycle due to there being fewer people and job opportunities, and due to the larger distance to urban areas, from rural towns and villages, fewer individuals cycle in these areas. This tool has informed the production of LCWIPs and Local Transport Delivery Plans.

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<sup>68</sup> Propensity to Cycle Tool - Bike

# 4.2.7 Summary

A summary of the findings in this chapter and implications for the LTP are described in the table below:

Section	Key findings	Implications for the LTP
4.2.2	All of the towns within Cheshire East have cycle parking facilities, however this varies in terms of quality and number.	To attract more individuals to cycle within Cheshire East, cyc the borough to make it easier and more comfortable for indiv
4.2.2	The central and southern areas of Cheshire East are well connected by the National Cycle Network, the north of Cheshire East less so, with only the NCN route 55 connecting north to south via Macclesfield. The level of service offered on these routes is variable.	To increase the number of people cycling in Cheshire East it is for this to happen. Improvements are needed in many areas
4.2.2	Many routes within Cheshire East are on road or shared with traffic. Cheshire East also has some off carriageway routes with a number of Greenways and Trails that provide an excellent level for service such as the Middlewood Way and the Crewe – Nantwich Connect 2 route. There are a variety of shared paths which is some circumstances can be appropriate for cycling, however in more urban areas where pedestrian footfall is higher and there are frequent interactions with side roads, they may not provide the level of service set out in Local Transport Note 01/20.	Building on work conducted in recent years such as the B schemes, there should be a continuing focus on delivering hi
4.2.3	In 2011, Cheshire East had a similar proportion of adults cycling to work as the whole of England, and a higher proportion than the North West. Crewe and Macclesfield have the highest number of people cycling as a method of travelling to work, however in 2021, compared to 2011, cycling was significantly lower as a method of travelling to work, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.	It is important to maintain and improve cycling infrastructuinfrastructure in other areas of the borough to attract more p
4.2.3	The proportion of people cycling in Cheshire East at least once a week for any purpose has remained relatively unchanged from 2018 onwards, however in 2017, 2021 and 2022 the proportion of people cycling in Cheshire East was higher than in the North West and England.	Whilst the proportion of people cycling in Cheshire East has b and 2022 this has been due to a fall in the regional and natio relatively similar so more needs to be done to increase and a
4.2.4	Collisions have remained relatively unchanged across the period from 2018-2022, apart from a slight increase in collisions during 2020 which may be due to the increase in the proportion of people cycling in 2020. Although the number of fatal collisions has steadily fallen over the 5 year period, serious collisions were highest in 2022 and slight collisions have returned to pre-pandemic levels.	This suggests there is a need to ensure that all cycling facilitie borough to encourage individuals to cycle instead of using th line with guidance are likely to help further reduce cyclist rela
4.2.6	The potential to encourage more people to cycle is highest in Crewe and Macclesfield, however there are also opportunities in many other Key Service Centres.	To achieve maximum benefits from encouraging more peo Macclesfield. This however needs to be balanced against the

ycle parking and facilities need to be improved within lividuals to cycle in Cheshire East.

s important to have the infrastructure in place to allow of the borough.

Black Lane / Hurdsfield Road and Manchester Road igh quality cycle routes in line with LTN 1/20.

ure in higher performing areas whilst also improving people to use cycle as a method of travel to work.

been higher than the North West and England in 2021 onal proportion. Cheshire East's proportion has stayed attract people to cycle in the borough.

es are of high quality safe for all users throughout the heir private vehicle. Well-designed cycling facilities in ated casualties.

ople to cycle, the high potential exists in Crewe and e needs of the wider borough.

# 4.3 Bus

Local buses play an important role in the transport network connecting residents to jobs, education, employment, and key services. Buses can free up capacity on roads as a mechanism for mode shift away from private car and to improve local air quality. Buses can also be a lower cost option to car ownership and provide a more sustainable alternative to the private car. A cohesive bus network creates opportunities for increased accessibility to towns, villages, and services. This also enables residents and bus users to benefit from an established sense of community, reduce social isolation and promote economic growth. Data and analysis presented in this section is summarised from the CEC Bus Service Improvement Plan, June 2024.

In recent years, local buses nationally have faced significant reductions in funding and consequently services which have impacted commuters and communities across the UK. This has resulted in reduced accessibility. Cheshire East's local bus network is made up of 37 combined bus services, of which 21 are fully supported by the council (56.8%), a further eight are partially supported by the council (21.6%), such as evening journeys and eight services (21.6%) operate on a fully commercial basis. The council currently spends circa. £2.8m per year supporting bus services which are not commercially viable but are deemed important and socially necessary. This includes cross boundary expenditure and contributions, as well as section 106 contributions from new developments.



Figure 4-24 Commercial and supported bus services within Cheshire East (correct as of April 2024)

# 4.3.1 Bus operators

The data in Table 4-4 shows the principal bus operators which provide services across Cheshire East. The local bus network is operated by eleven commercial bus operators. D&G Coach & Bus (part of the Centrebus Group) is the predominant operator for the borough, which operates approximately half of all routes, with ten local bus operators collectively providing the remaining bus routes. Each operator, particularly for the commercial provision, is responsible for their own network planning, branding, and ticketing. Where services are financially supported, the planning for services is currently managed by Cheshire East Council (as the Local Transport Authority).

Currently, two out of the eleven operators deliver their services from an operating base or depot within the boundary of Cheshire East, and the remainder from neighbouring cross boundary locations in Cheshire West and Chester, Greater Manchester, Salford, Staffordshire, and Warrington. This reflects the close inter-relationship that Cheshire East and its neighbouring authorities has for the delivery of bus services to the borough.

#### Table 4-4 Bus operators within Cheshire East

Bus Company	Parent Operator or Owner	No. of Bus Routes	Principal Locations Served	Depot Location
D & G Coach & Bus	D & G Bus Ltd (Centrebus Ltd)	25	Boroughwide	Crewe, Adderley Green
Stagecoach Greater Manchester	Stagecoach Group Ltd	2	Between Stockport/Cheadle and Handforth/Poynton	Manchester
Stagecoach Merseyside, Cheshire & South Lancs	Stagecoach Group Ltd	1	Between Chester, Tarporley, Nantwich and Crewe	Chester
High Peak Buses	High Peak Buses Ltd (The Wellglade Group and Centrebus Ltd	6	Between Macclesfield and High Peak	Dove Holes
First Potteries	First Group plc	1	Stoke-on-Trent to Crewe	Stoke-on-Trent
Hollinshead Coaches	Hollinshead Coaches Ltd	3	Congleton	Biddulph
Belle Vue Coaches	Belle Vue (Manchester) Ltd	2	Stockport to Macclesfield	Eccles
Warrington's Own Buses	Warrington Borough Transport Ltd	2	Between Knutsford and Warrington	Warrington
Aimee's Travel	Aimee's Travel Ltd	1	Macclesfield	Leek
Mikro Coaches	Mikro Coaches Ltd	1	Crewe to Nantwich	Crewe
Direct Taxis Lymm Shopper	Warrington Borough Council & Cheshire East Council	1	Little Bollington, Agden, Broomedge	Little Bollington

## 4.3.2 Routes and frequency

The Cheshire East local bus network operates:

- Principally between **Mondays** and **Saturdays**, with limited or no service on routes outside of urban centres on Sundays and Bank Holidays.
- During the AM peak (07:00 to 09:00), interpeak (09:00 to 16:00) and PM peak (16:00 to 18:00) periods, with a limited selection of bus routes operating during post evening peak, where typically on many routes this post evening peak does not extend beyond 18:00.
- The cross-boundary services provide key links to neighbouring service centres and employment, such as Greater Manchester, Stoke-on-Trent, Chester, and Warrington.

The following maps below illustrate coverage of the local bus network across the borough, by time period; the weekday AM peak period, weekday interpeak and weekday PM peak. Please note the maps were produced and analysed in April 2024 and will be updated following the implementation of the bus service review in April 2025.



Figure 4-25 Weekday Morning (AM) Peak 07:00 - 09:00 - Bus Frequency Across Cheshire East (April 2024)

Figure 4-25 shows that between 7am and 9am on a weekday, the most common bus frequency in Cheshire East is every 60 to 120 minutes. This can be seen around Crewe, Sandbach, Macclesfield, Knutsford, and Poynton. The routes that have no operating service during this time are around Audlem, south and west of Nantwich and west of Knutsford. The most frequent route running every 15 to 30 minutes is between Crewe and Alsager, and routes on the border with Greater Manchester in Handforth and Disley.



Figure 4-26 Weekday Inter Peak 09:00 - 16:00 - Bus Frequency Across Cheshire East (April 2024)

Figure 4-26 shows that between 9am and 4pm on a weekday the most common bus frequency in Cheshire East is every 30 and 60 minutes. This can be seen around Macclesfield, north of Congleton, Chelford, north west of Crewe, Wilmslow and Handforth. The routes that have no service during this time are within Crewe and Mobberley. The most frequent route running every 15 to 30 minutes, can be seen between Crewe and Alsager, between Mobberley and Knutsford and routes on the border with Greater Manchester in Disley.



Figure 4-27 Weekday Evening Peak 16:00 - 18:00 - Bus Frequency Across Cheshire East (April 2024)

Figure 4-27 shows that between 4pm and 6pm on a weekday the most common bus frequency in Cheshire East is every 60 to 120 minutes. This can be seen around Audlem, Poynton, Sandbach, Mobberley, Prestbury and Handforth. The routes that have no service operating during this time period can be seen around Nantwich, north and south of Holmes Chapel and north east of Alsager. The most frequent route running every 15 to 30 minutes can be seen between Crewe and Alsager, north of Congleton, and routes on the border with Greater Manchester in Disley.



Figure 4-28 Weekend Morning (AM) Peak 07:00 - 09:00 - Bus Frequency Across Cheshire East (April 2024)

Figure 4-28 shows that between 7am and 9am on a weekend, the most common bus frequency in Cheshire East is every 60 to 120 minutes. This can be seen south of Macclesfield, west of Congleton, north of Crewe, Middlewich and south east of Holmes Chapel. The routes that have no service operating during this time period can be seen south and west of Nantwich, Audlem, north and south of Holmes Chapel, south of Macclesfield and north east of Alsager. The most frequent route running every 15 to 30 minutes can be seen between Crewe and Alsager, and routes on the border with Greater Manchester in Handforth and Disley.



Figure 4-29 Weekend Inter Peak 09:00 - 16:00 - Bus Frequency Across Cheshire East (April 2024)

Figure 4-29 shows that between 9am and 4pm on a weekend, the most common bus frequency in Cheshire East is every 60 to 120 minutes. This can be seen around Audlem, south of Macclesfield, south of Poynton and between Sandbach and Congleton. The routes that have no service operating during this time period can be seen in Handforth and south of Wilmslow, south east of Sandbach, north west of Alsager and south of Holmes Chapel. The most frequent route running every 15 to 30 minutes can be seen between Crewe and Alsager, and routes on the border with Greater Manchester in Disley.



Figure 4-30 Weekend Off Peak 18:00 - 00:00 - Bus Frequency Across Cheshire East (April 2024)

Figure 4-30 shows that between 6pm and 12am on a weekend, a lot of Cheshire East has no service operating during this time period. This can be seen around Nantwich, Audlem, Holmes Chapel, south east Crewe, Prestbury, south Macclesfield and Poynton. However, there are some services operating as shown by the blue lines. These include but are not limited to around the north west of Nantwich, north east of Congleton, north east of Crewe towards Sandbach, between Crewe and Alsager and south west of Macclesfield towards Congleton.

The analysis of these maps shows that bus services are more frequent during weekday morning and evening peaks and weekend interpeak. Bus services are less frequent during weekday interpeak times and weekend off peak. This reduces the access to services for those requiring them during these periods. It can be seen that bus frequency is higher in more urban areas compared to more rural areas, for example bus frequency is higher in Crewe and Macclesfield compared to Audlem, Nantwich and south Macclesfield.

# 4.3.3 Ticketing/fares

Cheshire East does not currently have a multi-operator ticketing (MOT) arrangement in place across the borough, with the exception of Macclesfield which recently implemented a MOT scheme entitled 'Silk Town Ticket' in September 2024 for a one-year trial. In areas in the north of the borough, close to the Greater Manchester boundary (i.e., Poynton and Wilmslow), passengers are able to access the 'System One' range of tickets for adults, but this is limited to areas close to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority area boundary.

Bus service data from May 2023 to March 2024 provided by Cheshire East Council and operators show that between 36-44% of trips are made using concessionary passes.

The DfT launched the £2 bus fare cap on 1st January 2023, aiming to reduce travel costs for individuals in response to increased cost of living pressures. This scheme caps adult single fares to £2 and is in place across Cheshire East operators. Initially set to run until 31 March 2023, the government extended the fare cap until 31 October 2023 and subsequently extended this commitment to 31 December 2024. In a pre-budget speech on Monday 28 October 2024 the Prime Minister announced that the fare cap will be extended further from the 1 January 2025 through to the end of December 2025 at the increased price of £3.

The current bus fare cap applies to all but one of the local bus operators in Cheshire East (see below). Hollinshead Coaches has not previously participated in the fare cap scheme due to their maximum fare being below £2.

- D & G Coach & Bus;
- Stagecoach Greater Manchester;
- Stagecoach Merseyside, Cheshire and South Lancs;
- High Peak Buses;
- First Potteries;
- Warrington's Own Buses;
- Belle Vue;
- Mikro Coaches;
- Aimee's Travel; and
- Direct Taxis.

The DfT published an interim report in February 2023 on the £2 fare cap that found patronage was continuing to recover in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the fare cap may be playing a role in this recovery.

National patronage for January and February 2023 increased by 20% compared to the October 2022 - January 2023 period (which saw a decrease by 3%). A Transport Focus survey found that 80% of respondents agreed that the fare cap may mitigate the current cost-of-living crisis and the scheme was also perceived to have the largest impact on the cost of living for younger people.

Cheshire East Council is keen to see rapid expansion of opportunities for smart, integrated ticketing on bus services and across different modes of public transport. It was further noted by the council in the October 2021 BSIP that 'any scheme

that can be extended and implemented to serve Cheshire East and our wider sub-region would be of particular benefit to passengers in the borough'.

The council have been engaged with the DfT and their development work on Project Coral. This initiative, supported by DfT, involved operators collaborating to implement multi-operator day and weekly 'best fare' contactless capping after a successful pilot in Leicester<sup>69</sup>.

# 4.3.4 Patronage (DfT Bus Statistics)

Since 2010/11 to 2022/23, the data analysed shows the total number of passenger journeys on local bus services per year has decreased from 5.6m (2010/11) to 3.8m in 2019/20, a decrease of 32.14% in ten years. This decline has been substantially greater when compared to the decline in total number of passengers journeys on local bus services in the wider North West (19.43%) and England (11.82%) in the same time period.

Table 4-5	5: Passenger	Journeys (	<b>Df</b> T	Bus	Statistics)	)
	Januassenger	Journeys		Dus	Statistics	,

Passenger journeys	Cheshire East (Million)	North West (Million)	England (Million)
Total 2010/11	5.6	457.0	4618.4
Total 2019/20	3.8	368.2	4072.6
Total 2021/22	2.2	255.8	2835.3
Total 2022/23	2.8	301.7	3383.2
Change 10/11 - 19/20	-32.14%	-19.43%	-11.82%
Change 19/20 - 21/22	-42.11%	-30.53%	-30.38%
Change 21/22 - 22/23	+27.27%	+17.94	+19.32
Concessionary 2010/11	2.2	128.6	1044.0
Concessionary 2019/20	1.8	98.7	899.0
Concessionary 2021/22	1.1	63.4	554.2
Concessionary 2022/23	1.2	70.8	643.4
Change 10/11 - 19/20	-18.18%	-23.25%	-13.89%
Change 19/20 - 21/22	-38.89%	-35.76%	-38.35%
Change 21/22 - 22/23	+9.09%	+11.67	+16.09%

Whilst the decline is part of a wider trend, reflected in both regional and national figures, it is more pronounced in Cheshire East than nationally across England. In comparison, by 2019/20 the total number of passenger journeys on local bus services per year declined by 19% in the North West and by 12% in England. For 2021/22, there has been a decrease of 31% across the North West and 30% in England, which is significantly higher than the decreases seen in 2019/20 data.

The decline is less pronounced in concessionary fare passenger journeys in Cheshire East when compared to the wider North West region, but greater than nationally across England. It is likely that the further decline between 2019/20 and 2021/22 has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns, with similar levels of decline across Cheshire East, the North West region and nationally across England.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Leicester Buses Tap On Tap Off Multi-Operator Contactless Capping Update – 1 Year Later (firstbus.co.uk)

Passenger journeys per head	Cheshire East	North West	England
Total 2010/11	15.2	65.1	87.7
Total 2019/20	10.0	50.2	72.4
Total 2020/21	2.7	19.3	27.9
Total 2021/22	5.6	34.5	50.2
Total 2022/23	6.9	40.6	59.8
Change 10/11 - 19/20	-34.21%	-22.89%	-17.45%
Change 19/20 - 21/22	-44.00%	-31.27%	-30.66%
Change 21/22 - 22/23	+23.21%	+17.68%	+19.12%

#### Table 4-6 Passenger journeys per head (DfT Bus Statistics)

Table 4-6 summarises the number of passenger journeys 'per head' for Cheshire East, compared to the North West and wider England statistics. It shows the number of passenger journeys per head in Cheshire East decreased by 44% from 2019/20 to 2021/22. However, the 23.21% increase between 21/22 and 22/23 in Cheshire East is higher than both the North West and England, showing growth in passenger journeys per head to be above regional and national averages. It is evident that by 2022/23 passenger journeys per head in Cheshire East, the North West and England have begun to recover, however not to the 2019/2020 (pre-COVID) levels.



Figure 4-31 Fare-paying and concessionary fare passengers for supported bus services (May 2023 - March 2024)



Figure 4-32 Fare-paying and concessionary fare passengers for supported bus services - 2021 BSIP (July 2020 - October 2021)

The passenger journeys 'per head' in 2022/23 are at much lower levels in Cheshire East (6.9) than in the North West (40.6) and England (59.8). The latter two can be explained by the higher numbers of journeys per head in metropolitan areas, as well as in London, which disproportionately affect the national average.

Cheshire East recorded the fourth lowest number of bus journeys per head in 2019 out of all local authorities in England (outside London) and dropping to third lowest in 2023. Data provided by operators in 2021 demonstrated the further decline in bus patronage as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic which can also be seen in in the number of passenger journeys per head for 2020/21. However, growth can be seen by the increase of passenger journeys per head between 2020/21 and 2021/22 of 2.9 million, likely due to less severe restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 4-32 and Figure 4-32 illustrates the changes in patronage, both fare-paying and concessionary fare passengers for bus services which are supported (financially) by the council.

Patronage data received to March 2024, provided by bus operators in Cheshire East, reflects a post-COVID recovery in passenger numbers with journeys returning to near pre-COVID levels. Concessionary fare passenger numbers have remained relatively consistent since May 2023, however, there has been a greater increase in fare paying passengers, likely following the introduction of the £2 bus fare cap.

## 4.3.5 Method of travel to work

The data in Table 4-7 (ONS, 2021) shows the method of travel to work by mode, organised by most used to least used.

#### Table 4-7 Method of travel to work by mode in Cheshire East (ONS 2021)

Total: All usual residents aged 16 years and over in employment the week before the census	192,487	100.0 (%)
Driving a car or van	93,442	48.5
Work mainly at or from home	67,827	35.2
On foot	13,950	7.2
Passenger in a car or van	7,454	3.9
Bicycle	3,537	1.8
Train	1,630	0.8
Other method of travel to work	1,627	0.8
Bus, minibus, or coach	1,328	0.7
Тахі	931	0.5
Motorcycle, scooter or moped	663	0.3
Underground, metro, light rail, tram	98	0.1

It is important to note that the 2021 Census was carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic, where travel behaviours and working patterns were considerably altered – whereby generally public transport was less attractive due to restrictions and transmission of the virus. This contributed towards adversely attitudes towards travel by bus reflected in less than 1% mode share. However, 2011 Census data shows bus share also being low, indicating bus mode share has been low for a considerable time, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Table 4-8 Travel to work via bus Census 2011/21

Census Date	Cheshire East	North West	England
Census 2011	1.2	5.2	4.9
Census 2021	0.7	4.3	4.3

Table 4-8 shows the percentage of individuals travelling to work via bus for Cheshire East, the North West and England. The data shows that Cheshire East has significantly lower percentages of individuals travelling to work via bus compared to the North West and England, 0.7% in 2021, compared to 4.3% for the North West and 4.3% for England. This shows that the population of Cheshire East may rely on other modes of transport such as car, rail and walking due to the lower frequency of buses in more rural areas, meaning travelling to work via bus is not justifiable for many.

Figure 4-33 shows how commuter bus shares vary across the borough. As shown below, the use of bus for commuting is divided along rural-urban lines based on available services across the network. This can be seen in Crewe and Macclesfield, where the share of commuting trips by bus is higher than more rural areas. However, the higher modal shares in Crewe and Macclesfield remain well below the rates seen in the North West and in England. The data highlights that bus usage is highest in urban areas. This is partly driven by higher densities of employment and residential areas.



Figure 4-33: Proportion of commuting trips by bus in Cheshire East (Census 2011)

#### 4.3.6 Punctuality and reliability

Bus journey time reliability and punctuality within Cheshire East has and continues to be impacted by congestion and delays, particularly for town/urban bus services during peak periods.

In recent years, Cheshire East Council has continued analysis on locations of general traffic congestion and pinch-points across the network.

Traffic delays through 'Inrix' data has been analysed from June 2022 (latest available at the time of assessment) to identify consistent congestion hotspots on the bus network. This has been undertaken specifically to understand how delays to traffic have been impacting on bus journey times and to identify where average vehicle speeds are notably lower than anticipated.



Figure 4-34 Average speed along Cheshire East corridors – PM (June 2022)

Figure 4-34 and Figure 4-35 overleaf show key locations of delay have predominately been identified in the principal towns of Crewe and Macclesfield as well as, to a lesser extent, other key service centres.

The data broadly aligns to early stakeholder feedback specifically relating to network congestion locations and pinch points.

From this analysis, the locations which have experienced the greatest level of delay include:

- A534 Nantwich Road, Crewe (from roundabout junction with Crewe Road/Weston Road, passing railway station and signal junction with A5019 Mill Street/South Street);
- Nantwich Road (from Dane Bank Avenue to Crewe Railway Station) at peak times;
- Crewe Green Roundabout;
- Nantwich Road at Williston Corner (Crewe);
- West Street with the corner of Underwood Lane (Crewe):
- West Street and Minshull New Road (Crewe);
- West Street and Frank Webb Avenue (Crewe);
- Earle Street, Crewe (in particular between junction with Manchester Bridge, in vicinity of the retail park, to roundabout junction with A5019 Vernon Way);
- Macon Way, Crewe (in particular northbound from junction with A534 Crewe Road/Nantwich Road to junction • with Manchester Bridge/Hungerford Road);
- Access from Brookhouse and Shavington areas onto Gresty Road and from Gresty Road onto Nantwich Road; •
- Crewe Green Roundabout (Crewe);
- A536 Park Lane/Congleton Road/Oxford Road/Ivy Lane (Flowerpot) signal junction, (Macclesfield);
- A523 The Silk Road/A537 Hibel Road/Hurdsfield Road (Tesco) roundabout junction; and
- A533 Middlewich Road/Crewe Road/Old Mill Road (Glasshouse) roundabout (Sandbach).
- The council have undertaken a detailed feasibility study and assessment of the potential for bus priority interventions within key towns and locations across the borough. This also builds on the initial adaptive signals pilot (Imflow) in Crewe which has recently been implemented. The study identified an initial prioritised list of key locations for discrete bus priority measures across the highway network (see below). By addressing congestion and delay to the bus network, the intention to improve bus services and their reliability and punctuality.Crewe - A534 Nantwich Road Corridor: between A5019 Mill Street/ South Street traffic signal junction and Crewe Arms Roundabout.
- Crewe A532 West Street/ Frank Webb Avenue priority T-junction.
- Macclesfield A523 London Road/ Byrons Lane traffic signal junction.
- Middlewich A54 Kinderton Road/ Leadsmithy Street traffic signal junction.
- Nantwich B5341 Waterlode/ Welsh Row/ High Street traffic signal junction.



Figure 4-35 Average speed along Cheshire East Bus Corridors – AM (June 2022)

Currently, there is limited bus priority in place within Cheshire East to support the reliability and punctuality of bus services. A single bus lane (approx. 250m in length) is located in Crewe along the A534 Crewe Road, passing the retail park, between the Crewe Green Road junction and the junction with Nantwich Road and Weston Road. The congestion and delays as a result of the level of traffic flows in central Crewe, owing to accessing the retail park, had been causing punctuality and reliability issues to bus services using the road. This bus lane provides an opportunity for bus services to 'get to the head' of queuing traffic, whilst still maintaining access to retail and employment adjacent to the road network.

Cheshire East is also currently trialling intelligent adaptive signals pilot in Crewe, to address operational and performance issues at the specific signal junctions. This technology has been installed at the Nantwich Road, Gresty Road and Edleston Road junction; the junction of Mill Street and South Street; and the junctions of Nantwich Road/South Street and Nantwich Road/Gresty Road.

There are opportunities to further develop these schemes to facilitate bus priority, as well as the potential to roll out to other locations within Crewe and wider Cheshire East, if this trial proves successful. The council will continue to monitor the implementation of this pilot programme, as well as assessing the suitability for future applications within the borough, and the outputs will be developed as part of the 2024 BSIP programme.

#### 4.3.7 Journey times

The following figures illustrate the accessibility of the towns and key service centres by bus, with travel time in minutes. Analysis has been conducted for within the weekday AM peak (06:00 - 09:00), the weekday PM peak (16:00 - 19:00) and Saturdays and Sundays (11:00 - 16:00). The isochrones show the areas that can be accessed within 20, 30 and 40 minutes, this considers the bus timetable and walking to the bus stops. The figures are based on data from January, February and March 2024 and the maps are correct as of April 2024.





Figure 4-36 illustrates the accessibility of the towns and key service centres by bus, with travel time in minutes, within the AM peak (07:30 - 09:30). Table 4-9 shows that an average of 85% of the population in the AM peak period can reach a town or key service centre within 40 minutes. The figure shows that there is better accessibility around the towns and key service centres than in rural areas, therefore the denser and more urban the area, the greater the level of service.

#### Table 4-9 Cheshire East residents within a 40-minute journey of a principal town/key service centre

Day and time period	Perce key s
Weekday AM Peak period (07:30-09:30)	85%
Weekday Inter Peak period (09:30-16:00)	88%
Weekday PM Peak period (16:00-18:00)	84%
Weekday Evening period (18:00-23:59)	72%

entage of population with access to towns and ervice centres within 40 minutes
Day and time period	Percentage of population with access to towns and key service centres within 40 minutes
Saturday (09:30-16:00)	84%
Sunday (09:30-16:00)	25%

Table 4-9 shows that on an average weekday there is over 80% of the population that have access to a town/key service centre within a 40-minute journey time by bus. A typical Saturday gives a similar level of service; however, the Sunday level of service provides the lowest access with just 25% of the population having access within 40 minutes.



Figure 4-37: Accessibility of the towns and key service centres by bus - Weekday AM peak (April 2024)

Figure 4-37 shows the accessibility to the towns and key service centres within the weekday AM peak. The map shows that accessibility around the key towns and service centres is better than in more rural areas, however there are corridors of greater levels of service. For example, along the A51 northwest of Nantwich and along the A536 between Congleton and Macclesfield.



**Figure 4-38 Accessibility of the towns and key service centres by bus - Weekday PM peak (April 2024)** Figure 4-38 shows the accessibility to the towns and key service centres within the weekday PM peak. The map shows that accessibility around key towns and service centres is better than in more rural areas, and this can be seen in Crewe and Macclesfield. Accessibility to key towns and service centres in the weekday PM peak is slightly better than in the AM. However, the bus routes along the A51 have a lower level of service, and connectivity between Knutsford and Macclesfield is also lower.



Figure 4-39: Accessibility of the towns and key service centres by bus - Saturdays (April 2024)

Figure 4-39 shows the accessibility to the towns and key service centres for Saturdays between 09:30 and 16:00. The difference in this map compared to Figure 4-37 and Figure 4-38 highlights a reduced service compared to on weekdays and can be visualised by the lack of services along the A51, A537 and between Knutsford and Macclesfield along the A537. Within the towns and key service centres accessibility is still high however further away the levels are significantly lower.



Figure 4-40: Accessibility of the towns and key service centres by bus – Sundays (April 2024)

Figure 4-40 shows the accessibility to the towns and key service centres for Sundays between 09:30 and 16:00 and compared to the other maps above, Sundays show a significant reduction in accessible locations – commercial services provide accessibility around Nantwich and Crewe, with pockets in other towns including Macclesfield and Disley.

The map is based on data from April 2024; however, a series of Sunday service enhancements were implemented in June 2024 on services 38, 130 and 12. As a result of the service enhancements, there has been an increase in accessibility from 25% to 54%.

Overall, Figure 4-37, Figure 4-38 and Figure 4-39 above show that the most connected areas of the borough are the more urban areas, such as Crewe, Nantwich, Wilmslow, Handforth and Macclesfield. All the maps shows that quite a far distance can be travelled in 20, 30 and 40 minutes on the bus network in the borough. However, the maps shows that the more rural areas in the borough, the areas outside of the towns, cannot be accessed within 20, 30 and 40 minutes.

# 4.3.8 Passenger satisfaction

Transport Focus released their annual report in March 2024 of bus passengers within Cheshire East. This has been analysed to understand whether previous targets around passenger satisfaction in Cheshire East have been met.

Cheshire East respondents were asked to identify their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their bus journey. Passengers surveyed provided their feedback about a single leg of a journey. The surveys focus on measures of satisfaction, with optional further detailed questions. The data is weighted to be representative of the demographics of passengers by

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Overall Satisfaction with Bus Journey
Very satisfied
Fairly satisfied
Fairly dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
0 10 20 30 40 50 60
Percentage (%)





Figure 4-41 shows the overall satisfaction of bus journeys in Cheshire East from March 2024. The data shows that around 51% of the Cheshire East population are very satisfied with their bus journey and around 33% are fairly satisfied with their bus journey. In comparison, around 4% of individuals are both fairly and very dissatisfied with the bus journey services.

Figure 4-42 Value for money (March 2024)

Figure 4-42 shows the satisfaction results for value for money of Cheshire East bus services. Data shows that just under 80% of individuals surveyed were satisfied with the value for money overall, with 52% identifying that they were very satisfied and 27% were fairly satisfied. Figure 4-42 shows that around 8% of individuals are fairly dissatisfied and around 4% of individuals are very dissatisfied with the bus services in Cheshire East.

Cheshire East Council have set a target to increase passenger satisfaction with 'Value for Money' from 60% to 64% by 2024/25.





Figure 4-43 What has the biggest influence on value for money rating? (March 2024)

Figure 4-43 shows responses which have the biggest influence on value for money rating. Respondents could choose from eight options, including the cost for the distance travelled and the fare compared to the cost of everyday items.

Figure 4-43 shows that the most popular response was the cost of the bus fares compared to what they were 12 months ago (25%), which may be as a result of the introduction of the £2 fare cap. 19% selected the cost of the bus compared to other modes of transport, and 16% selected the cost for the distance travelled.



Figure 4-44 Bus journey satisfaction - reasoning (March 2024) Respondents were asked to identify their satisfaction with each of the following elements during their bus journey:

- the bus stop where you caught the bus;
- the length of time you had to wait for the bus;
- the punctuality of the bus at the stop where you caught the bus (arriving on time);
- the bus driver; and
- the length of time your journey on the bus took.

The figure shows that 42% of respondents were very satisfied with bus stop where they caught the bus, 40% very satisfied with the length of time they had to wait for the bus, 54% very satisfied with the punctuality of the bus at the stop where they caught the bus, 67% very satisfied with the bus driver, and 55% very satisfied with the length of time the journey took.

#### **Demand Responsive Transport** 4.3.9

In Cheshire East, the current method of operating bus services continues to be challenging. The analysis in earlier sections shows that the decline in bus use has occurred across many years and whilst there are key locations which rely heavily on using the traditional bus network, this is not seen everywhere across the borough.

Moving beyond the delivery of a traditional model of delivering bus services may reflect a changing attitude to bus travel generally, as well as the need to deliver different transport options for key parts of the borough by alternative means.

One available option is that of Demand Responsive Transport (DRT), where this model of delivery is intended to 'fill the gaps' in the network, where it is a more appropriate solution for bus service delivery and where it offers value for money. The focus for DRT in Cheshire East, is one which is delivered alongside that of the local bus network option, to increase the level of service to support rural areas, compared with what is currently being delivered.

The potential for future DRT is being investigated as part of Bus Service Review and 2024 BSIP to enable improved connectivity by bus for some of the rural communities across Cheshire East.

DRT can work well within rural areas (or at the urban fringe) as it is more efficiently able to directly serve hard to reach locations and areas of isolation, as well as providing feeder links to the current fixed route network.

Additionally, future consideration of DRT should not be limited to rural areas alone, with the potential for town connections which could strengthen the bus network and public transport availability across Cheshire East.

#### 4.3.9.1 FlexiLink

FlexiLink is funded by the council as part of the supported bus network. The service operates during core hours between 9.30am and 2.30pm Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays. Passengers book by telephone and are offered a personalised, door-to-door service similar to traditional 'dial a ride'. 99% of passengers are concessionary pass holders who travel free of charge, otherwise passengers are charged a £3 fare per journey.

The current criteria for the FlexiLink service includes Cheshire East residents who:

- are aged 80 or over;
- have a disability; and
- live beyond the reach of any other public transport.

There is a fleet of 10 vehicles to provide the FlexiLink service, which integrates with the provision of home to school transport for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Ansa Transport, who operate both FlexiLink and go-too, have developed marketing and promotional material to improve awareness and increase the use of both DRT services.

During August and September 2023, the council conducted a consultation to seek views on a set of potential proposals to expand and improve the FlexiLink service. There was a mix of viewpoints from current passengers and those who were not. Challenges such as low levels of demand and under-utilised vehicles were identified. In order to address these issues, the FlexiLink has proposed to:

- Expand the eligibility criteria to serve a wider population;
- Expand the operating hours and days;
- Improve integration with the mainstream network (i.e. feeder service);
- Modernising the booking and scheduling system; and
- Introducing a new fare structure, including a charge for concessionary pass holders.

A further round of consultation was undertaken as part of the bus service review between May and July 2024.

#### 4.3.9.2 'Go-too' DRT service

The council were successful in securing £1.26m from the DfT Rural Mobility Fund to trial a demand responsive service in the rural area to the south and west of Nantwich. The 'go-too' service launched in October 2021. The objective of this scheme is to improve connectivity across the rural area through the provision of demand responsive transport.

The go-too service is open to all residents in the target area and the service operates Monday to Saturday from 7am until 9pm. The standard fare is £3 per journey or £2 for concessionary passholders. The service is provided with two vehicles. More information on the service is available at www.go-too.co.uk.

Go-too currently operates to the south and west of Nantwich and is designed to serve the rural communities, including Bunbury, Wrenbury and Audlem, as well as the surrounding rural areas.

Figure 4-45 illustrates the operating area of the 'go-too' service. The study area from the DRT was selected based on its rural nature, limited fixed bus provision and low population density.



#### Figure 4-45 The geographic coverage of the 'go-too' network and key locations

During 2024, Cheshire East Council carried out a bus service review, which looked for opportunities to encourage more bus use and get more services operating commercially, tweak services to improve performance and passenger uptake and get better value out of what the council is spending. As part of this review, there is a proposal to combine the FlexiLink and Go-Too services into a single, integrated service. This will be:

- Available to all age groups = where no alternative and/or suitable public transport is available;
- Available Monday to Friday during the day (9:30am 2:30pm) and in the evenings (4:30pm 9:00pm);
- Available Saturdays (9:00am 6:00pm);
- Chargeable (£4 full fare and £2 concessions); and
- Booking using an online app or by telephone.

# 4.3.10 Bus Stop Infrastructure

Cheshire East currently has five bus stations. These bus stations are located in Crewe, Nantwich, Congleton, Macclesfield, and Knutsford. A new bus station has recently opened in Crewe as part of the Royal Arcade development.

In addition to bus stations, data from the National Public Transport Access Nodes database (NaPTAN) shows that Cheshire East has a mixture of marked and unmarked bus stops and are outlined 'by type'<sup>70</sup> in Table 4-10.

## Table 4-10 Bus stops by type across the borough

Туре	Number
Pole or Lighting Column	662
Unmarked or Road Markings	549
Bus Shelter with Timetable	377
Pole or Lighting Column with Timetable	183
Bus Shelter	30
Hail and Ride Stops	19
Total	1820

Table 4-10 shows that for the 1,820 bus stops across Cheshire East, 407 of the bus stops have shelters. There is work to do in upgrading the quality of bus stop infrastructure and this is being addressed as part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) delivery programme. The council has developed bus stop infrastructure standards to support the improvement of bus stops within the borough, which are summarised in Table 4-11.

## Table 4-11 Bus Stop Infrastructure Standards

Infrastructure	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Pole	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$
Bus stop flag	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$
Printed stop-specific timetable	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$
QR code link to bus real time information	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$
Accessibility adjustments both to and at the bus stop (where practical)	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$
Covered waiting area e.g., bus shelter	Х	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$
Bus box markings	Х	Х	$\checkmark$
Cycling parking provision (at targeted locations)	Х	Х	$\checkmark$
Real-time information displayed (at targeted locations)	Х	Х	$\checkmark$

<sup>70</sup> There have been discrepancies between NaPTAN data and local knowledge of bus routes regarding the number of Hail and Ride stops.

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# 4.3.11 Summary

A summary of the findings in this chapter and implications for the LTP are described in the table below:

Section	Key Findings	Implications for the LTP
4.3.2	Bus service frequencies and coverage varies depending on the day and time of day. Coverage is reduced in particular at the weekend off-peak (evenings). A number of rural areas have low bus frequency or do not have bus provision.	The next LTP should consider the approach to bus services in
4.3.3	The DfT launched the £2 bus fare cap on 1st January 2023. This scheme caps all adult single fares at £2 and is in place across Cheshire East operators. The cap will continue through 2025 at the increased price of £3.	The DfT published an interim report in February 2023 on the recover in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and data a recovery. This been extended, which in turn will help increase
4.3.4	There has been a general decline in bus patronage over the last 10 years regionally and nationally, although the decline has been more pronounced in Cheshire East. The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a steep decline, and bus passenger numbers are currently lower than pre-pandemic for Cheshire East and England, with some improvements since the £2 bus cap fare.	The LTP needs to consider how the local bus network can be drawing on recommendations from the BSIP.
4.3.5	Major commuting movements can be seen around all towns and key service centres of the borough, with the largest movements around Crewe and Macclesfield, around 3-4%. Compared to more rural areas where less than 1% of individuals travel to work via bus.	The data highlights that bus usage is highest in urban areas. Th and residential areas. Therefore, it is essential urban areas ha access their place of work, education, and key services.
4.3.6	Key locations of bus delay have predominately been identified in the principal towns of Crewe and Macclesfield as well as, to a lesser extent, other key service centres.	Cheshire East Council needs to continue to work with staken locations where delays are occurring to ensure these delays ca services in the borough can be improved.
4.3.7	There is increased bus accessibility around towns and key service centres with reduced levels of service in rural areas. This means that these areas could feel quite disconnected in terms of the bus network, and therefore have to rely on other modes of transport such as the private car.	The LTP needs to consider how rural areas of Cheshire East ca
4.3.9	Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) provides an alternative to traditional fixed route services through users specifying desired locations and pick-up/drop offs. The two services offered in Cheshire East are FlexiLink (CEC funded) and 'go-too' (Pilot project – DfT funded) and help overcome some of the rural connectivity challenges linked to lower population density, frequency, and reliability of services.	To improve bus accessibility for the LTP, Cheshire East Counc with the BSIP and bus service review 2024.
4.3.10	Outside of the principal towns, there is a lack of bus infrastructure in the key service centres, with potential for further bus/multi-modal interchanges with high quality facilities to provide additional capacity and improve bus patronage.	Cheshire East Council needs to deliver improved bus stops and

line with the council's BSIP.

£2 fare cap that found patronage was continuing to suggested the fare cap may be playing a role in this bus patronage.

stabilised and how improvements can be delivered,

nis is partly driven by higher densities of employment ave good bus connections to ensure individuals can

nolders to identify, assess and prioritise these main an be addressed and punctuality and reliability of bus

an be served through passenger transport.

cil should consider the modernisation of DRT in line

d interchange facilities.

#### Rail 4.4

The Cheshire East area plays an important role in rail connectivity, with Crewe providing a nationally significant hub for connections on the West Coast Mainline with London, Birmingham, North Wales, Manchester, Liverpool, and Scotland. The Borough also possesses access to intercity services from Macclesfield and Wilmslow, and a number of inter-urban connections that are essential to the ongoing vitality of the economy.

The rail network plays a key role in connecting people, places, and key attractors across a wide demographic. The additional capacity rail provides to the transport network can also contribute to reducing congestion in the borough.

#### 4.4.1 **Rail Network**

Cheshire East is serviced by several different rail lines, serving 22 rail stations in total throughout the borough. Train operating services throughout Cheshire East include:

- Avanti West Coast:
- Cross Country;
- London Northwestern Railway;
- Mersey rail;
- TransPennine Express;
- Transport for Wales; and
- West Midlands Railway.

Crewe acts a regional hub for the borough in terms of rail connectivity and provides links to Chester, Liverpool, Manchester, Stoke on Trent, Shrewsbury, and Stafford. However, there are areas in Cheshire East with no access to rail stations, including Middlewich where residents must rely on other modes of transport to get around the borough or neighbouring towns to access a rail station. Therefore, it is important that these towns have efficient, reliable, and frequent public transport services connecting these towns to existing rail stations until infrastructure is improved.

Figure 4-46 shows that Crewe is the best linked station, however there are no direct links to Macclesfield from Crewe. Also, there is no service at Middlewich, resulting in a lack of rail connectivity impacting opportunities for local residents and encouraging car dependency. However, there are aspirations to reopen the Middlewich line and provide a station at Middlewich in the future. Figure 4-46 shows Crewe to Wilmslow provides the most direct weekly rail services of four trains per day (Mon – Fri). Furthermore, some links within Cheshire East's rail service requires changing at Crewe, Kidsgrove or Cheadle Hulme. Due to the geography of the rail network, a direct journey cannot be made from Crewe to Macclesfield and would require a change at Kidsgrove. In addition, Knutsford is not connected to any other Cheshire East town by rail.

Figure 4-46 Direct rail services in Cheshire East and the number of direct rail services per hour in Cheshire East (Trainline, 2024)



#### 4.4.2 **Ticketing and Fares**

Table 4-12 Rail Fares Across Cheshire East (brfares.com) – March 2024					
Origin	Destination	Anytime Single	Off-Peak	Anytime Return	Off-Peak
			Single		Return
Crewe	Manchester	£17.40	£16.40	£19.50	£16.50
Macclesfield	London	£181.60	£74.10	£363.30	£105.90
Crewe	Chester	£15.50	£15.50	£15.70	£20.80
Congleton	Stoke-on-Trent	£7.30	£6.70	£8.10	£6.80
Sandbach	Liverpool	£17.50	£14.50	£21.00	£23.10
Alsager	Birmingham	£37.30	£32.20	£74.50	£32.80

Table 4-12 shows the fare structure for rail journeys71 from station in Cheshire East to key destinations across the UK. For most journeys, cheaper advanced tickets can be bought prior to the journey. Table 4-12 shows that anytime singles and returns are more expensive compared to off-peak singles and returns. This is due to ticket flexibility and access to a wider range of services throughout the day.

Rail fares in the UK have risen by an average of 4.1% in March 2024. This change in price often affects passengers in many ways:

- It becomes more expensive for residents to travel to work and school. This can strain individual's budgets, especially for those that rely on rail travel every day;
- If rail fares become too expensive, individuals may choose to travel via private cars, hence increasing road congestion, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and
- Higher fares may discourage people from using trains and therefore those that rely on rail travel and will impact on access to jobs, education, and leisure.

CEC need to work with rail operators to ensure the rail services are more frequent, reliable, and comfortable to use, to improve passenger experience – especially if prices continue to increase, and services face further disruption. Furthermore, CEC can improve local connectivity, ensure bus services, cycling infrastructure and footpaths are better integrated into train stations to make active travel an easier and more convenient for individuals.

No direct rail services Number of direct rail services per hour No rail service

Middlewich	
	Nantwich

1		2	Wilmslow
		Sandbach	
	Poynton		
Nantwich			

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> BR Fares - fares for train journeys in Britain

## Affordability

There should be efforts made to ensure all transport modes are accessible by as many as possible throughout Cheshire East. Factors such as incoherent fare structures and inconsistency in fare prices can impact individuals' ability to access transport. Within Cheshire East there are numerous service providers throughout the Borough with different fare structures. This can deter rail travel as individuals do not want to have to think about travel, they just want to make a journey as guick, easy and as cheap as possible.

There are also concessions for certain individuals such as 16–25-year-olds, individuals aged between 26-30 and seniors are entitled to reduced fares on trains by purchasing railcards. Reduced fares allow individuals of these age groups and individuals with differing levels of mobility to access public transport, meaning they can be more active and access leisure and employment opportunities, due to the reduced cost becoming an incentive to travel.

#### Gender inclusivity

UK Opinions and Lifestyle Survey, undertaken in 2021, shows that one in two women and one in seven men felt unsafe walking alone after dark in a quiet street near their home, with two out of three women aged 16 to 34 years having experienced one form of harassment in the previous 12 months. The experiences of women and girls in a transport report<sup>72</sup> produced in March 2022 found that 85% of participants thought about safety when planning a journey which influenced routes, times travelled and avoiding certain modes. Furthermore, those that felt very safe across several modes was between 15-30%, much lower than those using a car (59%). Factors such as visible staff and lighting were suggested as elements that would improve safety, however the research has emphasised that it is often others behaviour that was the issue.

There are opportunities to improve the perception of safety on public transport through inclusive design. This would encourage more women and girls to access the public transport network. Potential measures include:

- Improve surveillance systems and lighting at transport hubs to provide a sense of safety for passengers;
- Run public awareness campaigns to educate passengers about their rights and how to report incidents;
- Involve women in the design and planning of transport services and ensure their needs and preferences are considered when designing routes; and
- Work with community organisations and women's groups to address safety concerns.

A multi-dimensional approach to the design is required to improve the perception of safety which should contribute towards women feeling safer on public transport.

#### **Patronage and Station Usage** 4.4.3

Table 4-13 Passenger entries, exits and interchanges by station – ORR					
Station	Entries, Exits and Interchanges between April 2016 and March 2017 <sup>73</sup>	Entries, Exits and Interchanges between April 2022 and March 2023 <sup>74</sup>			
Crewe	3,085,604	2,922,754			
Knutsford	513,422	321,962			
Macclesfield	1,661,398	1,183,784			
Wilmslow	1,530,954	992,844			
Alsager	111,016	94,622			
Handforth	289,104	240,226			
Nantwich	216,292	185,690			
Poynton	236,746	161,930			
Sandbach	285,622	230,552			
Congleton	347,208	255,892			

Table 4-13 compares the number of individuals entering, exiting, and interchanging at rail stations within Cheshire East. Crewe station is the busiest station with 2,922,754 passengers entering and exiting the station between April 2022 and March 2023. This is a 5.3% decrease from 2016 to 2023. Macclesfield is the second busiest station, with 1,183,784 passengers in 2022/23. The stations with the least demand are Alsager, Poynton and Nantwich where there were fewer than 190,000 individuals entering and exiting the stations between April 2022 and 2023.

Figure 4-47 shows the number of passengers that have entered, exited, and interchanged at all Cheshire East stations between 1997 and 1998<sup>75</sup>. The graph shows that as the years increase since 1997-1998 to 2019-2020, the number of entries and exits to all stations has increased at a steady rate. However, between 2019-2020 and 2020-21 there is a dramatic decrease in the number of entries and exits. This decrease was as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic meaning individuals could not travel and therefore passenger numbers were very low compared to other years.

Figure 4-47 shows that the number of passengers has increased in the years after the COVID-19 Pandemic but are still below pre-pandemic levels. This may be as a result of a shift in work patterns as more individuals are working from home, therefore less individuals are commuting to work via rail. CEC need to work with rail operators to ensure they are providing a reliable service which makes commuting to work convenient and attractive. This could encourage those individuals to travel back to work, hence increasing the numbers of passengers entering and exiting rail stations in Cheshire East.

There are opportunities to work alongside partners such as TfN and the rail industry to provide flexible ticketing options to cater to the change in work patterns, by offering part time ticket options or discounts for regular commuters. For example, National Rail has a Flexi Season Ticket that gives you any 8 days of travel in 28 days without needing to choose the days in advance<sup>76</sup> This could encourage those individuals to travel back into work due to the reduction in price of tickets.

<sup>75</sup> Passenger Entries and Exits and Interchanges by Station - ORR 2023 <sup>76</sup> Flexi Season Tickets | National Rail

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Experiences of women and girls on transport

<sup>73</sup> ORR Estimates of Station Usage 2016-17

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Table 1410: Passenger entries, exits and interchanges by station (annual), Great Britain, April 2022 to March 2023



Figure 4-47 Number of Passengers Entering and Exiting All Cheshire East Rail Stations Between 1997 and 2023 (ORR,2023)

# 4.4.4 Method of travel to work

Figure 4-48 shows the percentage of individuals that use rail to travel to work<sup>77</sup>. This data is taken from the 2011 due to the 2021 Census being carried out during the COVID-19 Pandemic, therefore data may be skewed and not reliable as many people worked from home.



Figure 4-48 Percentage of individuals travelling to work via rail (2011 Census)

Figure 4-48 shows that close to urban centres such as Crewe, Knutsford, Congleton and Nantwich, there are fewer individuals travelling to work via rail. This may be due to an individual's workplace being within walking distance or a short bus ride away from their household, therefore individuals may choose to not opt for a train to travel to work. Furthermore, train fares, as analysed in 4.4.2 shows train fares can be high, which may impact individuals choosing to travel to work via rail due to the high cost of rail compared to other modes of transport. In Disley (east of Poynton) 6-7.5% of individuals use rail to travel to work, compared to only 0-1.5% of individuals using rail to travel to work in Crewe. This could be due to Disley being closely linked to Greater Manchester.

It is essential trains are on time and run frequently so individuals can access work opportunities with ease and without delay. However, in some areas such as Middlewich, whilst being located further away from urban centres such as Crewe and Macclesfield, the number of individuals travelling to work via rail is low. This is impacted by the lack of rail infrastructure in Middlewich, which means individuals have to rely on other means of transport to travel to work. There are aspirations to reopen the rail line and provide a station at Middlewich in the future, therefore numbers of individuals travelling to work via rail from Middlewich may increase in the future.

<sup>77</sup> QS701EW - Method of Travel to Work

#### 4.4.5 Key aspirations and issues

The West Coast Main Line (WCML) is a crucial railway corridor that connects London to cities in the northwest of England; however, there are significant capacity constraints that impact Cheshire East. Currently, the WCML timetable has insufficient capacity to provide a consistent and reliable service. However, there is no available capacity without compromising on performance therefore the timetable needs restructuring to address the issues with punctuality and reliability of the trains.

High Speed Two (HS2) has faced significant challenges and changes, leading to the cancellation of Phase 2 of the development which was originally planned to extend from London Euston to Manchester and Leeds. This cancellation will impact Cheshire East in many ways. There will be a loss of connectivity at Crewe Station where there were plans for five to seven HS2 trains per hour, therefore impacting enhanced travel options and no longer being the catalyst for economic development in Cheshire East. Furthermore, as HS2 will deliver the London to Birmingham route, Cheshire East will be left without the anticipated economic benefits that HS2 was going to provide.

Access to Manchester Airport from Cheshire East is seen to be challenging due to the infrequent and unreliable train services. Stockport train station also has a lack of capacity negatively impacting customer experience. Stockport station acts as a key transport hub for Cheshire East residents, therefore creating reliable and consistent services is essential for efficient movement throughout the borough. Stockport station could receive £65 million for the refurbishment of the station in order to improve the stations facilities<sup>78</sup>, along with increasing rail capacity to meet the demand in the catchment area, hence benefitting Cheshire East.

On the 25 March 2024, the Government published their next steps on Northern Powerhouse Rail between Liverpool and Manchester, this signalled their commitment to the future of NPR. Linking NPR into the Mid-Cheshire Line could help to improve connectivity to the airport.

Alongside issues with the lack of capacity of certain stations and lines around Cheshire East, rail strikes have impacted the borough in many ways. Over the month of December 2023, union members of 16 train operating companies carried out a strike between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> December. It is predicted that rail strikes have cost the UK economy around £1 billion to date<sup>79</sup> and may have affected passenger confidence in the reliability of the service.

#### 4.4.6 Passenger satisfaction

Rail User Survey carried out by Transport Focus, regularly asks a representative sample of 2000 people across Great Britain about their public transport use<sup>80</sup>. This survey was carried out between March 2023 and February 2024 and participants were asked if they used rail in the last seven days and their overall satisfaction with their most recent rail journey in terms of;

- Value for money,
- Punctuality,
- Cleanliness,
- Frequency of trains,
- Level of crowding, and
- Value for money of tickets.

Table 4-14 Great Britain Rail User Survey - Overall satisfaction with the journey - 24th March 2023 - 4th February 2024 - Transport Focus

Operating Service	Overall Satisfaction Level
Avanti West Coast	85%
CrossCountry	75%
Merseyrail	91%
Northern	84%
TransPennine Express	78%
Transport for Wales	74%
West Midlands Trains	85%

Table 4-14 shows the overall satisfaction levels for train journeys of different operating services that operate in and around Cheshire East. The results show that for the majority operating services, a large proportion of passengers are satisfied with their rail journey. However, for certain services, a larger proportion of individuals are dissatisfied with the service, this can be seen for Transport for Wales where only 74% of individuals are satisfied with their rail journey and CrossCountry where only 75% of individuals are satisfied with their rail journey.

In order to improve passenger satisfaction in the services that have higher dissatisfaction levels and keep satisfaction levels high. CEC needs to they work with rail operators and the wider industry to improve the reliability and punctuality of train services.

#### 4.4.7 Station assessment – provided by TfN

Out of the 22 train stations throughout the borough, each station varies in the number of facilities that are provided. A snip from the TfN data can be found in Table 4-15.

The largest station in Cheshire East is located in Crewe and provides a large variety of facilities, including having full time staff, waiting room and toilets. However, more importantly, the whole of Crewe station provides step free access, along with ramps for trains and physically accessible waiting shelters. This ensures that those individuals with accessibility needs can access the station and travel to their destinations with ease.

In total, there are three stations - Crewe, Macclesfield, and Wilmslow - that provide step free access to platforms, with other stations only providing step free access to some platforms. Handforth is the only station that does not provide step free access; however, funding has been secured for the provision of lifts in 2024/25.

<sup>80</sup> Rail User Survey - train operator results - February 2024

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Stockport station needs 'immediate attention' as council plots £65m refurbishment

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Rail strikes cost UK £1bn and settling would have been cheaper, minister admits | Rail strikes | The Guardian

	Step free access	Access to platforms	Ramps for trains	Physically accessible waiting	Cycle parking
Adlington	Poor Standard Ramps	Poor Standard Ramps to All Platforms	Yes	No	None
Alderley Edge	Platforms Only	Ramps to All Platforms	Yes	No	Parking
Alsager	Poor Standard Ramps	Ramps to All Platforms	Yes	Yes	Parking
Ashley	Poor Standard Ramps	Poor Standard Ramps to All Platforms	Yes	No	None
Chelford	Poor Standard Ramps	Poor Standard Ramps to All Platforms	Yes	No	Parking
Congleton	Platforms Only	Ramps to All Platforms	Yes	No	Covered Parking
Crewe	Whole Station	Ramps to All Platforms	Yes	No	Covered Parking
Disley	Poor Standard Ramps	Poor Standard Ramps to All Platforms	Yes	No	None
Goostrey	Poor Standard Ramps	Poor Standard Ramps to All Platforms	Yes	No	Parking
Handforth	None	No Ramps or Lifts	No	Yes	Parking
Holmes Chapel	Poor Standard Ramps	Poor Standard Ramps to All Platforms	Yes	No	Covered Parking
Knutsford	Some Platforms only	Ramps to Some Platforms Only	Yes	No	Covered Parking
Macclesfield	Whole Station	Ramps to All Platforms & Lifts	Yes	Yes	Covered Parking
Mobberley	Poor Standard Ramps	Poor Standard Ramps & Lifts to All Platforms	Yes	Yes	Covered Parking
Nantwich	Poor Standard Ramps	Poor Standard Ramps to All Platforms	Yes	No	Parking
Plumley	Poor Standard Ramps	Poor Standard Ramps to All Platforms	Yes	Yes	None
Poynton	Poor Standard Ramps	Poor Standard Ramps to All Platforms	Yes	Yes	None
Prestbury	Some Platforms Only	Ramps to Some Platforms Only	Yes	No	None
Sandbach	Some Platforms only	Ramps to Some Platforms Only	Yes	No	Covered Parking
Styal	Poor Standard Ramps	Poor Standard Ramps to All Platforms	Yes	No	Covered Parking
Wilmslow	Whole Station	Ramps to All Platforms	Yes	Yes	Parking
Wrenbury	Poor Standard Ramps	Poor Standard Ramps to All Platforms	Yes	No	None

Table 4-15 TfN Station Quality Demand Model

# 4.4.8 Summary

A summary of the findings in this chapter and implications for the LTP are described in the table below:

Section	Key Findings	Implications for the LTP
4.4.1	There are gaps in the existing rail infrastructure within Cheshire East, with towns such as Middlewich which lack a rail station.	Residents living in Middlewich have to rely on other modes of the to access a train station. Alongside work to facilitate the reopend investment should focus on providing an efficient, reliable, and connecting to existing rail stations to address these issues a transport in Cheshire East.
4.4.2	Rail fares in the UK have risen by an average of 4.1% in March 2024.	Since the COVID-19 Pandemic and the occurrence of rail strikes which has impacted the number of rail passengers and overall s
4.4.3	Crewe is the busiest station in the borough, with around 2.65 million passengers per year. Macclesfield and Wilmslow have the second highest demand of passengers with around 1.4 million individuals entering and exiting the stations per year.	In order to accommodate the needs of a large number of past efficient, provide reliable services, and provide accessible facilit around the borough. The LTP also needs to consider complet improve sustainable access to rail stations.
4.4.3	The number of rail passengers has increased in the years after the COVID-19 Pandemic but remain below pre- pandemic levels.	To encourage rail usage post COVID-19 Pandemic, Cheshire E focus on improving the reliability, flexibility, and connectivity or options in order to encourage more individuals to travel back to
4.4.4	In urban centres like Crewe, Knutsford, Congleton and Nantwich, fewer people travel to work by rail because their workplaces are often within walking distance or a short bus ride. High train fares also discourage use. Middlewich has low rail usage due to a lack of rail infrastructure, but there are long term ambitions to reopen the rail line and build a station, which could increase future rail travel from Middlewich.	It is essential that Cheshire East works with rail operators to en- ensure rail travel is the chosen method of travelling to work de ease and without delay.
4.4.6	<ul> <li>There is reported dissatisfaction across many of the train providers, and TransPennine Express reported 13% of individuals are dissatisfied with the service. This can include:</li> <li>Value for money;</li> <li>Punctuality;</li> <li>Cleanliness;</li> <li>Frequency of trains;</li> <li>Level of crowding; and</li> <li>Value for money of tickets.</li> </ul>	In order to improve passenger satisfaction Cheshire East need improve the reliability and punctuality of train services and e effectively. Additionally, accessibility improvements are requir clear signage.
4.4.7	The majority of stations in Cheshire East, only providing step free access to some platforms. However, Handforth is the only station that does not provide step free access, therefore those individuals with accessibility needs such as wheelchairs and prams cannot access the station and therefore will have to travel to their destination via another mode of transport.	Funding has been secured for the provision of lifts in 2024/2 accessed by wheelchairs, making sure no individuals are exclu East.

## rransport or rely on travelling to neighbouring towns ning of the Middlewich line and provision of a station, d frequent public transport services – such as buses and improve the accessibility and sustainability of

s, public perception of public transport has changed satisfaction levels.

ssengers, rail services at these locations need to be ties to ensure all individuals can use the rail services ementary improvements to local transport that can

ast can engage with DfT, TfN and rail operators to f the rail network, whilst providing flexible ticketing o work via rail.

nsure rail services are frequent and reliable. This will due to individuals accessing work opportunities with

to ensure they work with rail operators closely to onsure delays and cancellations are communicated red to make sure all stations have lifts, ramps, and

25. This ensured all stations and platforms can be uded from the public transport network in Cheshire

# 4.5 Electric Vehicles (EVs)

A key benefit of transitioning vehicles to electric is reducing carbon emissions. CEC in January 2022 set a target of committing to becoming a carbon neutral across the wider borough by 2045<sup>81</sup>. The UK is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 in response to recommendations from the Committee on Climate Change. EVs have a lower whole-life carbon footprint than petrol and diesel vehicles and given the UK's progress towards greener electricity generation these benefits will increase further in the future.

Additionally, CEC is committed to improving air quality as outlined in the 2018 Air Quality Action Plan. EVs reduce emissions, particularly in congested urban areas where, stopping and starting, idling, and over-revving of petrol/diesel vehicles in queues produces high concentrations of emissions. However, EVs still contribute to non-exhaust emissions through brakes and tires. These friction-related wear and tear processes release particulate matter (PM) into the environment.

Cheshire East has ambitious plans for EV transition as detailed in the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy which has been through public consultation and was approved by the councils Highways and Transport Committee. The EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy has been developed to directly support CEC's aim of reducing carbon emissions by accelerating the transition to EVs.

# 4.5.1 Factors Influencing Electric Vehicle Uptake and Usage

Chapter 4 in Cheshire East's EV Strategy<sup>82</sup> describes the existing levels of EV uptake within the borough, the level of charging infrastructure and electricity supply network in Cheshire East, as well as a comparison against the EV charging infrastructure progress being made by similar local authorities within the UK.

To inform potential future locations of charging infrastructure, the chapter presents a review of the key factors that can influence charging demand in Cheshire East, including areas of limited off street parking, household type and income levels across the borough, as well as commuter journey patterns.



Figure 4-49 Electric Vehicle Density Across Cheshire East (EV Charging Strategy 2023)

Table 4-16 shows that in Cheshire East 5,285 Plug in Vehicles (PIVs) were registered in Quarter 2 of 2022, making up 2.11% of the vehicles registered in Cheshire East during Q2 of 2022. This is slightly below the national average for the UK which is at 2.39%.

<sup>82</sup> CEC EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2021

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> Carbon neutral by 2045 (Cheshireeast.gov.uk)

## Table 4-16 Cheshire East PIV Adoption (CEC EV Charging Infrastructure 2023)

District / Area	Total Registered Cars & Light Goods Vehicles as of Q2 2022	Total Registered PIV as of Q2 2022	PIV as % of Total Registered Vehicles as of Q2 2022
Cheshire East	250,667	5,285	2.11%
UK	37,715,246	901,488	2.39%

Figure 4-49 shows the density of EVs throughout Cheshire East. Figure 4-49 shows that the density varies across Cheshire East, with there being higher densities of EVs in urban areas. This can be linked to population density as seen in Figure 3-4. This data shows that without intervention, the private sector will focus the provision of chargepoints in areas of higher density and in this case in more urbanised areas. The CEC EV Charging Strategy <sup>83</sup>recognises this risk, and therefore has set out measures to support the provision of an equitable network that ensures access to charge points across the borough for all residents.

A key factor that is driving consumer demand for EVs is the UK government legislation of phasing out the sale of new ICE vehicles by 2035. Along with government legislation there are other factors that can influence the demand of EVs<sup>84.</sup>

## Household Type

Owning an EV requires infrastructure to charge them, and those individuals with off-street parking have a better ability of doing so. With access to off-street parking, individuals can install EV charging points at home, making it easier and more convenient to charge an EV. Individuals who are without access to off-street parking lack the ability to install a chargepoint at home and rely on public chargepoints. As noted in later sections CEC is developing an investment programme to overcome these challenges.

## Demographics

There has been an established link between income levels and the uptake of EVs, due to the higher cost of EVs compared to an Internal Combustion Engine vehicle. Therefore, higher income individuals within Cheshire East may be more willing to purchase an EV or already own an EV. In general, areas that are less wealthy and may be more deprived may have lower levels of EV uptake due to not being able to afford EVs. However, the council is seeing demand for EVs and charging facilities widely across the borough in both higher lower income areas, linked to other aspects driving EV uptake such as individuals who are provided with an EV for work related journeys.

#### 4.5.2 **Existing Chargepoint Provision**

Figure 4-50 shows the locations of existing publicly accessible EV charging points in Cheshire East<sup>85</sup>, created using the National Chargepoint Registry and Zap-Map data. This map breaks down the existing chargers into rapid and fast chargers. The figure shows that chargepoints are located around towns within Cheshire East, especially around the towns of Crewe, where there is a clustering of rapid chargers.

There is a lack of charging infrastructure around the east of the borough around Macclesfield, Congleton and Poynton, as well as limited infrastructure in rural areas. It is likely that fewer chargepoints are located in rural areas due to the lower population and more houses having access to off-street parking, and therefore not having to use publicly available chargepoints.

It is estimated that around 1,300 chargepoints need to be installed throughout Cheshire East by 2030 in order to meet the demand that is associated with the forecasted EV uptake.



Figure 4-50 Existing Charging Infrastructure and DNO Boundaries (CEC EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2023)

83 CEC EV Charging Strategy 2023

<sup>84</sup> CEC EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy

<sup>85</sup> CEC EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2021



Figure 4-51 Public Chargepoints Per 100,000 as a Percentage of all Local Authorities in the UK

Figure 4-51 shows the number of public charging devices per 100,000 of the population. There are 40.9 chargers per 100,000 individuals in Cheshire East, compared to 55.6 in Cheshire West, 56.7 in Manchester and 83.2 in Trafford. This shows that Cheshire East has a lower number of public chargepoints per 100,000 of the population.

Cheshire East is placed between 20-40% of all local authorities in the UK in terms of the number of public chargepoints per 100,000 of the population. This number is lower than surrounding boroughs such as Cheshire West and Chester and Manchester that are both in between 40-60% of all local authorities in the UK. As well as ensuring there around enough

numbers and types of EVs throughout Cheshire East, it is important to ensure chargepoints are provided in the vicinity of where they are needed by residents and people travelling into and through the borough.



Figure 4-52 shows the total number of public chargepoints as a percentage of all local authorities in the UK. There are 164 public chargepoints in Cheshire East<sup>86</sup>, compared to Manchester which has 312 and Cheshire West which has 199. This shows that Cheshire East has fewer public chargepoints compared to surrounding local authorities.

Figure 4-52 Total Number of Public Chargepoints as a Percentage of all Local Authorities in the UK

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> DfT EV Charging Devices by Local Authority

Cheshire East is placed in the top 60-80% of all local authorities in the UK in terms of the number of public chargepoints. This number is lower than surrounding boroughs such a Cheshire West and Chester and Manchester that are both in the top 20% of local authorities for the total number of public chargepoints.



Figure 4-53 Total Number of Public Charge Devices 50kW and Above as a Percentage of all Local Authorities in the UK

Figure 4-53 shows there are 54 public chargers 50kW and above within Cheshire East. This means that Cheshire East sits within the top 10% of all local authorities for the total number of public charge points that are 50kW above.



Figure 4-54 Rapid and Ultra Rapid Chargepoint locations in Cheshire East - Zap Map It can be seen in Figure 4-54 that there are a high number of 50kW pubic chargepoints throughout the borough<sup>87</sup>. There are multiple 50kW chargepoints along the M6 at Sandbach Services and Knutsford Services and along major A roads such as the A51, A34, A500, that all provide key links regionally around Cheshire East. Providing Rapid and Ultra Rapid chargepoints at these locations ensures individuals can charge their vehicles quickly if they are carrying out a long journey. Throughout the rest of the borough there are multiple 50kW chargepoints in locations such as Middlewich Morrisons, Booths Knutsford, Love Lane Car Park in Nantwich, Tesco Extra in Crewe and many more distributed around Cheshire East.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> Map of electric charging points for electric cars UK: Zapmap (zap-map.com)

## Accessibility to the EV Network

A key issue with the current network is that chargepoints are being focused predominantly on more well used areas and are not also being installed in locations where they are needed but would be less likely to be well used. This means that areas of Cheshire East which are less attractive to investors such as more rural areas and urban areas with lower levels of EVs are lacking in provision.

Accessibility to the EV network requires installing chargepoints at a variety of location types. Different charging use cases require the presence of chargers at different locations. Chargepoint use cases include:

- 'Destination' charging occurs in public locations where there is a high footfall of people typically spending two hours or more. This can include high streets, leisure and cultural facilities.
- 'Residential' charging provision for residents without access to off-street parking where charging at home is
  not possible. This is often used in areas of terraced housing and apartments where there are no dedicated
  facilities for off-street parking at the property. It is essential that a technical solution is found that appropriately
  balances the ability to charge a vehicle on street, with the issues of liability for trailing cables across the highway,
  and the ability to maintain infrastructure that facilitates charging cables.
- 'On-route' charging charging facilities individuals can use on their journeys, such as motorway facilities. These chargers are usually owned by private operators.
- 'Commuter' charging charging facilities in public car parks that link to a form of transport such as a train station, interchange or park and ride facilities.

Providing chargepoints at each of these locations will ensure strong accessibility to the network for users across the borough. Where the market may fail to install chargepoints at less commercially attractive locations, CEC will seek to provide socially necessary chargepoint sites through specific procurement exercises and funding bids to ensure a geographically balanced network is created to allow access for all residents.

CEC need to ensure the EV network is accessible to all and infrastructure is not impaired for users with protected characteristics or differing accessibility needs. This can include ensuring trailing cables from chargers do not pose a trip hazard for prams or those with mobility issues. Due to the ongoing advances in technology, chargepoints need to be accessible to the elderly and people with disabilities. By providing an accessible EV network throughout the borough, there may be a higher demand for EVs due to the accessibility and ease of use.

# 4.5.3 Forecasted Requirements for Chargepoints

## **Future EV Demand**

As noted in the EV Charging Strategy<sup>63</sup>, forecasts of the number of chargepoints that are needed to serve the anticipated number of EVs in Cheshire East have been produced, as seen in Table 4-17. Forecasts show that above 300 publicly available chargepoints are needed, across residential, destination and on-route chargers by 2025, rising to around 1300 chargepoints by 2030<sup>88</sup>. This is a large increase on the current number of publicly available chargepoints which according to UK Government figures was 153 in April 2023. Providing sufficient chargepoints is vital to enabling a timely transition to EVs as well as helping to reduce environmental issues and meet decarbonisation targets.

Table 4-17 Forecasted Publicly Available Charger Demand for Cl

Residential Parking Type	Charging Location					
	Residential	Destination	On-Route			
2025	255	57	26			
2030	1,015	220	96			
2035	2,289	488	212			
2040	3,309	693	299			
2045	3,713	765	329			

There is an opportunity for CEC to work towards achieving net zero by transitioning fleet vehicles to electric. In order to do this residential and on-route charging locations need to be provided. Residential charging is needed as some individuals take home their fleet vehicles at the end of the day and therefore need to charge at home, as well as requirements for top-up charging for fleet vehicles during daily operations, hence needing on-route charging infrastructure. Currently, the council has a number of chargepoints available for fleet use, however new sites that will provide a strategic network of chargepoints for the council's fleet are being assessed, some examples of these locations can be found in Table 4-18 below.

# Table 4-18 Potential Council Fleet Chargepoints (CEC EC Charging Strategy 2023)

Location	Туре
Sandbach Leisure Centre	Destination/Worktime
Crewe Multistorey / Delamere Street	Overnight/Worktime
Civic Way Car Park for Middlewich Library	Destination/Worktime
Knutsford Library	Destination/Worktime

# 4.5.4 Future Investment in Chargepoints

CEC has secured £151,000 of funding<sup>89</sup> from the Office of Zero Emission Vehicles which is committed as part of the On-Street Residential Charging Fund (ORCS) to install chargepoints. This funding is to be matched by the contracted chargepoint operator to provide 28 chargepoint across 15 locations in Cheshire East. The allocated chargepoint sites, included in Table 4-19 include a mixture of on-street charging locations and car parks located near residential properties that do not have off-street parking. Providing on and off-street charging infrastructure ensures that those individuals without off-street parking still have the opportunity to access EV charging infrastructure. This means owning an EV becomes more convenient, allowing individuals within Cheshire East to make the switch to a more sustainable mode of transport.

## Table 4-19 ORCS Chargepoint Locations in Cheshire East (CEC EV Charging Strategy 2023)

Sites	Area	Postcode	Location Type
Fairview Car Park	Alsager	ST7 2AE	Off-street
Antrobus Street Car Park	Congleton	CW12 1HB	Off-street

heshire	East	(CEC	ΕV	Charging	Strategy	2023)
		·				

Sites	Area	Postcode	Location Type
Wrexham Terrace Car Pa	Crewe	CW1 2ND	Off-street
Bulkeley Street	Crewe	CW1 6ET	On-street
Edleston Road Car Park	Crewe	CW2 7DG	Off-street
Hope Street Car Park	Crewe	CW2 7DR	Off-street
King Street Car Park	Knutsford	WA16 6DX	Off-street
Tatton Street Car Park	Knutsford	WA16 6AG	Off-street
Brook Street	Macclesfield	SK11 7AW	On-street
Churchill Way Car Park	Macclesfield	SK11 6AY	Off-street
Whalley Hayes Car Park	Macclesfield	SK10 1BS	Off-street
Southway Car Park	Middlewich	CW10 9BL	Off-street
Snow Hill Car Park	Nantwich	CW5 5LS	Off-street
Chapel Street Car Park	Sandbach	CW11 1DH	Off-street
The Carrs Car Park	Wilmslow	SK9 4AA	Off-street

As well as ORCS funding, CEC have confirmed funding for the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund from the UK Government, with £2.2 million allocated to deliver chargepoints and maximise investment in EV charging infrastructure across the borough<sup>90</sup>. The LEVI Fund builds on the ORCS Fund to support local authorities in England to work with the chargepoint industry, to improve the roll out and commercialisation of local charging infrastructure.

# 4.5.5 Other Electric Vehicle Classes

As part of the CEC EV Charging Strategy in the short to medium term, CEC intends to support the provision of rapid charging for taxis in convenient locations. By providing strategically located chargepoints, the uptake of EV Taxis throughout the borough will increase due to the accessible charging network that is in place. Taxis contribute to air quality issues and therefore it is important to transition to EVs.

At the time of writing in Cheshire East, there are 607 taxis throughout the borough comprised of;

- Private Hire Vehicles taxis pick up passengers from taxi ranks or can be flagged down in the streets by passengers and do not require pre-booking.
- Hackney Carriage Vehicles taxis that provide services that need to be pre-booked, where it is illegal to hail down the taxi on the street.

In Cheshire East there are currently only two battery electric taxis out of the 607 taxis in the borough, with both being private hire. Of the 607 taxis there are currently 101 hybrid vehicles throughout the borough. From the data available it is unclear whether a proportion of these hybrid taxis are plug-in or not.

It is important that Cheshire East increases the number of electric taxis throughout the borough to ensure reduced emissions, contributing to improved air quality and reduced pollution in the borough.

As well as taxis, Cheshire East's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) supports a shift to low and zero emission in total bus fleet. In the medium term the borough is committed to providing charging infrastructure for buses, however, further

engagement is required to determine the deliverability of transitioning buses to EV and where the best place to install chargepoints will be. Due to the nature of their operation these vehicles come with specific charging demands which will need to be considered and catered for.



<sup>90</sup> Cheshire East EV Strategy 2023

# 4.5.6 Summary

A summary of the findings in this chapter and implications for the LTP are described in the table below.

Section	Key Findings	Implications for the LTP
4.5.1	In Cheshire East 5,285 Plug in Vehicles (PIVs) were registered in Quarter 2 of 2022, making up 2.11% of the vehicles registered in Cheshire East during Q2 of 2022. This is slightly below the national average for the UK which is at 2.39%.	Cheshire East need to accelerate the update of EVs in order to the UK Government.
4.5.1	The density of EVs varies across Cheshire East, with there being higher densities of EVs in urban areas. This can be linked to population density of the borough which shows the most populated areas are situated in urban areas.	This data shows that without intervention, the private sector whigher density and in this case in more urbanised areas. The otherefore has set out measures to support the provision of an equation across the borough for all residents.
4.5.2	There are 40.9 chargers per 100,000 individuals in Cheshire East, compared to 55.6 in Cheshire West, 56.7 in Manchester and 83.2 in Trafford. This shows that Cheshire East has a lower number of public chargepoints per 100,000 of the population.	Improvement to the charging network are required to enable an important that CEC ensures chargepoints are provided in the stakeholders in addition to locations where their use will be ma
4.5.2	Chargepoints are located around towns within Cheshire East, especially around the towns of Crewe and Knutsford, where there is a clustering of rapid chargers. There is higher demand for charging in these areas due to the lack of driveways and therefore access to off-street parking.	Due to the higher demand in these areas, it is important to chargepoints in these locations to keep up with the demand of
4.5.3	Forecasts show that above 300 publicly available chargepoints are needed, across residential, destination and on-route chargers, by 2025 rising to around 1300 chargepoints by 2030.	Providing sufficient chargepoints is vital to enabling a timely transformed that environmental issues are reduced, and decarbonisation tar
4.5.4	CEC has secured £151,000 of funding from the Office of Zero Emission Vehicles as part of the On-Street Residential Charging Fund (ORCS) to install chargepoints at various locations. The allocated chargepoint sites, include a mixture of on-street charging locations and car parks located near residential properties that do not have off-street parking. Further to this £2.2m has also been secured from the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund that will play a major role in accelerating the provision of chargepoints for residents.	Significant funding has already been secured to accelerate the
4.5.5	In Cheshire East there are currently only two fully battery electric taxis out of the 607 in the borough, with both being private hire.	It is important that Cheshire East increases the number of elect emissions, contributing to improved air quality and reduced p quality, by providing a fleet of electric taxis throughout the bo organisations and individuals within the borough by encouragin



will focus the provision of chargepoints in areas of CEC EV Charging Strategy recognises this risk, and juitable network that ensures access to charge points

an acceleration in EV uptake within the borough. It is vicinity of where they are needed by residents and aximised.

ensure that Cheshire East are providing enough EVs in Cheshire East.

ransition to EVs in Cheshire East, as well as ensuring rgets are met.

rollout of chargepoints.

tric taxis throughout the borough to ensure reduced pollution in the borough. As well as improving air prough Cheshire East will lead by example for other ng the shift to cleaner transport options.

#### 4.6 **Highways**

Cheshire East relies heavily on the condition and availability of its road network, which also supports other modes of travel such as bus and active travel. Ensuring this network operates effectively and has adequate capacity is a strategic priority for the council.

#### 4.6.1 **Road Network**

The highway network in Cheshire East performs different roles and with different characteristics. The Strategic Road Network (SRN)<sup>91</sup> comprises the country's motorways and trunk roads and is managed by National Highways. Figure 4-55 shows the roads included within the SRN in Cheshire East connecting the key towns and economic centres in the borough and across England.

The M56 provides access to Manchester Airport and South Manchester at the eastern end. Towards the western end the M56 provides access to the wider Cheshire area and Chester and North Wales. The M6 runs north - south and provides access at its southern end to the West Midlands areas such as Birmingham and Coventry and further north areas such as Chester, Manchester, Liverpool, Blackpool and Lancashire, and further linking north of England through Cumbria and Scotland. Within Cheshire East, the M6 provides access to Sandbach and its surrounding areas from Junction 17, Middlewich from Junction 18, Knutsford and surrounding areas from Junction 19, the M6 then crosses the M56. Just outside of Cheshire East the M6 provides access to Birchwood, a key employment site in Warrington. The A556 runs between the two motorways and provides access to areas of Cheshire East such as Knutsford and Tatton Park before moving into Cheshire West.



Figure 4-55: Cheshire East Strategic Road Network and Major Road Network

Also highlighted in Figure 4-55 is Cheshire East's Major Road Network<sup>92</sup>; these roads form the middle tier of the country's busiest and most economically important local authority 'A' roads. The A-road network provides an important economic function in linking the key centres of Cheshire East with each other and the SRN and is managed by CEC as the Local Highway Authority.

In terms of Cheshire East's road network, this comprises of 2,700km<sup>93</sup> of carriageway which can be classified as A, B, C roads or unclassified local roads. The unclassified network accounts for 58% of the overall network length. The A-Roads and motorways within Cheshire East are highlighted in Figure 4-56.

93 Cheshire East Highway Asset Management Strategy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> <u>https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/roads-we-manage/</u>

<sup>92</sup> Major Road Network



Figure 4-56: Cheshire East Motorways and A-Roads

#### 4.6.2 Usage

The Department for Transport estimate the total vehicle miles on Cheshire East's highway network on annual basis as part of their Road Traffic Statistics<sup>94</sup>. Figure 4-57 shows the total annual miles from 2009 to 2022.



#### Figure 4-57: Annual vehicle mileage on CE roads

Key findings from the graph are listed below.

- The graph shows a general trend of traffic growth in Cheshire East up to 2019, car and taxi miles increased by 5% between 2009 and 2019 and total vehicle miles increased by 7.6% between the same period;
- Following 2019, the pandemic had a significant impact on mileage, as motor vehicle mileage dropped by 28.6% in 2020 and recovered to 3.8% below 2019 levels by 2022;
- Across the North West, the same trend can be observed whereby vehicle miles increased by 8% and car and taxi miles increased by 6.3% between 2009 and 2019;
- Following 2019, the pandemic had a significant impact on mileage, in 2020 miles dropped by 20.5% and car and taxi miles dropped by 32% in the North West;
- Since the pandemic, total vehicle miles have increased by 20.6% and car and taxi miles have increased by 22.8%. However, miles are still below the totals in 2019; and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> Cheshire East annual traffic

• Similarly in Great Britain, annual vehicle miles were increasing until 2020 when miles dropped by 21.5%, miles have recovered since the pandemic, however they are still below pre-pandemic levels.

Figure 4-58 shows the Percentage Change in Traffic across Cheshire East, the North West and nationally. This data has been derived from annual traffic data from 2009 to 2022.





As shown above, all three areas experienced a significant drop in traffic in 2020, Cheshire East experienced the largest change out of the three areas. In 2021, traffic numbers increased by around 10% for all three areas, however in 2022 traffic figures increased by 10% in Cheshire East, this was around a 2.5% higher increase than the North West and 1.9% higher increase than England. Cheshire East traffic has been steadily increasing by around 10% for the past two years data is available for from 2021 and 2022, whereas the North West and the nation saw a reduction in increase in 2022.



Figure 4-59: Major Road count points

Figure 4-60 shows the average traffic in each year across the major road count points within Cheshire East for the latest four years of data between the hours of 07:00 and 18:00<sup>95</sup>. Traffic is calculated by multiplying Annual Average Daily Flow (AADF) by the corresponding length of road and the number of days in the given year. AADF is calculated by counting the number of vehicles that travel past the count point on an average day of the year. The count point locations can be seen above in Figure 4-59.

#### 95 Road Traffic statistics CE





Figure 4-60: Cheshire East Major Road Average Traffic Profile

The above graph shows that for major roads the peak hours for traffic tend to be between 07:00 and 08:00 in the morning and between 16:00 and 17:00 in the evening; interestingly, this is a similar trend throughout the pandemic impacted years 2020 and 2021, however the peaks are less pronounced. In 2022 the data shows traffic levels to have exceeded pre-pandemic 2019 levels. This may be due to an increase in population and car use, reduced public transport services which may cause people to rely on the car more, or the inadequate delivery of active travel infrastructure which may deter people from cycling and have more people rely on the car for travel.

Figure 4-61: Cheshire East Minor Road Count Points

Figure 4-62 shows the average annual daily vehicle flow in each year across the minor road count points within Cheshire East for the latest four years of data between the hours of 07:00 and 18:00<sup>96</sup>. These profiles are created using Average Annual Daily Flow, the count point locations can be seen above in Figure 4-61.

<sup>96</sup> Road Traffic statistics CE



Figure 4-62: Cheshire East Minor Road Average Traffic Profile

Figure 4-62 above shows that for minor roads the peak hours are between 07:00 and 08:00 in the morning and 15:00 and 17:00 in the evening. Between 09:00 and 14:00 traffic is relatively lower for all the years; this may be because these roads are used to travel to and from people's homes for work and taking children to school. Therefore, once people are out of their homes, or in the case of the pandemic not leaving their homes, these roads are travelled on less. During the pandemic in 2020, traffic along minor roads was lower on average than the other years for most of the day, as less people were leaving the house for work, school or other activities. At 08:00 and 17:00 the morning and evening peak, for 2019, there were on average approximately 50 less vehicles counted for both times. Compared to the major roads, traffic is a lot lower with less journeys on average. In 2022 the data shows traffic levels are below pre-pandemic levels; this may be because of a change in work habits that has resulted in less people travelling to work.

#### 4.6.3 Performance/Reliability of the network

Information to be added on congestion/delay when Streetlight analysis has been undertaken (see section 4.9.2).

#### Annual Average Daily Flow 4.6.4

Figure 4-63 and Figure 4-64 show the Annual Average Daily Flow (AADF) for a selected number of key A-Roads and the motorways in Cheshire East. AADF is the average over a full year of the number of vehicles passing a point in the road network each day and is supplied by DfT<sup>97</sup>.



Figure 4-63: A-Road Average Annual Daily Flow, 2018-2022

Figure 4-63 shows that for all the chosen roads, a significant drop in AADF was experienced in 2020 due to the pandemic. From 2021 onwards, AADF has increased, however along all but one road it has not yet reached prepandemic levels. It is only along the A537 that AADF has returned to and surpassed pre-pandemic levels of traffic flow.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> DfT Cheshire East road traffic statistics



Figure 4-64: Motorway Average Annual Daily Flow, 2018-2022

Figure 4-64 shows that for both motorways the pandemic caused a significant reduction in AADF. Since 2020, the AADF of both motorways has increased with the M6 flow significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels. The M56 flow has not surpassed pre-pandemic levels, however it is at a similar level to 2018.

Figure 4-65 shows the Great Britain AADF for all major roads in the country. As shown the flow portrays a similar pattern to that of the M56 and A-Roads in Cheshire East. Flow fell significantly in 2020 and has been increasing since, however flows have not yet reached pre pandemic levels.



Figure 4-65: Great Britain Annual Average Daily Flow, 2018-2022

#### Car trips by distance 4.6.5

Figure 4-66 shows the number of car trips within Cheshire East separated into the distances of each trip for the years 2002 to 2022. The data has been derived from the National Travel Survey and provided by Transport for the North.





Figure 4-66: Trip length distribution, 2002-2022

As shown in Figure 4-66 the majority of trips in Cheshire East are under 10km, these trips make up 59.6% of car trips. The next most trips are within the 10-25 km range with 25.6% of trips being within this distance, and 9.2% of trips being between 25-50 km. Cheshire East could look to reduce the number of shorter distance trips and replace these with active travel and public transport trips. The longer distance trips may rely more on improving the rail network to reduce the number of these.

#### Traffic flow composition 4.6.6

Based on the 2022 DfT average annual daily flow (AADF) traffic counts for Cheshire East, the composition of traffic flow is shown in Figure 4-67<sup>98</sup>. Figure 4-67 highlights that the road network in Cheshire East is car and taxi dominated, they account for just over two thirds of all vehicles. LGVs account for around 19% of Cheshire East's composition and HGVs just under 13%.

Figure 4-67: Cheshire East Highway Network Traffic Flow Composition, 2022

The impact of the pandemic on Cheshire East's traffic flow composition can be seen in Figure 4-68. The graph shows the proportion of cars and taxis, HGVs and LGVs on the Cheshire East road network over the latest four years of data, which is taken from DfT count point data. The location of these count points is shown earlier in Figure 4-59 and Figure 4-61.

<sup>98</sup> Road Traffic statistics CE



## Figure 4-68: Cheshire East Traffic Flow Composition Over Time

Figure 4-68 shows that the proportion of cars dropped by 4% in 2020 as a result of the pandemic; and the proportion of LGVs and HGVs increased by around 2% each. Since the pandemic, the proportion of LGV and HGV has increased and is now higher than pre-pandemic levels by around 2% each. The proportion of cars has remained 4% lower than prior to the pandemic. During, and since, the pandemic the number of LGVs and HGVs has increased due to the rise in e-commerce and the demand for delivering these goods. Along with the decrease in car journeys during the pandemic, this may be the cause of the increase in the proportion of LGVs and HGVs on Cheshire East roads. This is further explored in Section 4.8.

# 4.6.7 Road safety

The following tables below highlights the collision data for Cheshire East<sup>99</sup>. Table 4-20 below highlights the number of collisions resulting in fatal or serious injury which have occurred by road class.

## Table 4-20: Collisions (2018-2023) by Road Class

	A-Road	B-Road	C-Road	Unclassified	Total
Fatal	45	9	4	9	67
Serious	246	57	43	133	479

	A-Road	B-Road	C-Road	Unclassified	Total
Total	291	66	47	142	546

Table 4-20 shows that 67% of fatal collisions in Cheshire East occur on A-roads. C-Roads account for the least number of collisions with 8.6% of fatal or serious collisions occurring on these roads. Between 2018 and 2023 fatal collisions made up 12.3% of fatal or serious collisions.

By improving safety and reducing the number of collisions on the road network first and foremost the human cost of collisions will be reduced, and the reliability of the network will improve. Delays will also be reduced for road users, as a result of less people being delayed, and the productivity of Cheshire East Road users will increase. Therefore, the region's economy will benefit from more people being more productive. The costs related to collisions will also be reduced, thus decreasing the impact of collisions on the Cheshire East economy.



## Figure 4-69: 5-year collision history by severity, 2018-2022

Figure 4-69Figure 4-70 shows collision data between 2018 and 2022. The data shows that there was a significant drop in collisions in 2020 compared to 2019 by approximately 90. This is because, as shown previously the level of traffic was lower during this period due to the pandemic, therefore collisions were also lower. This figure increased to 2019 levels and has continued to rise further in 2022 to reach 2018 levels of collisions. The most significant fall in collisions was in 'slight' collisions which fell by around 75 between 2019 and 2020. However, 'slight' collisions in 2022 were higher

99 Road Safety Data

than for any other year in the data shown, as were serious 'collisions', this has led to collisions in total being higher in 2022 than any other year. 'Fatal' collisions have continued to reduce year on year with the 2022 figures being the lowest number of 'fatal' collisions over the past five years. Whilst there could be number of reasons for this, the reduced volume of traffic levels may have influenced the number of fatalities. However, the low sample size means that there is going to be some variance expected. Overall, fatal accidents have been reducing over the last five years which could be a result of improved road safety schemes and awareness. This may be as a result of road safety education provided by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Services.



Figure 4-70: Fatal and serious collisions, 2018-2022

Figure 4-70 highlights the locations of all the fatal and serious collisions within Cheshire East between 2018 and 2022. The figure shows that there is a large concentration of collisions within the key towns of Crewe and Macclesfield. Away

from these towns, many of the collisions take place on the Motorways and A-Roads within Cheshire East with many of the fatalities occurring along the M6.

# 4.6.8 Car ownership

Figure 4-71 Shows the number of cars owned per household at a Cheshire East level in 2011. Figure 4-72 compares the number of cars or vans owned per household at a local authority, regional and national level for 2021<sup>100</sup>. Compared to the 2011 Census, the data shows that in Cheshire East in 2021 the proportion of people without a car or van in the household is approximately 10% lower than the North West and 9% lower than England. Whilst the percentage of households owning 1 car or van is similar across the three areas, the number of households owning 2 cars or vans is significantly higher in Cheshire East. The proportion of households owning 2 cars or vans in Cheshire East is 33%, the North West is 8% lower and England is 7% lower. Whilst not as large, the proportion of Cheshire East households with 3 or more cars or vans is also higher than the region by 4% and the nation by 2%. Comparing 2011 car ownership with 2021 shows car ownership to be relatively similar, however the number of households without access to a car or van has decreased by 1.6% and the number of households with access to 3 or more cars or vans has increased by 1.1% within the time period.

The higher proportion of households owning 3 or more cars or vans may be because Cheshire East overall is seen to be relatively affluent with the majority of the borough in the 40% least deprived areas nationally. In terms of transport, cars and vans are the dominant mode of travel in Cheshire East. This is further highlighted in the Figure 4-71 and Table 4-21 which focus on the method of travel to work and how this relates to car ownership.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>100</sup> nomis Car or Van availability



Figure 4-71: Car Ownership Per Household in Cheshire East, 2011



Figure 4-72: Car Ownership Per Household in Cheshire East, North West and England, 2021

Figure 4-73 shows the number of households that do not own a car or van for the year 2021, low ownership is particularly concentrated around Crewe and Macclesfield, within some areas of Crewe and Macclesfield, the percentage of households not having access to a car is as high as 56% in Crewe. Particularly in Crewe and Macclesfield, as outlined in Chapter 2 and shown in Figure 3-11 deprivation levels are significantly higher than the rest of the region. Higher deprivation levels may result in lower car ownership as less people can afford to own a car or van, therefore people in these areas may be forced to take jobs nearby that do not require travelling by car. There also may be more access to alternative modes of travel (public transport) in these more built-up areas with better infrastructure which may deter people from owning a car as it is not required.



Figure 4-73: Percentage of Households with No Access to A Car or Van, Census 2021

# 4.6.9 Travel to work by car

Table 4-21 below show the number of people driving to work and the proportion of households with access to no cars or vans and 1 or more cars or vans for each year. The census data for both 2011 and 2021 is shown separately.

## Table 4-21: Method of Travel to Work, 2011 And 2021

Method of travel to work	Total	Proportion of method of travel to work (%)	Proportion of households with no car or van (%)	Proportion of households with 1 or more cars or vans (%)
		2011		
All methods	181,136	100		

<sup>101</sup> Derived NTS Data is licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0 (<u>https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/</u>), noting the following attribution statement for any use of this data: Department for Transport. (2022). National Travel Survey, 2002-2021: Special Licence Access. [data collection]. 11th Edition. UK Data Service. SN: 7553, DOI: <u>http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-7553-11</u>

Method of travel to work	Total	Proportion of method of travel to work (%)	Proportion of households with no car or van (%)	Proportion of households with 1 or more cars or vans (%)
Driving or passenger of a 133, car or van		74	16 84	
		2021		
All methods	ll methods 192,487		10	90
Driving or passenger of a car or van	100,896	52		

Table 4-21 shows that in 2011, 74% of the population were driving or a passenger of a car or van to work. It also shows that for 2021, 22% less of the population of Cheshire East were driving or a passenger of a car or van to work compared to 2011. This is a relatively significant change in behaviour and is linked to the pandemic that affected where people were working from, as more people were working from home. The proportion of households with or without cars has also changed in the 10-year period with 6% more households owning at least 1 car or van.

Figure 4-74 shows the average number of commuter trips in Cheshire East by car for the years 2017 to 2021, it is derived from National Travel Survey Data and provides more recent travel to work data trends<sup>101</sup>. The National Travel Survey is based on a household survey to monitor trends in personal travel.



Figure 4-74: Average Number of Commuter Trips by Car, NTS 2017-2021

Figure 4-74 shows that between 2017 and 2019 the average number of commuting trips by car reduced by approximately 70. In 2020 the average number of commuting trips by car reduced significantly, falling by 260 trips compared to 2019. In 2021 the number of commuting trips by car has increased, however this was a relatively insignificant increase and the average number of commuter trips by car is still below pre-pandemic levels by approximately 220 trips. This may be due to a change in commuter and work location habits which were caused by the pandemic.

The figures below highlight the percentage of people travelling to work by car, either as a passenger or driving, across Cheshire East in 2011 and 2021<sup>102</sup>. Both census years data has been included as 2021 was affected by the pandemic. It must be noted that the 2011 Census data is dated, however the 2021 Census data is influenced by the prevalence of at home working due to the pandemic. Therefore, both datasets are less reflective of the current situation or predictive of future trends.



Figure 4-75: Percentage of People Travelling to Work by Car, 2011

Figure 4-75 shows that away from principal towns the percentage of people driving to work is very high, it is within the LSOAs towards the centre of areas such as Crewe and Macclesfield where the percentage of people driving to work is lower. Even within areas such as Handforth and Wilmslow, driving to work is still high. Throughout Cheshire East in 2011 it is evident that driving is a well-used method of travelling to work and is only less in demand closer to the principal towns of the region.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> nomis Method used to travel to work



Figure 4-76: Percentage of People Travelling to Work by Car, 2021

Figure 4-76 shows that the proportion of people travelling to work by car in 2021 is relatively similar to the proportion in 2011. It is clear to see that there are more LSOAs where driving to work is lower. Particularly in the north of the region around Knutsford, Alderley Edge, Wilmslow and Poynton, the proportion of people travelling to work by car is lower than areas to the south and east of the region where driving to work is still relatively high. Areas southeast of Sandbach and west of Nantwich also experience lower levels of driving to work.

However, the number of people driving to work in areas such as Crewe and Macclesfield seem to be proportionally higher than 2011 levels. There is less correlation between car ownership and driving to work shown in the 2021 map. Areas such as Crewe, Macclesfield and the east of the borough which have lower car ownership are areas that experienced higher percentages of people travelling to work by car. As shown in Section 4.3.2, Crewe and Macclesfield are better connected to public transport as there are more bus routes and stops in the key towns of Crewe and Macclesfield, therefore reliance on cars may be lower. There are also more NCN routes in the south of Cheshire East and a route through Macclesfield which improves cycle access and may reduce the number of people driving to work as they use the quality cycle routes. However cycling and public transport usage is still quite low in these areas, therefore it may be a case of more people in these areas having jobs that require them to travel by car whilst others in lower proportion areas do not need to travel and can work from home.

# 4.6.10 Highway asset management

CEC are responsible for most of the roads and footpaths in Cheshire East, the Cheshire East Highway Asset Management Strategy<sup>103</sup> details that this includes 2,707 km of carriageways, 2,204 km of footways and cycleways and 5.8 million square metres of grass verge. In total there are 2,707km of carriageway length in the borough. This can be broken down to:

- A roads 414km;
- B roads 152km;
- C roads 564km; and
- Unclassified Roads 1,577km.

Cheshire East Council carries out an annual carriageway survey of the network in order to monitor the current condition of the network and assist with the development of annual programmes and lifecycle planning. Below indicates the current percentage of roads network where maintenance should be considered over the next 12 months:

- A roads = 3%;
- B and C roads = 5%; and
- Unclassified roads = 11%.

The council's highway asset also includes over 112 traffic signal junctions and 152 pedestrian crossings, over 100,000 gullies, 60 km of safety fencing and more than 400,000 streetlights. The council calculated the asset value, in accordance with the whole of Government accounts requirements, as having a gross replacement cost of over £6 billion.

The Council takes a systematic 'asset management' approach to looking after this network. This means making longterm plans and finding the most cost-effective ways of making sure the network continues to meet the needs of road users and residents. To do this CEC consider the following:

- Customer needs;
- Local priorities;
- Road condition;
- Environmental issues;
- Risk management; and
- Money available.

The code of practice "Well Managed Highway Infrastructure" provides guidance to councils on managing and maintaining their local roads. CEC follow this guidance as best practice to deliver an efficient and effective service. In 2020 the council adopted specific recommendations related to Highway Safety Inspections, Winter Service and The Resilient Network. The council developed a network hierarchy<sup>104</sup>, this forms the basis of the council's approach to highway safety inspections and winter service. The hierarchy prioritises areas of network by importance. Examples of this include 'their expected use, resilience and economic and social factors including industry, schools, hospitals.' From this prioritisation, roads are split into the following categories:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> Highway Asset Management Strategy

- Resilient network
- Strategic network
- Main distributor
- Secondary distributor
- Link roads
- Local access roads

Enhancing and maintaining the council's existing highway asset is crucial, as it represents a significant portion of the council's responsibilities and an asset which is subject to constant use and degradation. This necessitates a sustained investment programme to rehabilitate the network and prevent further deterioration. Since the condition of this asset affects not only cars but also buses and cyclists for example, securing investment to address these maintenance needs is essential. In relation to road repairs and improvements, the council takes a scored approach to prioritising which roads require improvements first and locating where works are most needed. The scoring is informed by condition, customer reports and engineering knowledge. A list and map of the works programmed for 2023-2024 can be found on the Cheshire East Website<sup>105</sup>. For day-to-day maintenance of the highways the budget for the 2023-2024 financial year is £10.6 million and for road network improvements the budget is £21.35 million. As the council only has a limited budget it is unlikely that all road improvement works will be completed within the year's programme of works, however all repairs and improvements are likely to be included within the longer-term plan.

In terms of road repairs, according to the Infrastructure and Highways Services: 2023/24 Mid-Year Review<sup>106</sup> published on 25 January 2024, 12,252 surfacing defects have been repaired to the end of October 2023 (Quarter 2), this is 3,064 more repairs than stated in the mid-year review for 2022/23. The report describes how this is expected to rise in Quarters 3 and 4 due to cold and wet weather. The report also mentions how the council is seeing an increasing number of urgent defects (potholes) across the network where safety repairs are required. This is explained to be due to previous real and actual terms reductions in government funding and there being more expected frequent adverse weather and higher rainfall in the second half of the financial year.

Table 4-22 below shows the condition of the CEC maintained roads broken down by carriageway over the last three years. It shows the percentage of each road type within the category. Each 10-metre road section has been assigned a condition category based on the Road Condition Indicator (RCI) value. The thresholds used to determine the categories of condition are as follows:

- Green 0 to less than 40 good condition no further investigation or work is likely needed at this time.
- Amber 40 to less than 100 likely to be some deterioration work may be needed sometime in the future.
- **Red** 100 or more likely to be in poor condition further investigation may be required to determine whether this section of road should be considered for maintenance. The local authority will decide whether any intervention is made.

Table 4-22	ble 4-22: Highway asset carriageway breakdown over the last 3 years										
	202	1/22	2022/23		2022/23 2023/2024						
	Red	Amber	Red	Amber	Red	Amber	Average Red	Average Amber			
A Roads	2.7	24.8	3.6	25.9	3.4	27	3	26			
B Roads	3.4	24.7	4.3	26.5	4.2	27.4	4	26			
C Roads	5	29.2	4.7	28.1	5.6	31.5	5	30			

As shown in Table 4-22, over the last three years, the number of roads with a red condition score have predominately stayed consistent. However, the amber scoring roads have increased year on year. Amber roads will eventually move over to red, if not treated appropriately with the right investment.

Table 4-23 shows the percentage of Type 1 and 2 Footways in Cheshire East that have scored within the red category over the last 3 years.

Table 4-23: Percentage of Red category footways over the last 3 years

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/2024	
	Red	Red	Red	Average
Type 1& 2 Footways	32%	33%	33%	33

The table shows that there has been an increase of footways needing maintenance within the next 12 months on Cheshire East's high usage footways by 1%.

#### **Recent Road and Highway Investments** 4.6.11

The tables below highlight the recent and upcoming major road and transport investments in Cheshire East<sup>107</sup>. For the constructed schemes that have been completed, it is important to monitor them and evaluate the impacts of these interventions to understand if they have been successful or not. They will also require maintaining.

「abl	le 4-24:	Constructed	majo	r road	and	transport	proj	jects
------	----------	-------------	------	--------	-----	-----------	------	-------

Major road and transport projects	Status – compl
A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road	10 km road fro
Congleton link Road	Opened to traf

<sup>107</sup> Major road and transport projects



## ete

m the A6 to Manchester Airport now open to traffic.

fic on 16 April 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> Cheshire East Programmed Works 2023-2024

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>106</sup> Infrastructure and Highways Services: 2023-2024 Mid-Year Review

Major road and transport projects	Status – complete
Poynton Relief Road	Connecting into the A523 London Road and the A6, Poynton Relief Road is an approximately 3 km single carriageway with a 3.5-metre- wide cycle and footway. It has been designed to take heavy traffic out of Poynton Village and was opened to traffic on Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> March 2023.
North West Crewe Package (NWCP)	A series of highways and junction improvements around the Leighton area to ease congestion and improve access to Leighton Hospital. This scheme was officially opened to the public on Wednesday 10 July 2024.

For the Congleton Link Road, a '1 Year After Report' was published in January 2024<sup>108</sup>, the report summarises that all the key objectives have been achieved to some extent. Most routes in Congleton town Centre have seen a reduction in flow since the scheme opened, and there has been a reduction in the number of HGVs on most of the routes around Congleton town centre. Noise levels within Congleton town centre have also likely reduced and Air Quality has been improved particularly around the town centre.

For the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road a '1 Year After Report' was published in March 2022, the report summarises that the scheme was delivering on all three of its objectives. As it is improving business integration and productivity, making a positive contribution to reducing the impact of traffic congestion on local businesses and communities and is contributing to the increasing of road safety particularly for walking and cycling.

Post-scheme monitoring is ongoing for the Poynton Relief Road scheme; however, the monitoring reports have not been published at time of writing.

# Major road and transport projectsStatus – in constructionMiddlewich Eastern BypassA new two-way single carriageway road will connect a new<br/>roundabout junction off Pochin Way to the north, to a new<br/>roundabout to the south connecting with the A533 Booth Lane. The<br/>target date for the main works to start is Spring 2025, subject to<br/>final funding approval.

## Table 4-25: Major Road and transport projects in construction

Table 4-26: Major Road and transport projects in development

Major road and transport projects	Status – in development
A500 Multi Modal Corridor Scheme	A package of measures, including highway pinch point improvements and accessibility improvements to the A500 corridor and Crewe Railway Station.

In addition, given that CEC is an authority with a very high level of private developments, it is essential that newly constructed highway that is presented for adoption under s38 HA1980 is built to appropriate standards, with appropriate materials and supported by financial commitments from developers.

## <sup>108</sup> Congleton Link Road Monitoring and Evaluation 1 Year After Report

<sup>109</sup> Strategic Road User Survey - North West findings

# 4.6.12 Strategic Roads User Survey

The Strategic Roads User Survey August 2022 to July 2023<sup>109</sup> looks at the views of around 8,000 users of the motorways and major 'A' roads managed by National Highways. The survey is the responsibility of Transport Focus, and it covers the seven regions under National Highways control. Transport Focus is an 'independent watchdog for transport users', they aim to 'get the best deal for passengers and road users.<sup>110</sup> Whilst it does not cover Cheshire East specifically, the North West is surveyed and can provide an indication of the satisfaction of Cheshire East motorways and major 'A' roads. The table below provides the North West's satisfaction scores and England's satisfaction scores for comparison.

#### Table 4-27: SRUS scores for North West and England

Satisfaction factors	North West	England
Journey Time	71%	70%
Roadworks management	46%	47%
Feeling Safe	81%	82%
Overall	71%	71%

This table shows that in the North West 71% of journeys on the SRN are satisfactory, this matches the national satisfaction which is the overall theme of the North-West's results. There is very little difference between the North-Wests satisfaction levels and the nation as a whole, apart from 1% less satisfaction in roadworks management and feeling safe on the SRN.

<sup>110</sup> Transport Focus

# 4.6.13 Summary

A summary of the findings in this chapter and implications for the LTP are described in the table below:

Section	Key findings	Implications for the LTP
4.6.1/4.6.2/4.6.4	The pandemic caused a significant decrease in traffic flows (28.6% decrease in all vehicle flows), this was particularly evident on the major roads in Cheshire East. Minor roads flows did decrease however not as significantly. In 2022 vehicle flows surpassed pre-pandemic levels. Currently cars and taxis make up the predominant share of vehicles on the Cheshire East road network, during the pandemic in 2020 this share dropped and the proportion of LGVs and HGVs increased as less people were going places whilst deliveries and shipments were still being made.	The return to car dependency and increased traffic levels so network with a lack of alternative options to promote susta It will be important to reduce the proportion of cars and tag and other sustainable forms of transport.
4.6.7	Most of the fatal and serious collisions over the last 5 years (2018-2022) have occurred on A-Roads in Cheshire East. The reduction in collisions in 2020 correlates with the reduction in vehicle travel. However, since the pandemic collision numbers have returned to pre-pandemic 2019 levels. Although the composition of these has changed as fatal collision numbers have steadily fallen over the 5-year period, serious collisions were highest in 2022 and slight collisions have returned to pre-pandemic levels.	It is important to improve road safety in Cheshire East and the number of collisions will reduce the loss of life and set people and families. It will also provide welfare savings, im reliable road network.
4.6.8	Cheshire East has a significantly higher proportion of households owning 2 or more cars than the North West and England. Crewe and Macclesfield are the two main areas where the proportion of households with no access to car or van is high relative to the rest of Cheshire East. The proportion of households without access to a car or van in Cheshire East is lower than the North West and England and the proportion of households owning 2 cars or vans and 3 or more cars or vans is significantly higher than the North West and England. Low ownership is particularly concentrated around Crewe and Macclesfield.	Outside of Crewe and Macclesfield active travel and pub significantly improved so that active travel and public tran areas in Cheshire East with high car ownership have a bette or active travel, then the reliance on cars and car ownershi Within Crewe and Macclesfield, it is important to sustain infrastructure so that it is safe and aligns to the latest desi This will improve accessibility to services, education and Macclesfield's lower car ownership may also be linked to result there is scope for more investment in active travel inf travel facilities and infrastructure must be prioritised in a inequalities. It is also important to provide an attractive all ownership is required less.
4.6.9 4.6.10	Travel to work follows the same trend as car ownership as most areas outside of Crewe and Macclesfield have a high proportion of people travelling to work by car, this is particularly true for 2011. In 2021 travelling to work by car is lower everywhere, however it does not seem to change as significantly in Crewe and Macclesfield. In 2021, compared to 2011 the proportion of people travelling to work by car reduced by 22%, this is likely linked to the change in work location patterns with more people working from home due to the pandemic. In 2021 driving to work is low in the north of the region around Knutsford, Alderley Edge, Wilmslow and Poynton. Compared to 2021, areas such as Crewe, Macclesfield and the east of the borough which have lower car ownership are areas that experienced higher percentages of people travelling to work by car. The annual survey indicates that 3% of A roads, 5% of B and C roads, and 11% of unclassified roads require maintenance within the next 12 months. The number of roads with a red condition score have predominately	With there being a 'new normal' post-pandemic, it is like therefore the number of car journeys to travel to work is lo With patterns of commuting changing, and the demand f provide an attractive alternative to car travel in the forr individuals away from car travel. This is particularly imports higher proportion of individuals driving to work. Maintaining and enhancing the council's highway assets council's responsibilities and are continuously used and su
4.6.11	In relation to the recently opened (16 April 2021) Congleton link Road, post-scheme monitoring reports that all the key objectives have been achieved to some extent with flow and the number of HGVs reducing on routes	impacts not only cars but also buses and cyclists, secu essential. It is important that the council make long-term network continues to meet the needs of road users. There has been some success with recently opened schem on this success and learn from what went well within these

since the pandemic puts additional stress on the road tainable travel.

ixis on the roads and increase the proportion of cycles

I reduce the number of collisions that occur. Reducing prious injuries which are the cause of personal loss for pprove perceptions of safety and contribute to a more

olic transport facilities and infrastructure need to be nsport is a more attractive alternative to the car. If the er alternative to the car in the form of public transport ip may reduce.

n and improve the active travel and public transport ign requirements where possible, such as LTN 01/20. Ind job opportunities across these towns. Crewe and their urban characteristics and high deprivation, as a frastructure in these areas. Public transport and active areas with low car ownership to reduce accessibility lternative to car travel across the borough so that car

ely that less people are travelling to work as often, ower.

for car travel to work decreasing, Cheshire East must m of public transport or active travel that can shift cant in Crewe and Macclesfield to reduce the relatively

s is vital, as they represent a significant part of the ubject to wear. Given that the condition of these assets uring investment to address maintenance needs is plans to find cost-effective ways of making sure the

mes in Cheshire East therefore it is important to carry e schemes to take forward.
Section	Key findings	Implications for the LTP
	in the town centre. Noise pollution and air quality have also likely seen improvements. Poynton Relief Road is currently being monitored, however the reports have not yet been published.	



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### 4.7 Parking

CEC is responsible for the operation, management and civil enforcement of on street and off-street parking regulations across Cheshire East. On-street responsibilities include limited waiting bays, loading bays, waiting restrictions, residents parking schemes and Blue Badge (disabled driver) schemes. Off-street responsibilities cover 111 Council-operated public car parks. Figure 4-77 presents the distribution of off-street car parks across the borough.



Figure 4-77: Cheshire East Council operated public car parks

In January 2024, the council's highways and transport committee approved a set of proposals<sup>111</sup> to introduce parking charges in the majority of remaining free car parks in Cheshire East. This followed a statutory consultation period where a parking strategy report for each town and village was published<sup>112</sup>. The proposals are due to be implemented from 01 December 2024.

#### 4.7.1 Overview

Each year, CEC publishes its Annual PATROL (Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside of London) Report<sup>113</sup>. This includes information on the parking services' income and expenditure, as well as educational material such as how to read a tariff plate or sign. The council uses this as an opportunity to showcase in a transparent way how the service operates, its purpose and to dispel some myths.

## 4.7.1.1 Car Parks

The total number of spaces (and blue badge spaces) by town/ village is presented in Figure 4-78 and further details for each car park are available on the website. This shows that the principal towns (Crewe and Macclesfield) have the most parking spaces. The only other town with over 1,000 spaces is Wilmslow.

Figure 4-78 shows that there are blue badge spaces in the majority of towns and villages in Cheshire East. The only places without blue badge holder spaces are Haslington, Poynton and Shavington. In Haslington and Shavington, there is only one car park in each place with approximately 8-10 spaces, which are primarily used by residents. In Poynton, the council only operate approximately one third of the spaces on Civic Hall car park. There are three blue badge spaces serving Waitrose and four blue badge spaces serving the medical centre and library in the section of the car park that is not Council-operated.

On all Council-operated car parks, blue badge holders can park for free and there is no limit on how long they can park for in one session, as long as they are correctly displaying their blue badge. Blue badge holders are also permitted to park on double yellow lines or in limited waiting bays for up to three hours - The Blue Badge scheme: rights and responsibilities in England - GOV.UK

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> Cheshire East 2021/22 Annual Report on Parking Services (PATROL UK, 2023). URL: <u>https://www.patrol-</u> uk.info/annual\_reports/Cheshire%20East/CEC-Parking-Services-Annual-Report-21-22-160223.pdf. Last accessed 08/03/2024.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>111</sup> Highways and Transport Committee – Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024, 10.30am Agenda and Minutes, CEC (2024). URL: https://moderngov.Cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecMinutes/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cld=961&Mld=9854&Ver=4. Last accessed 07/03/2024.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>112</sup> Town parking strategy reports – supporting documents, CEC (2023). URL: <u>https://www.Cheshireeast.gov.uk/car-parks-and-</u> parking/reviews\_and\_consultations/town-parking-strategy-reports-supporting-documents.aspx. Last accessed 07/03/2024



Figure 4-78: Total parking and blue badge holder spaces by town and village

#### **On-Street Parking Places** 4.7.1.2

The council's on-street responsibilities include limited waiting bays, loading bays, waiting restrictions, residents parking schemes and Blue Badge (disabled driver) schemes. The Traffic Regulation Orders that enable the council to enforce these restrictions are provided on Cheshire East's TraffWeb GIS mapping<sup>114</sup>.

It is not possible for the parking service to monitor compliance with all on-street restrictions simultaneously. Therefore, to prioritise enforcement, the parking service reviews where Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) are issued on a regular basis, which shows the areas where compliance with parking regulations is lowest. The service aims to improve compliance in these areas through greater education and enforcement.

#### 4.7.1.3 Safer Parking Around Schools

The service also patrols streets close to schools on a daily basis during the pickup and drop off periods as part of the 'safer parking around schools' initiative. The Civil Enforcement Officers visit schools on rotation and aim to educate drivers on safe places to park to improve safety for parents, school children and staff. This includes:

- Ensuring that vehicles are not parked on the yellow zigzag lines with 'School Keep Clear' markings;
- Using boards depicting children ('little people') as a visual aid to deter drivers from parking inappropriately:
- Presenting at school assemblies to children about safer parking with the aim of children educating and asking parents to park safely when dropping off or picking them up from school;

- Developing activity booklets for children that educate them about safer parking in a more interactive and visual way; and
- From February 2025, it is anticipated that CCTV cameras will be used to capture contraventions on zig zag lines.

#### 4.7.2 Usage

Parking strategy reports for all towns and villages produced during Spring/ Summer 2023 presented the utilisation of each car park (see footnote 112 on page 96). For towns and villages that already had parking charges, ticket sales data for the 2022 calendar year was used to generate a utilisation profile for each car park. For free car parks, a combination of ANPR surveys and Civil Enforcement Officer beat surveys were conducted for a one-week period in 2023 to generate a utilisation profile. Further details are provided in each town parking strategy report.

Prior to parking charges being rolled out more extensively from 02 December 2024, only seven of the 19 towns and villages in Cheshire East that had Council-operated car parks charged for parking. These were: Alderley Edge, Congleton, Crewe, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Nantwich and Wilmslow. The utilisation figures within the parking strategy reports for each town and village are based on pre-October 2024 conditions, when more parking was free. This should be considered when reviewing the supporting reports.

The baseline data used to underpin the parking strategy reports showed that Crewe and Macclesfield had the most under-utilised car parks. This is a result of the number of car parks across these towns where there is a significant oversupply of car parking (25 car parks and 22 car parks respectively). The towns and villages that had the most utilised car parks were Alderley Edge, Alsager, Audlem, Bollington, Handforth, Holmes Chapel, Nantwich, Poynton and Sandbach. In the majority of cases, the most utilised parking was in towns and villages where there is a small number of car parks. This shows a need to manage the demand and encourage turnover of spaces to ensure there is sufficient parking supply to support town and village economies.

The changes to utilisation over the first year following the introduction of, and changes to existing, parking charges will be monitored across all towns and villages. This will be compared with changes in trips made by other modes of transport to understand if the proposals have improved rail or bus patronage or increased the number of trips made by walking and cycling.

### 4.7.3 **Parking Charges**

The tariffs that were implemented are available on the website. Charges in towns which currently charge are due to be increased before October. Charges in towns which were free came in on 2<sup>nd</sup> December. Though not all will come into effect on that date, some will be phased through October. The table also highlights the car parks that will be free after 3pm. All charges will be operational between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Saturday, with the exception of the following car parks:

- Fairview, Alsager;
- Springfields, Prestbury; and
- Westfields, Sandbach.

These car parks will start charging at 9am to accommodate the morning school run. During school holidays, and on Saturday and Bank Holidays, parking charges at these car parks will start at 8am. Throughout the year, these car parks would cease charging at 6pm. These car parks are also proposed as free after 3pm car parks to mitigate issues associated with the afternoon school run.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>114</sup> Cheshire East Traffic Orders, CEC (2024). URL: <u>https://Cheshireeast.traffweb.app/traffweb/1/TrafficOrders</u>. Last accessed 08/03/2024.

As part of the proposals, three consolidated tariff bands were put forward (see Table 4-28), which were proposed for each car park depending on their proximity to key services, which are most often in the centre of towns and villages. This means that car parks located further away from key services will be cheaper than more central and conveniently located car parks. The purpose of this approach is to:

- Encourage more parking in peripheral car parking sites, with the aim of increasing walking activity and decreasing the number of miles that vehicles drive;
- Encourage modal shift by make public transport more competitive and attractive when compared to private vehicles; and
- Decrease the number of vehicles in the town and village centres, to:
  - Provide a safer environment for non-motorised users:
  - Provide more pleasant places to dwell and shop;
  - Improve noise and air pollution;
  - Potentially facilitate more regeneration opportunities and improvements to the public realm (council or private sector led).

The consolidated tariff bands mean that charges can be applied more fairly to each town and village, considering their unique characteristics and the level of service provision in each place.

### Table 4-28: Consolidated tariff bands

Tariff	0-0.5	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-6	6-10	Quarter	Annual
Band	hours	hour	hours	hours	hours	hours	hours	Permit	Permit
Lower	£0.30	£0.60	£1.00	£1.50	£2.10	£3.00	£3.40	£163.00	£490.00
Middle	£0.40	£0.80	£1.40	£2.00	£2.70	£3.70	£4.30	£195.00	£620.00
Higher	£0.50	£1.00	£1.60	£2.30	£3.30	£4.40	£5.20	£228.00	£750.00

#### 4.7.3.1 **Transition to Cashless Payments**

As part of the Highways and Transport Committee decision to roll out parking charges to the majority of free car parks, there was also a resolution to transition towards cashless payments. This was to reflect that society was generally moving towards cashless payments and also provided the opportunity for the council to make savings related to cash collection. As part of the resolution, at least one car park in each town or parish must retain cash payments.

The Department for Transport (DfT) is currently developing a service called the National Parking Platform<sup>115</sup>. The vision is to provide a single mobile payment solution for the user, which can be used in most local authority areas in the UK. This would improve the user experience as they would not require an app for each provider. Additionally, the National Parking Platform is aiming to provide real time availability on parking spaces and access to more reliable and detailed parking information.

The council monitored the impact of transitioning towards cashless payments and the developments made on the National Parking Platform and became an associate member in January 2024.

#### Sunday and Late Evening Charges Consultation 4.7.3.2

The council ran a statutory public consultation between 28 August 2024 and 9 October 2024 on proposals to introduce parking charges at all charged car parks on Sundays and during the evening. If implemented, it would mean parking charges would be enforced between 8am and 10pm, Monday to Sunday.

#### 4.7.4 Permits

The council issues several types of permits, which are shown in Table 4-29 alongside a description and the total permits issued for the 2023/2024 financial year.

Table 4-29: Number of permits issued by type

Permit Type	Description	Total Issued in 2023/24 Financial Year
Staff Permits	Issued to council staff to enable them to carry out their duties	1,375
Annual Contract Permits	Issued for a vehicle to park in a specified car park for the financial year	271
Quarter Contract Permits	Issued for a vehicle to park in a specified car park for a three month period	97
Resident On-Street Permits	Available for residents living in an eligible property within a resident permit zone. Eligible properties are defined as those with only one private off-street parking space or no off-street parking spaces	452
Resident Off-Street Permits	Available for residents living in properties without private off-street parking in Knutsford, Macclesfield and Nantwich only	195
Business Permits	Issued to businesses in a residents' permit zone that need to park essential business vehicles and/ or where customers need to park near to the business.	21
Carer Permits	Residents who require at-home care on a temporary or permanent basis. This permit is free of charge.	8
Total		2,419

#### **Revised Permit Scheme** 4.7.4.1

Since the pandemic, the number of permits issued to members of the public or businesses has been falling. The main contributing factors are:

- Increased home working (i.e. a reduction in the number of people working in town and village centres five days per week);
- Cost of permits; and
- Permits not guaranteeing a space within the specified car park.

As part of implementing the wider parking charges, the council revised the existing scheme for contract permits. Under the revised scheme, users can purchase a quarter or annual permit at the lower, middle or higher tariff rate (see Table 4-28). As a result, the following scenarios would have occurred:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>115</sup> National parking platform, DfT (2021). URL: <u>https://www.gov.uk/service-standard-reports/national-parking-platform</u>. Last accessed 08/03/2024.

- A user who purchases a contract permit at the higher tariff rate is able to park in any council-operated car park in Cheshire East:
- A user who purchases a contract permit at the middle tariff rate will be able to park in any council-operated car park in the middle or lower tariff band in Cheshire East; and
- A user who purchases a contract permit at the lower tariff rate will be able to park in any council-operated car park on the lower tariff band only in Cheshire East.

The purpose of the revised scheme is to make permits more attractive and to overcome the existing issue of not being able to find a space within the specified car park.

### 4.7.4.2 Staff and Member Permits

As shown in Table 4-29, over half of the permits issued by the parking service were for council staff. There are also approximately 80 permits issued per year for council members.

The council has a target to be net zero in its operations by 2027 and to deliver a net zero borough by 2045. The council is currently undertaking a review of staff and member parking permits to develop an approach that better aligns with the Corporate Travel Plan, encourages travel by more active and sustainable modes of transport and reduces costs to the council. The development of a new approach to the provision of staff and member permits will be integrated into an updated Travel Plan, which will reflect imminent changes to the use of the corporate office estate. At all times, parking permits will be considered with reference to the needs to deliver services to clients whilst minimising costs and improving the sustainability of operations.

#### 4.7.4.3 **Digital Permits**

Currently, the majority of permits are issued in paper form, which is time consuming and more costly (e.g. costs associated with postage, printing etc). As part of a wider modernisation of the parking service, there is an ambition to transition to digital permitting. This will make the application, monitoring and issuing processes more efficient, improve the user experience and represent better value for money. With a new back office system, this will be implemented in 2024/25 - 2025/26.

#### Modernising the Car Park Estate 4.7.5

The council wants to ensure that car parks meet the highest safety standards and incorporate the latest technology to improve the experience of users. To maximise investment from revenue received through parking charges, permits and PCNs, the number of council-operated car parks is likely to reduce during the LTP period. This will include, but is not limited to, disposing of car parks that are under-utilised or are suitable for development and regeneration of town and village centres.

Reducing the number of car parks operated by the council will help to reduce the overall cost of running the service, which will allow greater investment in creating better and safer car parks (e.g. better lighting, resurfacing etc), implementing new technologies (e.g. pay on exit) and rolling out more EV charging points.

In some areas where car parks may be disposed, there may be a requirement to ensure no net loss of parking spaces due to demand. In addition, there may be schemes that require road space reallocation and the potential removal of onstreet parking. In these cases, there may be a viable business case to increase the capacity of an existing car park(s) to accommodate displaced demand. These factors will be considered by the council before any decisions are taken on car park disposal.

#### 4.7.5.1 Crewe Town Centre Multi-Storey Car Park

As part of the wider Royal Arcade development in Crewe, a new multi-storey car park (hereafter referred to as 'Crewe Town Centre MSCP') has opened alongside a new bus station. Crewe Town Centre MSCP has 388 spaces and operates between 7am and midnight, Monday to Saturday. 'Demand responsive parking charges' is being trialled, which means tariffs will be higher during peak periods and lower during off-peak periods. If this trial is successful, other car parks will be considered for demand responsive parking charges.

Crewe Town Centre MSCP opened in July 2024 and is part of a longer term strategy to reduce the number of car parks around Crewe town centre to facilitate regeneration and new developments (both public and private sector led schemes). Crewe Town Centre MSCP can accommodate displaced traffic from these car parks while still being convenient for Crewe town centre.

#### Influence on Travel Choices 4.7.6

Parking is integral to the overall vitality of towns and villages across the borough. It facilitates access to services in each location for car users. Well managed parking can contribute to decreased car dominance in town and village centres, which helps to:

- Create a more pleasant environment to dwell, resulting in more spending per visitor;
- Improve environmental conditions (e.g. lower noise pollution and improve air quality); and
- Provide more regeneration and development opportunities.

Car parks can take significant areas of land to provide the capacity required to support town and villages in the borough. Parking charges generally encourage turnover of traffic, which provides greater potential for car parks to be used more efficiently (i.e. fewer spaces are required to facilitate the same number of trips). Where this is achieved, it may be possible for the council to consider regeneration opportunities for some of this land, which would yield higher rates of return and be a more productive use. They can also be used to manage the competing demands of short and long stay users.

For short journeys, the wider roll out of parking charges across car parks in Cheshire East presents an opportunity to encourage modal shift, particularly for walking and cycling trips. This also has associated health benefits, as increased physical activity often improves the health of individuals and communities. In the short term, the impact of parking charges on trips with longer distances is less likely to have a significant impact on modal shift due to relatively limited alternative travel choices (e.g. not all areas of Cheshire East are served by convenient/ frequent bus or rail services).

The wider roll out of parking charges will also make public transport (particularly bus services) more competitive against the use of a private car. The bus network in Cheshire East has contracted significantly over the last 15 years and one of the contributing factors alongside cuts in funding and subsidies has been the availability of free parking in key and local service centres. New/improved/ more frequent bus services may become more commercially viable in some areas with parking charges in place. The opportunities to expand the bus network and increase frequency will be monitored and delivered through the council's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

# 4.7.7 Summary

A summary of the findings in this chapter and implications for the LTP are described in the table below

Section	Key findings	Implications for the LTP
4.7.2	In the majority of cases, the most utilised parking was in towns and villages where there is a small number of car parks. This shows a need to manage the demand and encourage turnover of spaces to ensure there is sufficient parking supply to support town and village economies.	This will need to be reviewed once the proposals agreed at highways out. The council will be monitoring the impact of the proposals on util
4.7.3	Three car parks will start charging at 9am during school term time to accommodate the morning school run. These car parks are also proposed as free after 3pm car parks to mitigate issues associated with the afternoon school run.	In these instances, there is still an incentive to drive children to school a parking is free after 3pm. This may make delivering school travel pl Strategy (SMOTS) more challenging in these areas.
4.7.3	Tariffs for each car park vary depending on their proximity to key services, which are most often in the centre of towns and villages. This means that car parks located further away from key services will be cheaper than more central and conveniently located car parks.	<ul> <li>This may:</li> <li>Encourage more parking in peripheral car parking sites, with the air number of miles that vehicles drive;</li> <li>Encourage modal shift by make public transport more competitive and</li> <li>Decrease the number of vehicles in the town and village centres, to - Provide a safer environment for non-motorised users;</li> <li>Provide more pleasant places to dwell and shop;</li> <li>Improve noise and air pollution;</li> <li>Potentially facilitate more regeneration opportunities and improve sector led).</li> </ul>
4.7.3	The council consulted on proposals to introduce parking charges on Sundays and during the evening. The statutory consultation took place in 2024 and the responses from the consultation have been carefully considered - these will help inform any final set of proposals.	Expanding the parking charges to cover Sundays and late evenings wi travel across the whole week. It also means that public transport would be competitive on Sundays that are traditionally quieter.
4.7.4	As part of implementing the wider parking charges, the council is revising the existing scheme for contract permits. Under the revised scheme, users can purchase a quarter or annual permit at the lower, middle or higher tariff rate.	This will provide greater flexibility for drivers to park in the borough street. Currently, if the specified car park on the permit is full, drivers c on-street.
4.7.5	To maximise investment from revenue received through parking charges, permits and PCNs, the number of council-operated car parks is likely to reduce during the LTP period	Reducing the number of car parks may provide regeneration and d walking/ cycling connections.
4.7.5	There may be a viable business case to increase the capacity of an existing car park(s) to accommodate displaced demand from road space reallocation and/ or rationalisation of car parks in an area.	As above, the rationalisation of car parks may provide regeneration an Increasing the capacity of existing car parks to allow for road space rea enable better walking, cycling or public transport infrastructure to be in trips made by active modes, as well as public transport trips.

and transport committee in January 2024 are rolled lisation and ticket sales throughout the first year.

as there is free parking until 9am in the morning, and lans and the Sustainable Modes of Travel to School

im of increasing walking activity and decreasing the

e and attractive when compared to private vehicles;

o:

rovements to the public realm (council or private

ill potentially encourage more sustainable and active

and may help to increase patronage during periods

and may decrease the volume of traffic parking oncannot park in another car park and would likely park

development opportunities. This could also improve

nd development opportunities.

allocation would create a better use of land and could mplemented. This could increase the number of short

# 4.8 Freight

# 4.8.1 Facilities for drivers in the borough

CEC public car parks are purposed for cars and light goods vehicles; however, the council offer contract lorry parking at Shaw Heath Lorry Park on Mobberley Road in Knutsford<sup>116</sup>. Table 4-30 below shows the costs associated with the Lorry Park.

### Table 4-30: Shaw Heath Lane Park costs

Туре	Cost
Annual Contract	£735 per space
Six Month contract	£447 per space
Three month contract	£231 per space
Key deposit	£30

Motorway services along the M6 also provide Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) parking, one of which is the Sandbach services located between junctions 16 and 17, this provides 24 hour parking for a capacity of 24 HGVs. There is also the Knutsford services between junctions 18 and 19, this also provides 24 hour parking for HGVs and shower and accommodation facilities.

# 4.8.2 Location

Figure 4-79 shows the A-Roads and Motorways within Cheshire East. This network is important for linking freight in Cheshire East to Manchester Airport, services and other areas such as ports. The M56 provides east/west movement, connecting to Manchester Airport at the eastern end and North Wales and Holyhead Ferry Port towards the western end. The M6 runs north-south from southern England to Scotland and provides access to West Midlands areas such as Birmingham and Birmingham International Airport, as well as further north areas such as Manchester and Liverpool, before linking further north to access Cumbria and finally Scotland.



Figure 4-79: Cheshire East Motorways and A-Roads

Within Cheshire East, there are many development sites which generate freight traffic, these include industrial estates and logistic centres. The road network plays an important role in providing connectivity within Cheshire East, the neighbouring authorities and the UK. For example, the largest industrial estate in Cheshire East, Hurdsfield Industrial Estate in Macclesfield, connects directly to the A523 which provides access north towards Manchester. Crewe Green Industrial Estate, the largest industrial estate in Crewe is located next to Crewe Rail Station and connects to the A500.

# 4.8.3 Lorry Parking Demand

Provided by National Highways, the Lorry Parking Demand Assessment 2023<sup>117</sup> provides an overview of where there is lorry parking demand and utilisation issues on a regional scale. National Highways devised a ranking system taking into account off-site and on-site parking issue to understand the demand for lorry parking in each Local Planning Authority and this provided a Lorry Parking Demand score out of 20, with a lower score being better. In Table 4-31 below the Lorry Parking Demand scores for Cheshire East and its neighbouring planning authorities are shown.

Table 4-31: Lorry Parking Demand Scores

Local Planning Authority	Lori
--------------------------	------

### ry Parking Demand Score

Cheshire East	8.248
Neighbouring Local Planning Authority	Lorry Parking Demand Score
Warrington	16.288
Cheshire West and Chester	6.050
Staffordshire Moorlands	1.208
Newcastle-Under-Lyme	16.818
Shropshire	10.662
High Peak	0.000
Stockport	0.580
Manchester	1.690
Trafford	0.338

According to the Lorry Parking Demand Assessment Report, Cheshire East does not score highly enough for the local authority to have a lorry parking demand issue. The neighbouring authorities Warrington and Newcastle-under-Lyme however do score highly and are in the national top 10 for Local Planning Authority Areas with unmet demand.

The report states that there are multiple limitations to the spatial approach used to score Lorry Parking Demand. Therefore, the report provides additional indicators of demand which are not included within the Lory Parking Demand score. One of these is the number of critically utilised lorry parks. A critically utilised lorry park is counted as the lorry park being utilised above 85%. Cheshire East has three lorry parks which are utilised at a critical level, this places Cheshire East in the top eight nationally for the number of critically utilised lorry parks. The report states this is because of the local authorities' connections to the Port of Liverpool and the further warehousing and distribution industry in Warrington with which lorry drivers utilise parking in Cheshire East to access.

Critical utilisation is an important indicator of demand as critical utilisation may cause drivers to waste time and money travelling to sites which are full and may lead to drivers parking in locations that are not secure or do not provide adequate facilities as they may be going over their legally permitted driving time. This utilisation issue poses the question as to whether additional facilities are necessary to reduce the struggle for lorry drivers.

# 4.8.4 LGV/HGV data

Figure 4-80 shows the count of Large Goods Vehicles (LGVs) and HGVs on major and minor roads in Cheshire East for the 5-year period 2018-2022. This data has been taken from the DfT road traffic statistics of vehicle counts<sup>118</sup>. The locations of these count points can be found in the highways section in Figure 4-59 and Figure 4-61.



### Figure 4-80: LGV and HGV counts on major and minor roads

The figure above shows that LGV numbers are higher than HGV numbers in Cheshire East and both counts have been increasing since 2018 until 2021 with a slight decline in 2022. Between 2018 and 2022 LGV numbers have increased by 156% and HGV numbers have increased by 317%. There was a reduction in LGV counts in 2020 due to the pandemic. HGVs did not reduce as there was still a need for HGVs during this time. One of the main reasons for the increase LGVs and HGVs traffic is due to the increase in e-commerce and home delivery services. According to Statista, in 2022 online sales accounted for 26.5% of overall retail sales in the UK, this was over double the amount from one decade prior. In 2020 alone internet retail sales grew by 47%; this is the fastest rate recorded in the previous ten years<sup>119</sup>. There are potential impacts on residential and neighbourhood streets from this increase in delivery traffic.

Figure 4-81 shows the forecasted miles for LGVs and HGVs in the North West, this data has been taken from the National Road Traffic Projections 2022<sup>120</sup>. The forecast uses a core scenario which is based on the latest government projections of the main drivers of road traffic demand, for example population, GDP, employment, households, fuel prices and fuel efficiency.

<sup>120</sup> National Road Traffic Projections 2022

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>118</sup> Road Traffic Statistics CE

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>119</sup> Statista e-commerce facts and statistics



### Figure 4-81: Forecasted LGV and HGV miles

As shown in Figure 4-81, in the North West LGV numbers are projected to carry on steadily increasing across the forecast period, reaching around 8.8 billion miles in by 2060 which is approximately 3.6 billion more than in 2015. HGV miles are forecasted to also increase however not as significantly as LGVs. They are forecasted to increase by around 0.4 billion. The increase in forecasted LGV miles may be due to the rise in e-commerce and home delivery services. This increase in miles will put additional strain on the Cheshire East Road network (including residential streets) and the facilities for lorry drivers without suitable mitigation. In addition, this will have implications for emissions as set out in Section 6.

### 4.8.5 Rail freight

The Office of Rail and Road provide a quarterly statistical release on the usage and performance of freight transported by rail in Great Britain<sup>121</sup>; the latest report covers the period 1st October 2023 to 31st December 2023. The findings are presented in Table 4-32.

## Table 4-32: ORR report findings

Unit	2022	2023	Percentage change
Net tonne kilometres of freight moved	3.70 billion	3.85 billion	4%
Total freight lifted (tonnes)	7.2 million	7.2 million	0%
Freight train kilometres	7.35 million	7.66 million	4%

In terms of freight performance, the proportion of freight trains arriving within 15 minutes (measured by the Freight Delivery Metric) was 87.8%. this is the second worst level of freight performance between October and December since the time series began in 2013.

In June 2022, the DfT released the 'Future of Freight: a long term plan' document<sup>122</sup> which sets out the governments vision for the freight sector. This includes modal shift to rail freight as part of the government's commitment to unlock "the economic and environmental benefits rail freight can deliver including supporting decarbonisation and reducing congestion on Britain's roads." Another document 'Rail Freight Growth Target'<sup>123</sup> published by the DfT in December 2023 details how the government is targeting a UK wide 75% growth in rail freight by 2050. Should this vision be realised, it is likely Cheshire East will see a year on year increase as the government look to shift freight onto rail.

<sup>123</sup> Rail Freight Growth Target

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>121</sup> Freight Rail Usage and Performance
 <sup>122</sup> Future of Freight

# 4.8.6 Summary

A summary of the findings in this chapter and implications for the LTP are described in the table below:

Section	Key findings	Implications for the LTP
4.8.1	CEC provide contract lorry parking at Shaw Heath Lorry Park in Knutsford. Other 24 facilities for drivers include the Sandbach services located between Junction 16 and 17 on the M6 and Knutsford services between Junctions 18 and 19 on the M6. Both provide 24-hour parking.	There are facilities available for drivers in the borough white to the area, such as manufacturing.
4.8.2	Within Cheshire East the M56 provides east/west freight movement, and the M6 provides north/south freight movement. There are also many freight generating sites within the borough, for example the largest industrial estate in Cheshire East, Hurdsfield Industrial Estate in Macclesfield connects directly to the A523.	Cheshire East is well located and has good transport links country. The borough's road network also serves freight go access the rest of the country.
4.8.3	Lorry Parking Demand in Cheshire East scores relatively low on the National Highways Lorry Parking Demand Assessment, however Cheshire East has three lorry parks which are utilised at a critical level which means Cheshire East is ranked in the top eight for the number of critically utilised car parks nationally.	CEC need to understand whether additional facilities are n critical utilisation of their current facilities. This may be red
4.8.4	LGV numbers are higher than HGV numbers in Cheshire East and both counts have been increasing since 2018 due to the increase in e-commerce and home delivery services. LGV miles are forecasted to continue steadily rising with 3.6 billion more miles forecasted to be travelled by LGVs in 2060 than 2015.	This increase in LGV and HGV vehicles and miles will put a (including residential streets) and the facilities for lorry dr implications for emissions.

nich may attract freight and the associated businesses

s to key airports, ferry ports and cities across the generating development sites well enabling them to

necessary to cater for lorry drivers to reduce the equired to improve safety and security for lorry drivers.

additional strain on the Cheshire East Road network rivers without suitable mitigation. This also has

# 4.9 Journey Patterns

One element of the evidence base that is missing through desktop data collection is understanding journey patterns. For example, people's residence and place of work and the distance travelled between the two. This is largely as a result of the previous Census taking place during 2021 during COVID-19 restrictions. This understanding is crucial to the development of the LTP. Therefore, this gap is proposed to be filled by a Household Survey and StreetLight data collection which utilises mobile phone data. Once this work has been done and analysed, this section of the evidence base will be replaced with the information.

# 4.9.1 Household Travel Survey

Cheshire East Council are working on a sub-regional project with Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington, Warrington Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council to undertake a household survey. Across the sub-region, the survey is designed to achieve at least 1,100 completed surveys from households at the local authority level. This will help to understand how residents travel and move around the area. The results from a survey and travel diary will provide data that includes accurately reported travel movements by residents, and detailed information about household composition and status. The travel diary will collect detailed information about household member's travel movements for a single 'neutral' weekday. Analysis of this information will provide insight of movements within the borough.

# 4.9.2 StreetLight Data

StreetLight is a data integration platform to visualise transport network data. It is envisaged that both TomTom and BT mobile phone data for 2023 will be shown in the StreetLight platform which will be multi-modal. Streetlight will give insight to mobility through an interactive web application which will provide data on road volumes, speeds, travel times including the variability by time of day, day of week, and month of year for roads and between census geographies within Cheshire East. This dataset will allow additional analysis to be undertaken in the form of graphs and selections of individual/multiple road segments/geographies. For example, this could include summary statistics by town, or the top congested routes across the borough for example. The data will also help better understand travel to work flows and therefore where people want to travel to and from. This information will be able to be extracted for further analysis and reporting and due course will be added to this evidence base document.

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# 4.10 Digital connectivity

# 4.10.1 Broadband connectivity

Digital connectivity refers specifically to connections to the internet. The UK Government has made an ambitious target for gigabit broadband to be available to 85% of the UK by 2025 and nationwide by 2030<sup>124</sup>. Gigabit-capable broadband means download speeds of at least 1 gigabit-per-second (1 Gbps or 1,000 megabits per second, Mbps). Table 4-33 below shows the current availability of Superfast, gigabit and full fibre broadband across the regions of Cheshire East, the North-West and the UK. This data is taken from the Local Broadband Information website<sup>125</sup>.

### Table 4-33 Broadband Availability

	Cheshire	North	UK
	East	West	Availability
	Availability	Availability	(%)
	(%)	(%)	
Superfast (>=30 Mbps)	97.43	98.63	98.08
Gigabit (DOCSIS 3.1 or FTTP)	81.79	87.68	85.34
Full Fibre (FTTP or FTTH)	71.91	75.53	69.63

The data shows that the availability of all three broadband types is currently lower in Cheshire East than the rest of the North West and Superfast and Gigabit broadband availability is currently lower in Cheshire East than the UK as a whole. Full Fibre availability is only slightly higher in Cheshire East than the rest of the UK by around 2%. This shows that whilst the UK is currently meeting its gigabit targets, gigabit availability in Cheshire East is still below the target level of 85%. With Cheshire East also behind the North West it is important that broadband connectivity is improved. Internet connectivity plays a role in travel trends. For example, advances in technology and the internet can make working from home possible, and changes to the way people buy goods.

Cheshire East has produced a Digital Strategy<sup>126</sup> that looks at using digital innovation to provide innovative public services, creating sustainable digital infrastructure, a vibrant digital economy and improve health, wellbeing and inclusion. Cheshire East's Digital Investment Plan<sup>127</sup> also has a vision of striving for Cheshire wide Gigabit connectivity for all residents throughout the borough.

# 4.10.2 Digital accessibility and exclusion

Digital accessibility refers to the ability of everyone - no matter their age or disability - being able to access and use digital services. Without digital accessibility, barriers will be created, preventing individuals from accessing the internet. Under the UK Equality Act of 2010<sup>128</sup> it is legal requirement that websites and apps need to meet accessibility needs. Digital exclusion refers to individuals that have never used the internet or have not used the internet in the past three months<sup>129</sup>. The Digital Exclusion Risk Index was developed in response to local authorities finding digital exclusion a significant challenge for residents and communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Digital Exclusion Risk Index (DERI) looks at the risk or likelihood of digital exclusion at MSOA level. A score of 0 represents a low risk of exclusion and a score of 10 represents a high risk of exclusion. Figure 4-82 overleaf shows the area to the south east of Macclesfield has a high score of digital exclusion which correlates to high levels of deprivation, with a decile score of 6. This higher DERI Score implies a higher chance of digital exclusion due to the lack of infrastructure from being situated in a more rural area, having a larger

proportion of the population who do not have access to the internet, or older generations that do not have the skills to use the internet. To ensure digital exclusion does not happen, this area needs to be a key focus area for improvement.



Figure 4-82 Cheshire East's Digital Exclusion Risk Index (Greater Manchester Office of Data Analytics)

# 4.10.3 Internet user classification

Figure 4-83 shows the internet user classifications of Cheshire East<sup>130</sup>, utilising Consumer Data Research Centre data. Internet User Classification looks at the profile of the neighbourhoods across Great Britain according to how residents' access and engage with the internet. Neighbourhoods are classified into ten groups that describe typical resident internet use and engagement, which are:

- E-Cultural Creators high levels of internet engagement regarding social networks and communications;
- E-Professionals high levels of Internet engagement, and comprises young populations of urban professionals, typically aged between 25 and 34;
- E-Veterans affluent families, usually located within low-density suburbs, with populations of mainly middle-aged and highly qualified professionals;
- Youthful Urban Fringe edge of city centres and are often young and drawn from ethnic minorities;
- E-Rational Utilitarians rural and semi-rural areas at the city fringe, high demand for Internet services by members of this Group is constrained by poor infrastructure;

<sup>128</sup> Equality Act 2010: guidance

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>124</sup> <u>Gigabit broadband in the UK: Government targets, policy, and funding</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> Local Broadband Information (accessed 28/08/2024)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>126</sup> Cheshire East Digital Strategy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>127</sup> Cheshire East Digital Investment Plan

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>129</sup> Exploring the UK's digital divide - ONS

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>130</sup> Internet User Classification | CDRC Data

- E-Mainstream modal Internet user characteristics but are drawn from a wide range of social echelons as defined using conventional socioeconomic data;
- Passive and Uncommitted Users limited or no interaction with the Internet.
- Digital Seniors ageing and predominantly White British, retired and relatively affluent;
- Settled Offline Communities elderly, White British and retired, and tend to reside in semi-rural areas; and
- E-Withdrawn Areas associated with those more deprived neighbourhoods of urban regions.

As shown in Figure 4-83 around towns within Cheshire East there is a higher proportion of e-Mainstream, Digital Seniors and Passive and Uncommitted users - which is seen in Crewe, Congleton, Macclesfield, Middlewich and Sandbach. In more rural locations and areas surrounding towns within Cheshire East there is a large proportion of e-Rational Utilitarians and e-Veterans. These areas of Rational Utilitarians have high demand for internet services but due to poor infrastructure demands cannot be met. Internet infrastructure needs to be improved in these areas to maximise digital connectivity and support transport mobility.



Figure 4-83 Internet user classification in Cheshire East (CDRC)

### 4G and 5G connectivity 4.10.4

According to Ofcom, 99.35% of Cheshire East has 4G coverage by at least one service provider. This shows that the majority of the borough has good 4G connectivity, with the remaining 0.65% potentially being more rural areas where there may Edge.

4G and 5G connectivity are becoming increasingly important given its ability to provide excellent access to the internet on the go and through apps. This is particularly important regarding transport and the potential to access live information across all modes, but also plan and book journeys in advance for certain services. With advanced 4G/5G connectivity, digital accessibility will be improved for residents in line with the principles of Triple Access Planning – these principles facilitate resident's access key services, job opportunities and other amenities through an integrated system of transport planning, land-use and digital connectivity.



Figure 4-84 Availability of EE 5G connectivity throughout Cheshire East

not be the infrastructure to provide 4G connectivity. At time of reporting, Ofcom have not published a network-wide 5G coverage dataset; however, 5G coverage data is available from three different internet providers in Figure 4-84, Figure 4-85 and Figure 4-86 show the distribution of 5G for Vodaphone, EE and O2 throughout the borough of Cheshire East<sup>131</sup>.

There is no 5G connectivity throughout Cheshire East on the O2 network. However, there is good coverage of Vodaphone 5G concentrated to the south of Crewe, north of Sandbach and around Knutsford, Macclesfield and Wilmslow, but little to no 5G coverage around Crewe and west of Macclesfield. There is here is high concentrations of EE 5G around Crewe, Knutsford, Sandbach and Congleton. However, there is little to no coverage around Bollington, Macclesfield or Alderley

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>131</sup> View mobile availability - Ofcom Checker



Figure 4-85 Availability of Vodaphone 5G connectivity throughout Cheshire East



Figure 4-86 Availability of O2 5G connectivity throughout Cheshire East

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# 4.10.5 Summary

A summary of the findings in this chapter and implications for the LTP are described in the table below.

Section	Key findings	Implications for the LTP
4.10.1	The availability of all three broadband types is currently lower in Cheshire East than the rest of the North West and Superfast and Gigabit broadband availability is currently lower in Cheshire East than the UK as a whole. Full Fibre availability is only slightly higher in Cheshire East than the rest of the UK by around 2%.	It is essential Cheshire East improves digital connectivity in line of businesses to thrive and allow individuals to benefit from the access offer. Digital connectivity impacts travel patterns, for example, increase
4.10.2	Overall Cheshire East does not face significant issues of digital exclusion; however, there are high levels of digital exclusion in the south east of Macclesfield, which correlates to a low level of deprivation.	Factors such as an ageing population, low incomes/affordability of shortage in deprived areas contribute to digital exclusion. To bridge made to ensure better access to social and economic opportunities o
4.10.4	Lack of 5G connectivity - nearly all the borough has 4G coverage, but 5G connectivity varies depending on the service provider	Around 50% of the Borough has access to 5G on Vodaphone and EE 5G connectivity. It is essential that there is sufficient provision of 4G individuals can benefit from digital connectivity when away from bro

with the North West and UK to allow as and opportunities digital connections eased working from home.

f high-speed internet services and skills e this gap, more investment needs to be online.

, however O2 and Three do not provide and 5G across the borough, to ensure adband internet access.

### 5. **Grow the Economy**

### 5.1 **Cheshire East's Economy**

Cheshire East has a strong economy which consistently exceeds regional and national averages for metrics such as GVA per capita or percentage of population in employment. Despite this relative success, Cheshire East should not be complacent. An accessible, convenient, and resilient transport network is an enabler of economic growth by providing access to employment and training. This increases opportunity, and in turn can reduce deprivation which is still an issue in some areas of Cheshire East. Cheshire East is home to successful multinational companies such as Bentley, Astra Zeneca, Barclays, Royal London, Mornflake as well as a buoyant range of small and medium size enterprises. Furthermore, the borough has a rich cultural, heritage and visitor economy which contributes significantly to the overall economic output of the borough.

The proximity of Manchester Airport gives considerable economic benefits to the borough by providing access to national and international markets, as well as supporting a substantial number of jobs, both directly and indirectly.

The extensive road network in Cheshire East includes the M6 motorway, which runs north to south through the centre of the borough, and the M56 running east to west to the north. The rail network is accessible from 22 Railway Stations across the borough. Crewe and Macclesfield are on separate branches of the West Coast Main Line giving access to Greater Manchester and London Euston.

A key element of Cheshire East's economy is the dynamic and expanding tourism sector. Transport plays a key role in supporting this through providing accessibility into and around the borough. Additionally, active travel plays a key role in itself by providing leisure activities drawing on the attractive Cheshire natural landscape and visitor destination assets.

The vibrancy of town centres and villages is key to supporting the retail and leisure economy. The way streets and public spaces are designed and used is a key determinant on the vibrancy of these areas. Additionally, accessibility to these centres by various modes of travel is key to bringing residents and visitors into these centres.

### 5.2 Employment

In the 2021 Census, despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, around 192,500 residents of Cheshire East were employed, a 6.3% rise from 181,100 in 2011. This increase is slightly higher than the 4.9% growth in England's employment numbers from 2011 to 2021. This discrepancy can be partly explained by population growth and the inclusion of individuals aged 75 and above in the 2021 data.

As displayed in Figure 5-1<sup>132</sup>, in 2021 within Cheshire East, 60.8% of the population aged 16 and over were economically active, either being employed (58.4%) or unemployed (2.4%), almost identical to the England average of 60.9%. The rate of economic activity was higher in urban areas (61.7%) of the Borough compared to rural areas (59.5%). Economic activity rates differed across the borough, with Prestbury having the lowest rate (50.7%) and Shavington the highest (64.3%). These geographical differences can be attributed to variations in age structure, socioeconomic factors, and the effect of Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021 recent house building on the demographic composition

that rural areas are well connected to employment opportunities to ensure accessibility is not a barrier to economic activity.

The unemployment rate in the 2021 Census for the borough's economically active population was 3.9%, lower than England's 5.7%. Unemployment was higher in Cheshire East's urban areas (4.4%) compared to rural areas (3.0%). At the settlement level, the rate exceeded 4% in Crewe (5.2%), Handforth (4.6%), and Macclesfield (4.6%), and was lowest in Chelford (2.1%), though all areas of Cheshire East have unemployment rates lower than the national average. This analysis is consistent with the 2011 Census which showed the same pattern.

In the 2021 Census, just over a sixth (16.8%) of Cheshire East's employed residents were self-employed – a proportion very similar to the England average (16.9%). This self-employment rate was substantially greater (20.8%) in Cheshire East's rural areas than in its urban areas (14.4%). This rate was higher in Prestbury (28.6%) and Audlem (27.0%) than in any other settlements. At the other end of the spectrum, Crewe (10.9%) was the only settlement where this rate was below 12.5%.

Between 2011 and 2021 Census, the number of employed Cheshire East residents working in manufacturing sectors generally contracted, while the numbers working in service sectors generally increased. There are industries which make a particular contribution to the employment of residents. For example, the Manufacturing of chemicals, chemical products, rubber, and plastic accounted for 2.3% of all jobs in 2021, compared to only 1.0% across England. This likely reflects the concentration of pharmaceuticals and vehicle manufacturing at sites within Cheshire East and the dependence of these sites on local residents for much of their workforce.

In the 2021 Census, managerial and professional occupations accounted for a larger share of the jobs held by Cheshire East residents than in England as a whole. Conversely, other occupational groups accounted for a smaller share of the employed residents in Cheshire East than in England generally. These differences may reflect the rural/urban

# **Economic activity status** Cheshire East (England) Economically active: In employment 58.4% (57.4%) Economically active: Unemployed 2.4% (3.5%) Economically inactive 39.2% (39.1%) % of people aged 16 years and over

### of different settlements. It is important however to ensure Figure 5-1 Economic activity status

<sup>132</sup> Build a custom area profile - Census 2021, ONS

composition of Cheshire East and the fact that professional and managerial jobs are more prevalent among the borough's rural residents than among its urban population. For professional, scientific and technical activities, the local employment share was 8.2%, compared to an England figure of only 6.7%. This no doubt reflects the concentration of pharmaceuticals and vehicle manufacturing at sites within Cheshire East (most obviously AstraZeneca in Macclesfield, Bespak in Holmes Chapel and Bentley in Crewe), and the dependence of these sites on local residents for much of their workforce. These findings also reflect the attractiveness of parts of Cheshire East as a residential location for highly gualified working-age people with the skills and experience required for professional, science-based and other technical jobs. It is therefore essential that the transport network is in place to continue to support these businesses and workers enable them to travel to work sustainably. There has however been anecdotal feedback from these employers that a lack of access to these sites by sustainable modes of travel is a limiting factor on their business. This is likely due to the recruitment pool from which employees are drawn being limited geographically, and the fact that residents of some areas of Greater Manchester who prefer to travel by non-car means having limited travel options to these employment locations in Cheshire East.

The proportion of employed residents working as Managers, directors and senior officials was highest in Prestbury (34.9%), Alderley Edge (31%), Goostrey (27.1%), Mobberley (25.5%), Chelford (24.3%), and Wilmslow (23.7%). These settlements all have relatively high median house prices and good transport connections, making them attractive to workers who are willing and able to commute significant distances to their workplace. Conversely, only 8.7% of Crewe's employed residents were in this occupational group, with Macclesfield, Middlewich, and Shavington having the next smallest share.

#### 5.2.1 Home working

Whilst in the midst of COVID-19, the 2021 Census gives an indication of working from home at the time, and patterns associated with this. Homeworking was much more prevalent among those Cheshire East employed residents living in rural areas (42.2% of them worked from home) than among their urban counterparts (30.9%). The proportion working from home varied from over 50% in Prestbury (55.9%), Goostrey (52.5%) and Alderley Edge (51.1%) to only 20.6% in Crewe (more than 10 percentage points below any other settlement). These geographical variations are likely to reflect the differences in the occupations held by residents of each settlement, as well as the varying degrees to which the COVID-19 lockdown affected available travel options in each location.

More recent analysis from Ofcom in April 2022<sup>133</sup> at a national level suggests that the pandemic has accelerated a shift towards hybrid work from small and medium SMEs. This suggests that there is an enhanced importance of digital connectivity and digital accessibility for the workforce. If these trends continue, this will also have an impact on transport networks and how the workforce utilise various modes, and the frequency of utilisation. Section 4.10 presents analysis of digital connectivity in Cheshire East and notes particular issues in some rural areas.





#### Skills and education 5.3

Table 5-1 shows the working age population highest qualification. The percentage of the working age population in Cheshire East (45.5%) whose highest qualification is NVQ Level 4 and above is (as of 2021) higher than that in the North West (38.6%) or the UK (43.5%). The Cheshire East proportion is higher than in 2020, though this change is not statistically significant. This demonstrates Cheshire East has a more gualified and higher skilled population compared to the North West and the rest of the UK. The percentage of the working age population with no qualifications (4.4%) is lower than those in the North West and UK.<sup>134</sup> It is important that transport connectivity links residents to educational opportunities both inside and outside of the borough to ensure that the borough's residents remain highly skilled.

<sup>134</sup> Annual Population Survey (residence-based dataset), Jan-Dec 2020 to Jan-Dec 2021, ONS, NOMIS. ONS Crown Copyright https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>133</sup> <u>SME consumer experience in the communications market (ofcom.org.uk)</u>

	Cheshire East (2021)	North West (2021)	UK (2021)	Cheshire East (2020)
NVQ4+	45.5%	38.6%	43.5%	41.3%
NVQ3	17.9%	17.9%	16.5%	23.2%
Trade Apprenticeship	2.2%	3.3%	2.8%	2.4%
NVQ2	16.5%	17.4%	15.2%	17.7%
NVQ1	9.9%	10.0%	9.3%	8.6%
Other	3.5%	5.2%	5.8%	2.4%
None	4.4%	7.5%	6.8%	4.4%

### Table 5-1 Percentage of working age population whose highest qualification is NVQ level 1/2/3/4 or higher/other/none

### 5.4 Productivity

Cheshire East, with Cheshire West and Warrington continues to be a strong economy, worth £32bn, with high productivity of £36.00 per hour (in 2019, compared to an England average of £35.50) and GVA growth of 9% in the past five years relative to the England average of 6.6%.<sup>135</sup> Given the relatively high GVA, number of jobs and increasing productivity in the information and communication sector, this could potentially be an emerging opportunity for the sub-region. However, this output growth has been achieved in the absence of productivity growth. GVA per hour has fluctuated around 2008 levels, and in 2019 (the latest year for which data is available) was actually slightly lower on 2008 levels. There is a highly productive manufacturing sector, which is over twice as productive as the Great Britain average, but most other sectors are underperforming compared to national averages.

#### 5.5 Town centres

Town centres and high street retailing are facing challenges due to changing trends and behaviours. Cheshire East has a lower vacancy rate (10.0%) than the national average (13.8%), but three town centres exceed this average<sup>136</sup>. Crewe's town centre continues to face challenges in terms of retail vacancy rates. A number of investments have been delivered to improve the town centre including a new bus station and multistorey car park with EV chargepoints. Several other projects are underway, aiming to diversify the town centre's uses and attract more visitors. In Congleton, despite high vacancy figures (19.8%), the overall vacancy rates have reduced due to redevelopment efforts. The Congleton Market Quarter is seeing significant investment, which should reduce vacancy levels and boost town centre vitality.

In 2023, Town Centre Vitality Plans (TCVPs)<sup>137</sup> were developed for several towns within Cheshire East. These plans aim to support the vitality and viability of town centres, especially in the face of challenges posed by changing shopping habits and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. A summary of the transport and economic characteristics for each town is provided in the below sub-sections.

More recently, in relation to supporting Cheshire East's town centres, recent information has been gathered for twelve towns in Cheshire East regarding footfall within the town centres as set out within monthly Visitor Insights Baseline Reports. The towns are: Alsager, Congleton, Crewe, Handforth, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Nantwich Road, Poynton, Sandbach, Wilmslow, Middlewich and Nantwich. Data for July 2024 showed that the highest footfall for town centres within Cheshire East was experienced in Macclesfield, and Crewe was the second highest. The lowest footfall in July 2024 was experienced in Alsager. Comparing this data to pre-pandemic footfall in July 2019, all of the towns except for Alsager have experienced an increase in footfall. Handforth experienced the most significant increase at nearly 200%. Alsager experienced a decrease in footfall of around 20%.

It is vital that transport in Cheshire East can support its principal towns and key service centres and businesses within them to enable a thriving economy. Without good accessibility, there is a risk of residents and employers moving outside of the borough, where it may be easier to travel to work or for businesses to attract talent. There is also a need for streets and public spaces to be welcoming and attractive to support retail activity and the overall vitality of town and village centres.

#### 5.5.1 Alsager

Alsager is situated in the southern part of Cheshire East, seven miles to the east of Crewe and 10 miles north of Stokeon Trent. Its closeness to the M6 offers outstanding strategic road links to Manchester, Manchester Airport, Birmingham, and further afield. The Alsager Train Station, which is just a brief stroll from the Town Centre, provides a consistent daily service to Crewe, Stoke-on-Trent, and Birmingham, enabling connections to London via the West Coast Main Line. Consequently, Alsager boasts superb connectivity on a local, regional, and national level.

The primary employment and industrial activities are located on the town's southwestern edge, where BAE Systems and Radway Green Business Park are based. Despite the loss of some major employers, including Twyfords and MMU, Alsager's location next to the M6 makes it an appealing site for future investments. The anticipated expansion of Radway Green is expected to strengthen the town's role in employment, stimulate economic growth, and decrease the high incidence of commuting out of town.

Most of Alsager falls within the top 20% of the least deprived areas nationally. Only 16% of Alsager's residents lack access to a car. A guarter of the residents have to travel more than 40km for work, with public transport accounting for just 4% of commuting trips and 75% by car.

#### 5.5.2 Congleton

Congleton is located in the southeastern part of Cheshire, at the base of the Pennines. The town is enveloped by rural landscapes yet is a ten-minute drive from the M6 motorway. It is approximately equidistant from Crewe, Stoke, and Macclesfield, each of which is within a 10-mile radius of the Town Centre. Congleton Railway Station, situated approximately 20-minute walk to the east of the Town Centre, offers hourly train services to Manchester and Stoke-on-Trent.

Congleton has the capacity to significantly boost the economic development and future wealth of Cheshire East. It is proposed that an area north of the Town Centre will house more than 4,000 new dwellings and 24 hectares of land for employment. The North Congleton Masterplan outlines how this will be achieved. The realisation of this residential and employment expansion is predicated on completion of the Congleton Link Road (linking A534 to A536), which opened in April 2021.

Unlike many of the other towns in Cheshire East, a substantial proportion of residents in Congleton (32%) travel less than 5km to work and active modes accounts for 13% of travel to work trips.

<sup>135</sup> https://cheshireandwarrington.com/media/0asodop1/c-w-economic-evidence-report-final-draft-261022.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>136</sup>https://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/documents/s115646/Appendix%20G%20Town%20centres%20and%20retail%20topic%2 Opaper.pdf

# 5.5.3 Handforth

Handforth is centrally located in one of the region's most desirable residential areas, nestled between Wilmslow, Heald Green, and Styal. It is well-connected by road and rail, being just nine miles south of Manchester City Centre and connected to Manchester Airport via the A555. Besides Manchester, Handforth is within an hour's drive of other major cities like Liverpool and Chester via the M56. The Handforth rail station, a six-minute walk from the Centre, offers two trains per hour in each direction, connecting to Crewe, Alderley Edge, Manchester Piccadilly, and Southport.

There are a range of job opportunities at Airport City, the Cheshire Science Corridor, and the Greater Manchester City Region. Local employment is available at the Deanway Business Park on Wilmslow Road, the Brooke Park industrial estate, Stanley Green Industrial Estate and Handforth Dean. The Strategic Leisure/Tourism Asset Plan positions Handforth in relation to blue and green assets and tourist attractions. It highlights Handforth's links to local tourist spots like Quarry Bank Mill, Tatton Park, and Dunham Massey, as well as beautiful countryside areas like Alderley Edge and Styal Country Park.

Recognizing these assets, the Local Plan acknowledges Handforth's strategic growth potential and has earmarked several strategic sites for future residential and employment expansion. This includes the Handforth Garden Village (Phase 1 could accommodate 1,500 new homes and up to 12 ha of employment land). This development will significantly boost the resident population within the centre's catchment area and should encourage investment in local facilities. These allocations could support an additional 5,000 residents in the area by 2030.

Most of Handforth falls within the top 10% of the least deprived areas nationally. 75% of Handforth residents commute to work outside of the centre, primarily to other towns across Cheshire East like Wilmslow and Alderley Edge, and towards Manchester. Approximately 21% of households lack car access, the highest percentage among all nine areas with a TCVP.

# 5.5.4 Knutsford

Knutsford is one of the larger centres within Cheshire East. It is a popular destination for both residents and tourists. Knutsford is strategically well located, connected by road (M6) and rail to the conurbations of Manchester and Liverpool, and close to Manchester Airport.

Knutsford has a strong retail offer with a wide range of convenience and food retail. It also has a strong leisure and evening economy with a mix of independent and chain bars and restaurants. It also has a vibrant leisure and nightlife scene with a variety of independent and chain bars and restaurants. The town hosts several offices within the centre, primarily in the property and financial sectors. Knutsford also houses several employment sites around its periphery, offering a variety of office and industrial spaces, including Parkgate Industrial Estate, Knutsford Business Park, and Booths Park. While these may not necessarily house global brands, they do include a number of tenants with strong regional reputations in key sectors such as finance, ICT, and property.

Knutsford is also strategically well-placed, connected by road (M6) and rail to Manchester and Liverpool's urban areas, and near Manchester Airport. Knutsford falls within the top 20% of the least deprived areas nationally. However, it should be noted that there is a local pocket of deprivation that falls within the top 30% of the most deprived neighbourhoods. 74% of Knutsford's residents commute to work outside of the town, mainly to other towns across Cheshire East like Macclesfield and Wilmslow, and areas towards Manchester.

### 5.5.5 Middlewich

Middlewich is centrally located on the northern boundary of the Cheshire East, eight miles north of Crewe and 17 miles west of Macclesfield. The town's proximity to the M6 provides excellent strategic road connectivity to Manchester, Manchester Airport, Birmingham and beyond. A key employment site in Middlewich is Ma6nitude, this site is home to some of the country's major distribution companies such as Swizzels Matlow Ltd, B&M Retail, Wincanton and Kuehne + Nagel. The town also enjoys close linkages to the towns of Winsford and Northwich in adjoining Cheshire West and

Chester through its local road. As such, Middlewich benefits from good local and regional connectivity. Middlewich is the largest town in Cheshire without a centrally located rail station. With more than 80% of people travelling to work outside of Middlewich, there is a heavy reliance on car travel in and out of the area for commuting purposes contributing towards lower levels of air quality. Car travel accounts for 77% of travel to work trips. The Middlewich Eastern Bypass will include a new two-way single carriageway road that will connect a new roundabout junction off Pochin Way in the north to a new roundabout junction to the south, connecting with the A533 Booth Lane. The plans also include a combined cycleway and footway, as part of the council's continued commitment to encourage active travel and greener transport.

The majority of Middlewich is within the 20% least deprived areas of deprivation nationally.

## 5.5.6 Nantwich

Situated in the southern part of Cheshire East, Nantwich is five miles southwest of Crewe and 11 miles north of Whitchurch in the neighbouring borough. Its connection to the M6 via the A500 offers excellent road links to Manchester, Manchester Airport, Birmingham, and further afield. The Nantwich Train Station, located on the town centre's southern edge, provides daily services to Crewe, Manchester Piccadilly, and Carmarthen, enabling connections to London via the West Coast Main Line. This gives the town superb local, regional, and national connectivity.

Nantwich, due to its nearness to Crewe and easy access to the M6, is primarily a commuter town. It lacks a significant industrial estate or business park employment cluster within its urban area, except for a relatively small employment park. There are several offices scattered across the town centre, and Reaseheath College, situated on the northern outskirts, offers agricultural, academic, and light industrial uses. Approximately half of Nantwich is among the top 20% least deprived areas nationally.

Walking and cycling account for 16% of commuter journeys made by Nantwich residents, and 29% of the town's inhabitants work within the area (travelling less than 5km to work). Approximately 20% of households lack a car, and the percentage of residents who drive to work is relatively low at 66%.

### 5.5.7 Poynton

Poynton is situated in the northeastern part of Cheshire East, five miles to the south of Stockport and 13 miles to the south of Manchester City Centre, just beyond the Greater Manchester boundary. Manchester Airport is six miles east of Poynton, which boasts excellent road links to the M56 via the A555 and the A523 that runs through the town, connecting it to Macclesfield, Stockport, and Manchester. Poynton's train station offers hourly local services heading north to Manchester and south to Stoke-on-Trent.

Its location on the fringe of Greater Manchester provides Poynton with easy access to a broad array of job opportunities. Consequently, Poynton is primarily a commuter town with a limited internal job market. However, it does have a vibrant retail sector and nightlife. Most of Poynton falls within the top 10% of the least deprived areas in the country.

Car ownership in Poynton is notably high, with only 13% of households not owning a car. 36% of households have two or more cars, but 24% of residents travel less than 5km to work.

### 5.5.8 Sandbach

Sandbach is positioned in the centre of Cheshire East, seven miles to the north of Crewe and 15 miles to the south of Macclesfield. Its close proximity to the M6 offers superior road links to Manchester, Manchester Airport, Birmingham, and further afield. Located a mile away from the town centre in Elworth village, Sandbach Railway Station provides a regular daily service between Crewe and Manchester, via Manchester Airport. This allows for connections to London via the West Coast Main Line at Crewe, ensuring excellent local, regional, and national connectivity.

The primary source of employment is currently located on the town's western edge at the Springvale Industrial Estate in Ettiley village. Smaller employment areas are found in Wheelock village and business units in Elworth. A significant

mixed-use development is in progress at the Capricorn Business Park, located adjacent to J17 of the M6 motorway. This development will offer 29 hectares of employment opportunities, including a new business park, industrial, storage and distribution facilities, as well as amenities supporting food, beverage, and hospitality sectors, a sports facility, and a local centre. This scheme is expected to enhance Sandbach's role as an employment hub, stimulate economic growth, and decrease the high incidence of out-commuting.

A majority of Sandbach residents (65%) commute to work outside the area, primarily towards Crewe. Given the high rate of car ownership in the area (85% of residents have access to a car) and a 25-minute walk to the nearest train station. private car use is likely to dominate travel in, out, and around Sandbach. This is particularly true for commuting residents, with car travel accounting for 74% of work-related journeys.

Most of Sandbach falls within the top 20% of the least deprived areas nationally.

#### 5.5.9 Wilmslow

Wilmslow is situated in the northern part of Cheshire East, 14 miles to the south of Manchester City Centre and a mere three miles from Manchester Airport and the M56. This highway links it to the M6 and M60, and the town is also wellconnected to Manchester, Handforth, Macclesfield, and Congleton via the A34. Wilmslow Station, which is on the West Coast Main Line, offers both local and long-distance services, ensuring the town has superb local, national, and international connectivity. The town is also ideally positioned to access a broad spectrum of job opportunities, both within the Centre itself and its surrounding area (Airport City, Alderley Park, and Waters Corporation), as well as those in the wider Manchester City Region and Cheshire.

Most of Wilmslow falls within the top 10% of the least deprived areas nationally. The area also boasts high car ownership, with 90% of residents having access to a car and 40% having access to two or more vehicles. Consequently, 69% of residents commute to work by car.

#### 5.6 **Rural Economy**

The rural aspect of Cheshire East is significant in terms of its contribution to the economy but bring both the constraints and opportunities that are peculiar to rural areas. 148,400 people, nearly two fifths of Cheshire East's total population (386,700), live in rural areas. The quality of its natural environment, combined with factors such as high educational attainment and employment opportunities, ensure that Cheshire East is a place offering a high quality of life to its residents and is an attractive place to do business; a place where people want to live, work and visit.<sup>138</sup>

Cheshire East was traditionally, and remains in many places, a rural area, with agriculture (particularly dairy) and landbased industries, with a network of villages and mid-sized market towns serving as important service and functional centres. Alongside their roles as retail, commercial, educational and leisure focal points, these places historically developed specialisms, including extractive industries, chemicals and silk. Business counts data from the Office for National Statistics<sup>139</sup> indicate that, of the 19,540 businesses located in Cheshire East as of 2022 (an increase from the 19,510 businesses there were in 2021), 10,300 (52.7%) were based in Middle Layer Super Outputs (MSOAs) that were part rural and part urban, 4,455 (22.8%) were in completely rural MSOAs and 4,785 (24.5% were in completely urban MSOAs.<sup>140</sup>. It is therefore vital that our transport network supports businesses in rural areas, in addition to urban areas so the economy can continue to grow and thrive.

#### 5.7 Visitor Economy

Cheshire East is home to a dynamic and expanding tourism sector. The UNESCO World Heritage Site, Jodrell Bank, unveiled its 'First Light' visitor centre in 2022, and Tatton Park is among England's most frequented attractions. The region boasts accessible natural landscapes, and attractive market towns such as Congleton, Knutsford, and Nantwich. Coupled with top-tier accommodation, heritage sites, historic gardens, world-class events, farm accommodation, and health clubs/spas, it provides a wide-ranging offer for both day trippers and overnight guests. Cheshire East's location near to Manchester, Liverpool, and Chester, as well as Staffordshire, Derbyshire, and Shropshire, enhances its appeal. It also encompasses a portion of the Peak District National Park and provides easy access to both local and international markets, thanks to two nearby international airports and excellent road and rail connections. The hospitality sector, which includes restaurants, bars, cafes, theatres, museums, tourist spots, and shopping destinations, significantly contributes to the leisure experience for locals, tourists, and businesses. The revenue generated by visitors is a vital boost to the borough's economy. However, research has confirmed an acute staff shortage in various roles within the hospitality sector, particularly front of house and chef roles. In many Cheshire East businesses this is preventing sites opening or forcing businesses to restrict their trading hours or the menu and service they can offer.

Cheshire East's visitor economy was projected to exceed £1bn in value by 2020, after reaching £994m in 2019. However, the pandemic severely affected the sector, especially the rural areas where much of the tourism infrastructure is located<sup>141</sup>. As a direct result of the pandemic and the ensuing restrictions, the visitor economy's value dropped to £548m in 2020. According to STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Analysis Monitor) data, the sector has begun to rebound, growing by 34% and hitting £735m in 2021 and increasing by a further 20% in 2022, reaching £879m.

With tourism contributing significantly to the Borough's economy, it is important that the transport network is in place to support tourism, and that it is attractive and easy to use. This is both applicable for those travelling within the borough and those travelling from outside of the borough into Cheshire East.

categories. The statistics presented here are based on the two-category classification. However, the business count data are available only at and above MSOA level. Therefore, the resulting statistics are split into three categories: "rural only" MSOAs (those containing only rural LSOAs); "mixed" MSOAs (those containing both rural and urban LSOAs); and "urban only" MSOAs (those containing only urban LSOAs). 141 CE Visitor Economy Strategy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>138</sup> https://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecMinutes/documents/s97674/Rural%20Action%20Plan%202022.pdf

<sup>139 &#</sup>x27;UK Business Counts - Enterprises' data, ONS, NOMIS. ONS Crown Copyright. Note: Figures relate to enterprises, not local units. Hence an enterprise with 2 sites in Cheshire East (and none elsewhere) would be counted only once (under the location of its main site or HQ). Figures include public as well as private sector organisations.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>140</sup> These statistics are based on Cheshire East Council's 2015 Rural-Urban Classification developed by the council's corporate research team. This classification system assigned each of Cheshire East's 234 LSOAs to one of six narrow rural-urban categories and one of two broad rural-urban

# 5.8 Summary

### Table 5-2: Summary of grow the economy

Section	Key Findings	Implications for the LTP
5.1	Cheshire East has a strong economy which consistently exceeds regional and national averages for metrics such as GVA per capita or percentage of population in employment. However, there has been absence of productivity growth with GVA per hour fluctuating around 2008 levels, and in 2019 (the latest year for which data is available) was actually slightly lower on 2008 levels.	An accessible, convenient, and resilient transport network is an enab employment and training and therefore this is essential in order to main future economic growth.
5.2	The rate of economic activity is higher in urban areas of the Borough compared to rural areas.	It is important to ensure that rural areas are well connected to emplo ensure accessibility is not a barrier to economic activity.
5.2	Professional and managerial jobs are more prevalent among the Borough's rural residents than among its urban population. This no doubt reflects the concentration of pharmaceuticals and vehicle manufacturing at sites within Cheshire East, and the dependence of these sites on local residents for much of their workforce. These findings also reflect the attractiveness of parts of Cheshire East as a residential location for highly qualified working-age people with the skills and experience required for professional, science-based and other technical jobs.	It is essential that the transport network is in place to support these b work sustainably, including rural areas. There has been anecdotal feed to these sites by sustainable modes of travel is a limiting factor on the pool from which employees are drawn being limited geographically Greater Manchester who prefer to travel by non-car means having locations in Cheshire East.
5.2.1	In the 2021 Census, homeworking was much more prevalent among those Cheshire East employed residents living in rural areas than among their urban counterparts. Geographical variations are likely to reflect the differences in the occupations held by residents of each settlement, as well as the varying degrees to which the COVID-19 lockdown affected available travel options in each location.	Working from home is a key element of triple access planning which pressure on the transport network, however reduced demand on p commerciality of services in some areas. There are also challenges for a which may limit the ability to work from home.
5.3	Cheshire East has a more qualified and higher skilled population compared to the North West and the rest of the UK.	It is important that transport connectivity links residents to education Borough to ensure that the Borough's residents remain highly skilled.
5.5	Town centres across the country are facing challenges and whilst Cheshire East on the whole has lower vacancy rates than average, some towns are higher.	It is vital that transport in Cheshire East can support its principal town them to enable a thriving economy. Without good accessibility, ther outside of the borough, where it may be easier to travel to work or important that streets and public spaces in town and village centres su
5.5	Cheshire East was traditionally, and remains in many places, a rural area, with agriculture and land-based industries, with a network of villages and mid-sized market towns serving as important service and functional centres. The rural economy remains crucial to the borough with three quarters of businesses located in a rural or part-rural area.	It is therefore vital that our transport network supports businesses in economy can continue to grow and thrive.
5.7	Cheshire East is home to a dynamic and expanding tourism sector. The visitor economy is recovering following COVID-19 but is still facing challenges. Notwithstanding it is a crucial part of Cheshire East's economy, with many attractions being located in the rural parts of the borough.	It is important that the transport network is in place to support tourism both applicable for those travelling within the borough and those trave East. It is particularly important to have a transport network in place where many of the attractions are located. Additionally, active trave drawing on natural and cultural assets, and there is scope to further de

bler of economic growth by providing access to intain Cheshire East's strong position and enable

oyment opportunities and other destinations to

businesses and workers enable them to travel to dback from these employers that a lack of access eir business. This is likely due to the recruitment y, and the fact that residents of some areas of g limited travel options to these employment

ich brings environmental benefits and reduces public transport may pose challenges for the digital connectivity in rural areas of the borough

nal opportunities both inside and outside of the

ns and key service centres and businesses within are is a risk of residents and employers moving r for businesses to attract talent. Likewise, it is support vibrancy in these areas.

in rural areas, in addition to urban areas so the

n, and that it is attractive and easy to use. This is elling from outside of the borough into Cheshire e to access rural parts of the borough as this is el in its own right provides a leisure attraction levelop this offer.

### **Reduce Environmental Impacts** 6.

### 6.1 Introduction

In May 2019, the council declared an environment and climate emergency. The council has targets to become a carbon neutral council by 2027, and for the borough to be carbon neutral borough by 2045. Cheshire East has an environment that should be protected including:

- 385 English Heritage sites (Cheshire East and Cheshire West)<sup>142</sup>;
- 33 nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI''s)<sup>143</sup>:
- Over 420 sites in Cheshire East are classified as being of local importance as Local Wildlife Sites formally known as Sites of Biological Importance (SBI)<sup>143</sup>; and
- A number of sites in the borough have also been declared Ramsar sites by Natural England. This designation recognises these areas as wetlands of international importance for waterfowl habitats and migratory birds<sup>143</sup>.

Transport and the environment are closely related, and therefore transport has a key role to play in protecting and enhancing the environment through interventions to help reduce emissions. This section provides the evidence base in relation to the environment including carbon, climate change and air quality.

### 6.2 **Carbon Emissions and Climate Change**

#### 6.2.1 **Global and National context**

On a global scale, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) says the science is clear, the world is facing a climate emergency. Burning of fossil fuels has emitted enough greenhouse gases (GHGs) to significantly alter the composition of the atmosphere and average world temperature is rising. According to the Met Office, the global average temperature for 2023 was 1.46°C above the pre-industrial base line and it was the 10<sup>th</sup> year in succession that has equalled or exceeded 1.0°C above the pre-industrial period (1850 – 1900)<sup>144</sup>.

The world is now warming faster than at any point in recorded history and if global warming continues it will have an increasingly severe impact on the planet, causing hunger, drought, flooding, wildfires and extreme weather. To avoid the worst of those effects, humanity must limit temperature rise to below 1.5°C. This requires the world to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 30 gigatonnes annually by 2030. UNEP has identified six sectors with the potential to reduce emissions enough to keep the world below the 1.5°C mark.



Figure 6-1 UNEP Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction by Industry Sector<sup>145</sup>

Transport is responsible for about one-sixth of all greenhouse gas emissions globally and without mitigation this is set to double by 2050. The impact of the carbon footprint of transport can be reduced by up to 4.7Gt by switching to electric vehicles in private commercial and public transport, and encouraging people to walk, wheel and cycle and use other forms of non-motorised transport<sup>145</sup>. Reducing demand for transport is also recognised as a key opportunity for reducing emissions.

On the 27<sup>th of</sup> June 2024, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero published its latest annual estimates of greenhouse gas emissions for local authorities and regions, which cover the period 2005-22<sup>146</sup>. On a national level the report details that in the UK as a whole, estimated total greenhouse gas emissions decreased by around 43% between 2005 and 2022. All UK local authorities saw their total emissions fall between 2005 and 2022, with reduced emissions from power stations and industrial combustion being the main reason for that trend.

To address greenhouse gas emissions on a national and regional scale, numerous documents have been released with decarbonisation at the forefront including DfT's Decarbonising Transport - A Better, Greener Britain (last updated January 2023) and TfN's Transport Decarbonisation Strategy (December 2021). Both documents have been produced

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>142</sup> Places to Visit in England | English Heritage (english-heritage.org.uk)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>143</sup> Nature Conservation (cheshireeast.gov.uk)

<sup>144 2023:</sup> The warmest year on record globally - Met Office

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>145</sup> The six-sector solution to the climate crisis (unep.org)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>146</sup> UK local authority greenhouse gas emissions estimates 2022

in recognition of the significant and crucial contribution the decarbonisation of transport can have towards meeting greenhouse gas emissions targets. According to the policy document 'Decarbonising Transport. A Better, Greener Britain<sup>147</sup>, the transport sector has not matched the substantial emissions reductions seen in other sectors, with a 36% increase in the contribution transport has made to overall emissions since 2005 nationally. The large majority of emissions are directly generated by road-based trips, particularly private cars. Figure 6-2 indicates that transport is the largest emitter of UK greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for nearly a third of all emissions.



Figure 6-2 Net UK Green House Gas Emissions by Industry Sector 2022<sup>148</sup>

As shown above, in 2022, 28% of net greenhouse gas emissions in the UK were estimated to be from the domestic transport sector, 20% from buildings and product uses, 14% from industry, 14% from electricity supply and 12% from agriculture. The other 12% was attributable to the remaining sectors: fuel supply, waste and the land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector. The LULUCF sector includes both sinks and sources of emissions.

Historically, the electricity supply sector had the highest greenhouse gas emissions, but the large reductions over the last decade in emissions from power stations mean that since the mid 1990s the domestic transport sector has been one of the highest sources of greenhouse gas emissions. This is illustrated in Figure 6-3.



Figure 6-3 Trend in territorial greenhouse gas emissions for selected Standard Industrial Classification sections, UK 1990 to 2021149

#### 6.2.2 **Carbon Emissions**

In May 2019, the council declared an environment and climate emergency, and committed to becoming a carbon neutral council by 2025. This target has since been pushed back to 2027<sup>150</sup> due to the financial landscape the council is in. In January 2022, a further pledge was made to make Cheshire East a carbon neutral borough by 2045, which is five vears ahead of the UK Government's national 2050 target.

### 6.2.2.1 The council's Carbon Emissions

CEC's ambition to be a carbon neutral council by 2027 is based on the council's carbon emissions during 2018-2019. The council's Carbon Neutrality Action Plan 2020-2025 (January 2020) estimates that the carbon footprint of the council in 2018-2019 was just under 15,500 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions and is based on the activities the council has direct control of as shown in Figure 6-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>147</sup> Decarbonising Transport, A Better, Greener Britain

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>148</sup> 2020 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Final Figures (publishing.service.gov.uk)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>149</sup> Annex 2: 2021 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, by Standard Industrial Classification (publishing.service.gov.uk)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>150</sup> Carbon Neutral Council (cheshireeast.gov.uk)



Figure 6-4 CEC Carbon Emissions by Activity <sup>151</sup>

In terms of Transport (Fleet), the figure indicates it is responsible for 23% of all the council's carbon emissions; therefore, there is scope for transport to play an important role in reducing the council's carbon emissions.

#### 6.2.2.2 **Boroughwide Carbon Emissions**

In terms of borough-wide greenhouse gas emissions, in 2019, the borough's energy system was responsible for net emissions totalling 2,85 million tonnes. The majority resulted from buildings and facilities (48%) and transport (34%). The emissions profile for the area administered by Cheshire East Council is shown in Figure 6-5<sup>152</sup>

- Residential buildings: 23%
- Commercial buildings & facilities: 7%
- Institutional buildings & facilities: 3%
- Industrial buildings & facilities: 14%
- Fugitive emissions: 2%
- On-road transport: 33%
- Other transport: 1%
- Waste treatment and disposal: 1%
- Industrial processes: 4%
- Livestock: 11%
- Agriculture: 1%
- Land use: 0.3%

# Figure 6-5 2019 Cheshire East Borough Wide Emissions by Sector<sup>153</sup>

Therefore, it is clear that decarbonising transport is crucial to meet the council's goals of being a carbon neutral council by 2027 and making Cheshire East a carbon neutral borough by 2045. As a result, major change is required in terms of how people travel in and around the borough, moving away from private vehicles to public transport, active travel options and electric vehicles (EVs). Reductions in the demand for transport is also important. As set out within section 4.6.9, 74% of residents travelled to work by car or van in the 2011 Census, and over 85% of households own at least one car. In contrast, in the 2011 Census just 5% of journeys took place on public transport and 13% by walk or cycle.

In order to reduce emissions from on-road transport, the council have set targets as part of the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan 2020-2025 (January 2020) in relation to borough-wide emissions from cars and HGVs:

- 15% reduction in emissions from HGV fleet by 2025;
- 6% reduction in car transport share in 2025 against 2015 levels;
- 64% of cars are EV, PHEV or FCV by 2025;
- Modal share of active transport to 6% by 2025;
- 88% of buses are EV, PHEV or FCV and rail is 100% electrified by 2025; and
- By 2025, improve the efficiency of road transport through smart technology.

The LTP should provide a framework to enable these changes to occur to reduce emissions across the borough.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>151</sup> Cheshire East Council Carbon Neutrality Action Plan 2020-2025 (January 2020)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>152</sup> Cheshire East Council Borough-wide Baseline & Carbon Reduction Options (November 2022)

### Table 6-1: Neighbouring Local Authority emission numbers

Local Authority	Cheshire West and Chester	Derbyshire	Cheshire East
Report Year	2020	2018	2019
Net Greenhouse Gas Emissions	4 million tonnes	10.5 million tonnes	2.85 million tonnes
Largest sources of emissions	Buildings and facilities (79%), Transport (19%)	Industrial (68%), Transport (19%)	Buildings and facilities (48%), Transport (34%)

As shown in Table 6-1, Cheshire East has a lower share of buildings and facilities related emissions but has a higher share transport related emissions in comparison to Cheshire West and Chester. However, it must be noted that the Cheshire East data is from one year previous to the Cheshire West and Chester data. In comparison to Derbyshire, Cheshire East release around 8 million tonnes of emissions less, however transport emissions account for 15% more of Cheshire East's emissions than they do in Derbyshire. It must also be noted that this data is taken from 2018, whereas the Cheshire East data is from 2019.

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero's latest annual estimates of greenhouse gas emissions for Cheshire East<sup>154</sup> show that in 2022 the Borough's total domestic emissions were 604,600 tonnes, down 44.5% on 2005 (and 12.8% lower than in 2021). This percentage fall was slightly less than that achieved by the UK as a whole (47.1%).

With the exception of one year (2007), emissions from transport followed a downward trend from 2005 (1,245,400 tonnes) to 2013 (1,121,100), but then increased in four successive years (to 1,186,000 by 2017). In 2018 and 2019, emissions levels in this sector changed marginally (by less than 0.5% in each year), but then dropped by 16.2% in 2020 alone, to reach 991,900 (probably in large part a consequence of the COVID-19 restrictions in place for much of the year). Transport emissions then grew by 6.4% in 2021 and rose more modestly (by 1.7%) in 2022. UK transport emissions are now 18.2% below their 2005 level.

With the exception of short-term increases in 2010 (2.5%), 2012 (3.7%) and 2021 (4.7%), total emissions from all sectors have fallen every year from 2006 to 2022. Total emissions in 2022 (2,962,300 tonnes) were 34.1% below their 2005 level. For the UK as a whole, the trend was similar: steadily downward, apart from temporary increases in overall emissions in 2010, 2012 and 2021. By 2022, total emissions across the UK were 42.7% lower than in 2005. By 2022, Cheshire East's total emissions per capita were 7.3 tonnes, down from 12.5 tonnes in 2005 (and from 7.7 in 2021). Over the same 17-year period, per capita emissions also fell in the UK as a whole (from 10.9 tonnes to 5.6), but Cheshire East is still above the national average.

#### Becoming a carbon neutral council by 2027 6.2.3

A pathway to achieving the council's goal of being a carbon neutral council by 2027 is illustrated in Figure 6-6, which identifies an opportunity to reduce the council's transport (business travel and fleet) carbon emissions by 5% or 767 tonnes by:

- Reducing the need for business travel through technology;
- Encouraging a modal shift in travel methods; and
- Switching the council's fleet to 100% electric, which on average reduces emissions from vehicles by 66% with a target of 15% for HGVs.





As set out within the council's Carbon Neutral Progress Update Report 2023<sup>156</sup>, progress towards reducing emissions from the council's business travel and fleet has been made from a 2019 baseline. This is set out in Table 6-2, which indicates that between 2019 and 2027, the council set a CO<sub>2</sub> reduction target of 25% for business travel and 30% for fleet. The current reduction achieved for business travel is ahead of target at 55% and broadly on target to meet the 2027 goal for fleet at 14% making progress towards the 30% target.

# Table 6-2 CO<sub>2</sub> reductions from council business travel and fleet between 2019 and 2023<sup>156</sup>

	Business Travel	Fleet
2019 Baseline CO <sub>2</sub>	100%	100%
2027 Target CO <sub>2</sub> reduction	25%	30%
Current reduction achieved	55%	14%

<sup>156</sup> Cheshire East Council Carbon Neutral Progress Update (February 2023)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>154</sup> UK local authority greenhouse gas emissions estimates 2022

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>155</sup> Cheshire East Council Carbon Neutrality Action Plan 2020-2025 (January 2020)

#### Becoming a carbon neutral borough by 2045 6.2.4

In terms of making Cheshire East a carbon neutral borough by 2045, the council's borough-wide Baseline and Carbon Reduction Options report (November 2022), explains that this would not be achievable solely by the council, and that a high degree of partnership approach utilising existing and new regional and local sector groups will be required. The council will need to mobilise a significant coalition of partners to achieve the scale of behavioural change and project delivery for Cheshire East to reach its target as set out in Table 6-3 which is a non-exhaustive list of the different stakeholders required to mobilise to achieve the ambitious action required to meet the borough's 2045 target.

Table 6-3 Stakeholders required to meet targets

Stakeholder group	Networks within Cheshire East		
Local government	Cheshire East Council, town and parish councils		
Businesses	Chamber of Commerce, Local Enterprise Partnership, Cheshire Leaders Forum, NFU, transport operators, vehicle manufacturers, transport infrastructure providers and operators (e.g. EV chargepoints)		
Third Sector	Housing providers, public health, education sector		
Residents	Community action groups, local branches of environmental organisations		
National government	Members of Parliament		

However, the council can begin to reduce emissions from transport by:

Reducing the demand for energy:

- Using the planning and development process to reduce travel distances and incentivise active travel;
- Encouraging and actively supporting modal shift away from private vehicle use by improving public transport and active travel; and
- Promoting initiatives such as Liftshare A vehicle sharing scheme which connects passengers and drivers travelling similar routes into a single vehicle splitting the cost and environmental implications.

Encouraging low carbon fuels:

- Encouraging the switch to electric vehicles by improving the charging network; and
- Reducing emissions from freight.

It is crucial that these elements are considered in the forthcoming LTP strategy.

#### 6.2.5 Network resilience

Climate change is already creating risks for transport infrastructure. Extreme weather events such as major storms, heavy precipitation, flooding, and heatwaves can cause damage and disruption and are likely become more frequent. Thus, there is a need to ensure the borough's transport infrastructure is adapted to be resilient to climate change to reduce the impacts of extreme weather events on the transport network.

The Climate Change Adaptation and Transport Infrastructure report (2022) commissioned by the Department for Transport (DfT) identifies several ways in which the weather can cause damage and disruption to transport infrastructure:

- Drainage systems can be overwhelmed, which can lead to roads being inundated;
- When road surfaces are waterlogged for a prolonged time, asphalt can become weakened, leading to potholes and faults:
- Scour the erosion of soil or rock at the foundation of a structure is the main cause of bridge failure in the UK;
- Earthworks, such as slopes and embankments, can fail when the ground is saturated by water;
- High temperatures can result in expansion (which can lead to cracking), bleeding (when a thin film of asphalt appears on the road surface making it slippery) and rutting (when vehicles create depressions or grooves in the softer road surface);
- High temperatures may increase the frequency of droughts, which can cause drying of soil and plants, leading to earthwork problems;
- Extreme heat can lead to rail track bucking possibly resulting in derailment, speed restrictions and delays;
- High temperatures can also lead to point failures on the railway;
- High winds can also cause damage and danger by blowing trees or branches onto roads and railway lines; and
- Rising temperatures can expose public transport users waiting at bus stops and railway stations to unsafe thermal conditions which can lead to heat-related illness.

It should also be noted that extreme and adverse weather events cause disruption to people travelling and using the transport network. This impacts on day to day lives and the economy.

The highways network in Cheshire East is an asset with a replacement cost of over £5.5 billion<sup>157</sup>, Cheshire East Highways maintain:

- 2,700 kilometres (km) of highway;
- 1,900km of pedestrian footways;
- 1,700 bridges and structures; and
- 600km of cycle routes.

Given the significance of flooding on UK roads it will be important to review drainage capacity and the use of vegetation to absorb water runoff. The frequency of road surface inspections for heat and water damage will also need to be reviewed and also the identification of 'hotspots' and critical routes that would cause disproportionate disruption if they were flooded or otherwise made impassable.

Furthermore, the 2014 Transport Resilience Review recommended that local highway authorities identify roads that are a priority in terms of ensuring resilience to extreme weather events. These roads would constitute the "resilient network". To create this network, key businesses, interest groups and the community should be engaged to help identify crucial routes. A record of repeat events, such as flooding, would be kept informing action and for future reference.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>157</sup> Local Transport Plan (cheshireeast.gov.uk)

# 6.2.6 Extreme Weather Events

Figure 6-7 shows the number of residential properties in Cheshire East that are located in Flood Zone 3, which is the number of properties at risk from the one in 100-year fluvial flood event. In Cheshire East, 1,800 residential properties have been identified to be within Flood Risk Zone 3, with the most properties being located in Congleton (223 properties), Crewe (176 properties) and Alsager (173 properties).



A Preliminary flood risk assessment was created in 2011 by Cheshire East Council<sup>159</sup> and an addendum by was carried out in 2017 to update this report160. Between 2011 and 2017, there have been 264 internal flood incidents recorded across the lead local flood authority (LLFA). Table 6-5 shows that Macclesfield and Crewe both have the highest number of flood incidents, with 47 in Macclesfield and 34 in Crewe. Out of all of the locations in Table 6-5, Scholar

 $^{\rm 158}$  Figures subject to change following NAFRA2 in 2025

<sup>159</sup> CEC Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment 2011

Green and High Legh have the lowest numbers of flood incidents between 2011 and 2017. In 2024, CEC completed the latest Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, this highlights the main areas at risk of flooding from rivers and associated watercourses<sup>161</sup>, these are shown in Table 6-4.

Table 6-4: Main a	reas at risk of flooding from rivers and	associa
Priority Area		Wa
Congleton		Rive
Little Bollington		Rive
Poynton		Poy
Bollington		Rive
Crewe		Rive
Church Minshull		Rive
Nantwich		Rive
Wybunbury		Wył
Table 6-5 Numbe	r of internal flood incidents post 2011	by tow
Location	Number of flood incidents post 20	011
Macclesfield	47	
Crewe	34	
Nantwich	34	
Poynton	26	
Wilmslow	25	
Knutsford	17	
Congleton	12	
Bollington	11	
Sandbach	10	
Middlewich	9	
Handforth	6	
Disley	5	
Alsager	4	
Alderley Edge	4	
Mere	4	
Prestbury	4	
Audlem	3	
Wildboarclough	2	
Mow Cop	2	

<sup>160</sup> <u>CEC Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment 2017</u>

<sup>161</sup> Cheshire East Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

# ated watercourses atercourse er Dane er Bollin; Birkin Brook ynton Brook er Dean er Wheelock er Weaver er Weaver bunbury Brook yn (CEC Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment, 2017)

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Location	Number of flood incidents post 2011
Aston	1
Brereton	1
Road Heath	1
Scholar Green	1
High Legh	1

Since 2011, there have been 5 flooding events resulting in a section 19 investigation these are as listed in the above table, these events were caused by prolonged rainfall, however the details for each of these can be found within their section 19 reports published on the CEC website,<sup>162</sup> with the exception of Storm Henk which will be made available as soon as possible. One of the flooding events occurred in Poynton, and it took place between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> June 2016. This event was caused by prolonged and heavy rainfall which exceeded the capacity of the surface water drainage system and high-water levels in the local watercourses. This resulted in 117 residential properties being affected and many businesses affected. As a result of the flood, nine road closures were recorded and landslides resulting from heavy rain closed the railway line in Poynton.

As a result of different flooding affects, there can be multiple impacts created to the transport system within Cheshire East:

- Flood water can cause damage to roads and railways as they may become submerged, closed or unsafe for travel due to floodwaters;
- During flooding events, travel for passengers, goods and services can be disrupted. This may mean individuals daily lives and journeys are impacted meaning they cannot access work or school;
- Due to a reduction in productivity as a result of goods and services being delayed, businesses may suffer financial losses due to transportation disruptions caused by floods.

As a result of climate change, flooding events are becoming increasingly more frequent and extreme, due to more intense precipitation. As a result, the impacts listed above are to become more significant, therefore transportation in Cheshire East needs to be resilient to withstand flood impacts and ensure that infrastructure can recover quickly after floods to maintain connectivity and minimise economic losses for the borough.

Furthermore, as described by the Met Office<sup>163</sup>, extreme weather events such as heavy precipitation, flooding and heatwaves and are likely to become more frequent and intense due to climate change. UK winters are projected to become warmer and wetter, and summers are to become hotter and more likely drier. By 2050, heatwaves like that seen in 2018 are expected to happen every other year. However, this is likely to cause little change to the risk of drought in the country. Most studies by the Met Office point to a general increase in the frequency and length of meteorological droughts in the UK which is based on the degree of dryness or rainfall deficit and the length of the dry period. Despite the warming climate, severely cold winters are still likely to occur just on a less often frequency. In Cheshire east specifically, the region experienced an estimated 49% increase in rainfall between April 2023 and March 2024. This has led to a 73% increase in service requests and gullies becoming full more often which will inevitably have more of an impact on the network<sup>164</sup>.

These changes are likely to impact transport considerably, for example the heatwave in 2022, which led to temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius caused many rail services across the country to stop running and speed restrictions were imposed to avoid track buckling<sup>165</sup>. Roads across the country also began to melt, which caused closures<sup>166</sup>.

# 6.3 Quantified Carbon Reduction (QCR)

As set out within the Government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan, making quantifiable carbon reductions is fundamental to LTPs that should explain how carbon reductions will be delivered in the local area.

TfN have developed a Quantified Carbon Reduction (QCR) tool to help partners integrate quantified carbon reduction into LTPs. TfN's QCR dashboard "provides every local authority within the Transport for the North area, with a carbon baseline from cars, LGVs and HGVs which can be disaggregated to understand where those emissions come from (e.g. by vehicle type, fuel type or time of day). It also provides future user emission forecasts up to 2050". This tool enables an understanding of where baseline emissions are from, and therefore the LTP can target those areas within policy.

The QCR tool outlines six scenarios as shown in Table 6-6 below. Table 6-6: QCR Scenarios (Source: TfN QCR Tool)

		Fleet Scenario		
		BAU Vehicle Uptake	Accelerated EV Vehicle Uptake	
nd rio	CAS Core	SCO1 - BAU	SC04 – Accelerated EV	
enal	CAS High	SCO2 – BAU High	SC05 – Accelerated EV High	
Ñ D	CAS Low	SC03 – BAU Low	SC06 – Accelerated EV Low	

### 6.3.1 Emissions – all scenarios

Figure 6-8 shows Cheshire East's total emissions by scenario and how this is estimated to change over five yearly increments. These total emissions reflect emissions from car, HGV and LGVs for all fuel types and all trip types. The data behind this graph is shown in Table 6-7. The table and graph show that emissions are expected to decrease under all scenarios which is positive. The emissions decrease at a much faster pace and are substantially lower by 2050 in the accelerated EV scenarios (SC04, SC05 and SC06). This shows that an uptake of EVs can be important in reducing emissions related to cars. However prioritising investment in active travel and other low emission modes of travel is also impact to further lower emissions.

<sup>162</sup> Flood investigations

163 Met Office Climate Change

<sup>165</sup> Network Rail Red Weather Warning
 <sup>166</sup> BBC News A14 closures

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>164</sup> Hydrology Data Explorer Worleston





Figure 6-8: Total emissions by scenario (Cheshire East, all trip types, within LAD, all fuel types) (Source: TfN QCR Tool)

Table 6-7: Total emissions by scenario (Cheshire East, all trip types, within LAD, all fuel types) (Source: TfN QCR Tool)

Year	SC01	SC02	SC03	SC04	SC05	SC06
2018	1059963.37	1059963.37	1059963.37	1059963.37	1059963.37	1059963.37
2020	1062873.20	1068134.57	1060693.92	1064356.17	1069617.6	1062177.72
2025	1031711.95	1049161.83	1024680.23	999279.75	1016181.16	992506.41
2030	982166.63	1015428.01	967332.85	798501.89	825748.74	786518.40
2035	906794.11	958827.40	881145.49	490164.70	518860.38	476064.68
2040	854420.34	921499.16	818951.17	246194.07	266039.56	235759.03
2045	811968.96	893608.12	765949.74	103454.42	114330.60	97295.17
2050	785333.12	883428.98	728437.98	34286.28	38863.90	31553.74

Figure 6-9 below shows the cumulative emissions by scenario for Cheshire East. This adds the yearly incremental emissions to show how cumulative emissions compare against a total carbon budget. The data behind this graph is shown in Table 6-8. The table and graph show that the cumulative emissions are higher for the BAU scenarios (SC01, SC02 and SC03) in the region of 7 million. For the accelerated EV scenarios, this is much lower in the region of 5 million. This again shows the importance of EV uptake in relation to reducing emissions.

Table 6-8: Cumulative emissions scenario (CE, all trip types, with Tool)

,						
Year	SC01	SC02	SC03	SC04	SC05	SC06
2018	1059963.37	1059963.37	1059963.37	1059963.37	1059963.37	1059963.37
2020	2122836.58	2128097.94	2120657.29	2124319.55	2129580.97	2122141.09
2025	3154548.53	3177259.77	3145337.52	3123599.29	3145762.13	3114647.50
2030	4136715.16	4192687.78	4112670.37	3922101.18	3971510.88	3901165.90
2035	5043509.27	5151515.18	4993815.86	4412265.88	4490371.25	4377230.58
2040	5897929.61	6073014.34	5812767.03	4658459.94	4756410.81	4612989.61
2045	6709898.57	6966622.46	6578716.77	4761914.36	4870741.41	4710284.78
2050	7495231.68	7850051.45	7307154.75	4796200.64	4909604.90	4741838.52

Figure 6-10 shows the average yearly tCO2 emissions per scenario which shows the annual emissions averaged across all years from 2018 to 2050 for each scenario. This figure shows that the average annual emissions are much lower for the accelerated EV scenarios (SC04, SC05 and SC06).

Figure 6-9: Cumulative emissions scenario (CE, all trip types, within LAD, all fuel types, within LAD) (Source: TfN QCR Tool)

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# 6.3.2 Emissions - by scenario

This element of the QCR tool allows a scenario to be selected to understand the data in more detail. Outputs are presented in terms of actual tCO2 emissions.

### 6.3.2.1 SCO1 - BAU

Figure 6-11 below shows emissions by vehicle type and how these emissions change over time for the BAU scenario SC01. The data behind this graph is shown in Table 6-9. The table and graph show that in this scenario, both car and LGV emissions are expected to decrease. HGV emissions however are expected to increase. The predicted increase of HGV emissions suggests that more should be done to investigate alternative modes such as rail for freight to reduce the carbon footprint of HGVs within the borough, given that there are limited alternatives for ICE HGVs at present.



Figure 6-11: Emissions by vehicle type (CE, all fuel types, SCO1 BAU, all time periods, all vehicle types, within LAD) (Source: TfN QCR Tool)

Table 6-9: Emissions by vehicle type (CE, all fuel types, SC01 BAU, all time periods, all vehicle types, within LAD) (Source: TfN QCR Tool)

<b>、</b>			
Year	Car	HGV	LGV
2018	607685.52	323032.24	129254.6
2020	591982.59	338271.1	132619.52
2025	526426.11	364468.4	140817.44
2030	466714.47	381205.07	134247.09
2035	395254.37	393680.93	117858.81
2040	342789.06	403919.08	107712.19
2045	294115.37	412176.7	105676.89
2050	257525.67	419607.69	108199.75

Figure 6-12 shows the total number of licensed vehicles by fuel type over time for the BAU scenario SC01. This is useful for understanding the fleet mix across the borough. The table and graph show that a change is anticipated between now and 2050 with hybrid and BEV expecting to increase significantly by 2050. However, it is not expected that BEV will outnumber petrol and diesel vehicles until 2035 and 2045, respectively.





#### 6.3.2.2 SCO4 – Accelerated EV

Figure 6-13 below shows emissions by vehicle type and how these emissions change over time for the accelerated EV scenario SC04. The data behind this graph is shown in Table 6-10. The table and graph above show that in this scenario, all vehicle type emissions are expected to decrease significantly by 2050, suggesting that this accelerated EV uptake scenario will significantly reduce vehicle emissions across the borough. Emissions are expected to be lower than in the BAU scenario SC01 as set out in Figure 6-11.



Figure 6-13: Emissions by vehicle type (CE, all fuel types, SCO4 accelerated EV, all time periods, all vehicle types, within LAD) (Source: TfN QCR Tool)

Table 6-10: Emissions by vehicle type (CE, all fuel types, SC04 accelerated E	V, all time periods, all vehicle types,
within LAD) (Source: TfN QCR Tool)	

Year	Car	HGV	LGV
2018	607685.52	323032.24	129245.60
2020	595896.46	337133.04	131326.68
2025	509325.74	356051.33	133902.68
2030	360743.42	328642.21	109116.26

Year	Car	HGV	LGV
2035	185222.55	233715.90	71266.25
2040	75463.73	133460.16	37270.18
2045	24773.61	59497.72	19183.09
2050	5569.34	20220.39	8496.55

Figure 6-14 shows the total number of licensed vehicles by fuel type over time for the accelerated EV scenario SC04. This is useful for understanding the fleet mix across the borough. The table and graph show that a change is anticipated between now and 2050 with BEV expecting to increase significantly by 2050. It is expected that BEV will outnumber all other fuel types by 2030. In comparison to the BAU scenario as shown in Figure 6-12, BEV has a much higher number of licensed vehicles.



Figure 6-14: No. of licensed vehicles per fuel type (CE, all fuel types, SCO4 accelerated EV, all time periods, all vehicle types, within LAD) (Source: TfN QCR Tool)

#### 6.3.3 Vehicle kilometres – all scenarios

Figure 6-15 below shows the total vehicle kilometres travelled within Cheshire East for BEVs for each of the six scenarios (as set out in Table 6-6) until 2050. The figure shows that vehicle kilometres increase for BEVs for all scenarios. The largest increases occur until scenarios SC04, SC05 and SC06.



Figure 6-15: Yearly Vehicle KMs by Scenario (CE, BEV, all trip types, within LAD) (Source: TfN QCR Tool)

Figure 6-16 below shows the total vehicle kilometres travelled within Cheshire East for hybrid vehicles for each of the six scenarios (as set out in Table 6-6) over time. The figure shows that vehicle kilometres increase under scenarios SC01, SC02 and SC03. Under scenarios SC04, SC05 and SC06 hybrids increase and peak in 2035, before decreasing towards 2050.



Figure 6-16: Yearly Vehicle KMs by Scenario (CE, hybrid, all trip types, within LAD) (Source: TfN QCR Tool)

Figure 6-17 shows the total vehicle kilometres travelled within Cheshire East for diesel vehicles for each of the six scenarios (as set out in Table 6-6) over time. The figure shows that vehicle kilometres decrease in the long term across all scenarios as time progresses. Diesel vehicle kilometres decrease at a faster rate under scenarios SC04, SC05 and SC06 (accelerated EV scenarios).



Figure 6-17: Yearly Vehicle KMs by Scenario (CE, diesel, all trip types, within LAD) (Source: TfN QCR Tool)

Figure 6-18 below shows the total vehicle kilometres travelled within Cheshire East for petrol vehicles for each of the six scenarios (as set out in Table 6-6) over time. The figure shows that vehicle kilometres decline in all scenarios over time. The decline is more gradual in comparison with diesel vehicles as shown in Figure 6-17.



Figure 6-18: Yearly Vehicle KMs by Scenario (CE, petrol, all trip types, within LAD) (Source: TfN QCR Tool)

The figures above suggest that there is a range of realities that could occur in terms of the make-up of fuel types across the borough to 2050, which will impact emissions within the borough.

# 6.3.4 Vehicle kilometres – by scenario

This element of the QCR dashboard allows selection of a scenario and to analyse the vehicle mileage data in more detail. It also gives the total Veh-kms.

Table 6-11 below shows the total vehicle kilometres travelled across the SC01 (BAU) and SC04 (accelerated EV) scenarios, across various time periods.

Table 6-11: Total Veh-kms	s (All fuel types,	all time periods, all v
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Scenario	Year	Total Veh Kms
SC01-BAU / SCO4-Acc. EV	2020	10.20bn
SC01-BAU / SCO4-Acc. EV	2030	11.05bn
SC01-BAU / SCO4-Acc. EV	2040	11.62bn
SC01-BAU / SCO4-Acc. EV	2050	12.07bn

### vehicle types) (Source: TfN QCR Tool)

Table 6-11 shows that the total vehicle kilometres travelled in the borough is expected to increase going forward. However, this is not anticipated to be different across the two scenarios shown. This increase in vehicle kilometres travelled places an importance on ensuring a shift to EVs which are a cleaner way of travelling by car in addition to promoting alternative modes of travel such as public transport and walking, wheeling and cycling.

The Vehicle KM's Travelled by Vehicle Type chart both in Figure 6-19 and Figure 6-20 shows the total vehicle kilometres travelled by different vehicle types for years 2020 and 2050 respectively.



Figure 6-19: BAU & Acc EV, 2020 (Source: TfN QCR Tool)



Figure 6-20: BAU & Acc EV, 2050 (Source: TfN QCR Tool)

Figure 6-19 and Figure 6-20 above shows that across both years, the vehicle type is similar as a percentage of vehicle kilometres travelled. Car makes up a large proportion of vehicle kilometres travelled (almost 80%), HGV (approximately 8.5%) and LGV which has the most change between 2020 and 2050 increasing from 11.5% to 14%. With LGV and HGV accounting for approximately 20% of vehicle kilometres travelled, there is a need to encourage these trips to be made by cleaner vehicles or alternative means.

The Vehicle KM's Travelled by Fuel Type line chart in Figure 6-21 and Figure 6-22 shows the total vehicle kilometres travelled, broken down by vehicles utilising different fuel types for SC01 (BAU) and SC04 (accelerated EV).



Figure 6-21: Cheshire East,, all fuel types, SC01, all time periods, all vehicle types (Source: TfN QCR Tool)



Figure 6-22: Cheshire East, all fuel types, SCO4, all time periods, all vehicle types (Source: TfN QCR Tool)

The above figures can help us to understand the mix of mileage by different fuel types over time. For SC01 (BAU) this shows that both diesel and petrol vehicle kilometres are forecast to fall less than half of 2018 levels by 2050 for diesel and for petrol to close to zero. Both BEV and hybrids are anticipated to increase significantly, with hybrids totalling

almost 6 billion vehicle kilometres by 2050 and BEV around 4 billion. Both BEV and hybrid are not expected to be higher than both petrol and diesel vehicles until 2045. For SC04 (accelerated EV), this shows a different picture to SC01 (BAU). Under this scenario, whilst both diesel and petrol are expected to fall to close to zero by 2050, BEV is expected to increase significantly, rising exponentially around 2025 and to makeup a vast majority of vehicle kilometres by 2050 at almost 12 billion. Under this scenario, hybrid vehicles increase and peak by 2035 before decreasing to similar levels to petrol and diesel by 2050. These two scenarios present a very different picture for the make-up of vehicle kilometres travelled across future years, which will significantly impact carbon emissions across the borough.

#### 6.3.5 Total KMs by demand scenario

This data enables an understanding of the breakdown of trip distance for those trips originating from and ending in Cheshire East.

Figure 6-23 shows the number of trips within Cheshire East split by origin and destination, by distance band. The core demand scenario 'SC01/SC04' has been selected for the year 2028 for this graph.





Figure 6-23 shows that most trips (both origin and destination) are within the 0-5km category. As this trip length is within a reasonable walk or cycle distance, this suggests that enhancements to the walk and cycle network could be effective in encouraging modal shift to these modes.

#### 6.3.6 Summary and Implications for Policy

As set out in section 6.3, a range of scenarios have very different outcomes for in terms of EV proportions and emissions. It is clear that EV uptake is important to reduce emissions, in particular given vehicle kms travelled is expected to

increase going forward. The transition to EV is very positive and will lead to significant carbon reductions however this in itself will not be sufficient.

In addition to the transition to EV, there is also a need to reduce demand for transport and achieve modal shift to public transport and active travel to further lower emissions, especially in the short-medium term while there are still a high number of ICE vehicles ahead of a full transition to EV. A high proportion of trips to/from Cheshire East are within the 0-5km bracket which suggests that enhancements to the walk and cycle network could be effective in encouraging modal shift to these modes. Modal shift to active travel modes will help to decarbonise and reduce the emissions within Cheshire East further. This could be more applicable to the key service centres and principal towns where populations are concentrated and amenities and job opportunities for example are nearby, whereas this shift could be more difficult in the rural areas.

In addition, as HGV emissions are expected to increase, more should be done to investigate alternative modes such as rail for freight to reduce the carbon footprint of HGVs within the borough.

#### 6.4 Air Quality

#### 6.4.1 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)

The following reports have been produced to understand and address air quality issues and discharge the council's duty under the Environment Act 1995 to review and assess local air guality within the borough, against a set of health-based objectives for a number of specific air pollutants.

- Cheshire East Council Low Emission Strategy March 2018
- Local Air Quality Strategy for Cheshire East Council July 2024;
- Cheshire East Borough Council Air Quality Action Plan 2020-2025 March 2021; and
- 2024 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) June 2024.

Where areas are found where pollutants exceed the objectives, local authorities are required to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and to prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) setting out the measures they intend to introduce in order to reduce concentrations of air pollutants, in pursuit of achieving the objectives.

The Cheshire East Low Emission Strategy (March 2018) states air quality across Cheshire East is generally good, although there are a number of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in the borough, which have been declared as a result of exceedances of the annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) Air Quality Objective (AQO) of 40µgm<sup>3</sup>.

In 2023 Cheshire East had 12 AQMAs which breach the NO<sub>2</sub> AQO of 40µgm<sup>3</sup>, see Table 6-12. However, in January 2025, the Council revoked 11 of the AQMAs around the borough to the concentration of nitrogen dioxide being consistently below the national air quality objective. The last AQMA is located along the A6 Market Street Disley, running from the Market Street / Buxton Old Road crossroads in the West, to the Junction with Redhouse Lane in the East

### Table 6-12 Declared Air Quality Management Areas<sup>167</sup>

AQMA Name	Date of Declaration	Pollutants and Air Quality Objectives	One Line Description
AQMA West Road, Congleton	01/05/2005	NO2 Annual Mean	Between the Wagon and Horses gyratory and the fire station roundabout
AQMA A34/A54 Rood Hill. Congleton	01/05/2005	NO₂ Annual Mean	A short stretch at the Rood Hil A34/A54 traffic lights
AQMA Hospital Street, Nantwich	16/12/2006	NO₂ Annual Mean	A short stretch of the A534 through Nantwich
AQMA Lower Heath, Congleton	01/04/2008	NO₂ Annual Mean	A short stretch of the A34 at Lower Heath
AQMA A5022/A534, Sandbach	01/04/2008	NO₂ Annual Mean	A number of properties around the junction of the A534 and the A5022
AQMA A6 Market Street, Disley	01/04/2010	NO2 Annual Mean	A stretch of the A6 running from Market Street/Buxton Old Road crossroads in the west, to the junction with Redhouse Lane in the east
AQMA A523 London Road, Macclesfield	01/04/2010	NO₂ Annual Mean	An area from the Mill Lane/Sill Road junction in the north, to a point 65m south of the London Road Terrace junction in the south
AQMA Chester Road, Middlewich	01/10/2017	NO2 Annual Mean	A stretch of Chester Road in Middlewich
AQMA Hibel Road, Macclesfield	01/10/2017	NO2 Annual Mean	A short length of Hibel Road, Macclesfield
AQMA Broken Cross, Macclesfield	01/10/2017	NO2 Annual Mean	An area around Broken Cross Roundabout, Macclesfield
AQMA A533 Lewin Street, Middlewich	10/10/2019	NO₂ Annual Mean	A section of the A533 Lewin Street, Middlewich
AQMA A537 Chelford Road,	10/10/2019	NO <sub>2</sub> Annual Mean	A section of the A537 Chelford Road, Knutsford

The AQMAs are predominantly located in towns where there is a high volume of traffic, busy junctions and areas of congestion, which result in elevated levels of NO<sub>2</sub>.



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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>167</sup> Cheshire East Borough Council Air Quality Action Plan 2020-2025 March 2021
NO<sub>2</sub> concentration measurements are taken across the borough using both continuous and passive monitoring systems, such as diffusion tubes, the sites are reviewed regularly to make sure that the monitoring is still relevant to sensitive receptor exposure. There are 88 monitoring sites throughout the borough, the site locations can be found here: Air Quality Monitoring NO2 Diffusion Tube Data 2024 | Air Quality Monitoring NO2 Diffusion Tube Data 2024 | Insight Cheshire East (arcgis.com).

The council's priorities are to tackle vehicular emissions by applying AQMA targeted measures as well as taking a holistic/integrated approach across Cheshire East. These measures include:

- Development and planning;
- Traffic management;
- Alternative travel:
- Active travel:
- Low emission transportation;
- Transportation;
- Public awareness: and
- Green infrastructure.

Under the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) the council has also developed actions under eight broad topics:

- Environmental permits;
- Policy guidance and development control;
- Promoting low emission transport;
- Promoting travel alternatives;
- Public information, awareness and education;
- Transport planning and infrastructure;
- Traffic management; and
- Vehicle fleet efficiency.

#### Air Quality and development 6.4.2

The population of the borough is forecast to increase as set out within the Our Community section of this evidence base. The council's Local Plan identifies sites for housing, employment, commercial and mixed use. This development in the borough is likely to put future compliance at risk, therefore, integration of the CEC Low Emission Strategy<sup>168</sup> (LES) into the development planning process is an effective mechanism to achieve results.

The LES will be based upon the Avoid; Shift; Improve (ASI) approach for the reduction of emissions and therefore NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations:

- Avoid: reduce vehicle kilometres driven;
- Shift: change mode from cars to public transport, cycling and walking; and
- Improve: improve the vehicle technology to reduce emissions.

If emissions from vehicles do not improve, projected increases in vehicle numbers resulting from the planned developments and housing growth in Cheshire East will result in larger exceedances of the annual mean AQO for NO<sub>2</sub>.

Additionally, the council's Local Plan requires all major development proposals that are likely to generate significant additional journeys to be accompanied by a Travel Plan which will address the following requirements:

- 1. The Travel Plan will need to propose measures that will mitigate the impact of increased trips generated on the highway network;
- 2. The Travel Plan should propose measures to facilitate and encourage the use of sustainable travel alternatives (such as walking, cycling or public transport use), whilst discouraging single occupancy vehicle travel and parking; and
- 3. Major developments will be required to monitor the effectiveness of the travel plan and the traffic generated by that development and share data with the Local Authority.

To reduce future reliance on travel by private car, the council's Local Plan Strategy seeks to enable growth through providing a range of sustainably located development sites that are attractive to economic investment. In addition, infrastructure investment is required to support the strategy such as: safe walking routes, high quality cycle routes, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and developing efficient and accessible public transportation networks. It is vital that the next Local Transport Plan Strategy and next Local Plan are aligned and coordinated to ensure a robust approach to land-use planning and transport planning.

#### Air Quality and Health 6.4.3

Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts. It is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Additionally, air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society, children and older people and those with heart and lung conditions. Therefore, it is vital for public health that the measures identified by the council to mitigate increasing emissions from development growth succeed. Encouraging modal shift to walking and cycling will not only reduce vehicular traffic, but also improve emissions, reducing air pollution which will have a positive impact on health.

The annual health cost to society of the impacts of particulate matter alone in the UK is estimated to be around £16 billion<sup>169</sup>. The council is committed to reducing the exposure of people within Cheshire East to poor air quality in order to improve health.

#### 6.5 Environment

<sup>170</sup> Cheshire East Council Environment Strategy 2020-24 (April 2020)

The Cheshire East Council Environment Strategy 2020 – 2024<sup>170</sup> sets out the council's strategic goals and summarises the key strategies and action plans that will ensure the council deliver these goals through service delivery, regulatory activity, projects, and partnerships. It also provides a policy framework for the council to evaluate all emerging strategies, policies, action plans, and projects to consider the environmental and climate change impact and how they can

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>168</sup> CEC Low Emission Strategy 2018

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>169</sup> Cheshire East Borough Council Air Quality Action Plan 2020-2025 (March 2012)

contribute positively to the goals of this strategy. It is designed to ensure that everything the council does should consider the implications on climate change and the natural environment.

The natural environment provides us with multiple benefits including improving air quality, conserving biodiversity, reducing flood risk and capturing carbon. It contributes to our 'Quality of Place' and enables people to enjoy the outdoors contributing to their physical and mental wellbeing and to our economy.

#### **Green Infrastructure Plan** 6.5.1

The council has published a Green Infrastructure Plan for 2019 to 2030 (October 2019) which is a road map for a more comprehensive and connected green infrastructure. It is envisaged that the plan will be delivered through collective contributions with the involvement of partners, communities, landowners and developers. The Plan identifies key activities that can be aligned to projects and particular interest groups:

- Urban greening creating and maintaining vibrant, healthy and inspiring places where people want to live and work;
- Getting outdoors easily engaging people and improving community access to, and enjoyment of, green infrastructure for health and wellbeing;
- **Rivers and valleys** catchment-wide activity to improve water guality, natural flood management, renaturalisation and tranquil enjoyment of watercourses and waterways;
- **Thriving nature** creating and safeguarding well-connected networks of habitats;
- Working alongside major infrastructure integrating green infrastructure into major new infrastructure projects and retrofitting green infrastructure alongside existing infrastructure;
- A distinctive place for culture, heritage and tourism enhancing the setting of and access to heritage, landscape and outdoor recreational assets;
- Environments for business creating an attractive and accessible setting for centres of employment and economic activity, both in towns and the countryside; and
- Farmland and soils enabling land management which conserves and restores soil productivity and improves carbon sequestration.

The Plan applies these activities at both a landscape scale in urban fringe and rural areas, and to urban projects in the principal towns and key service centres. This vision for green infrastructure should be integrated into the next Local Transport Plan Strategy.

#### 6.6 Sustainable development

#### 6.6.1 **Planning Policy**

The Local Plan is the council's plan to manage growth and development over future years. It governs all new development, including the change of use of land, and allocates land for new developments such as housing, employment, retailing, infrastructure and community facilities. The overall growth proposition set out in the Local Plan Strategy, adopted in 2017, is to deliver at least 36,000 new homes and around 31,000 additional jobs by 2030. The objective of the plan is not economic growth at any price; rather it is the sustainable development of Cheshire East.

The National Planning Policy Framework14 (NPPF) explains that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that we must develop both economically and socially, but in a way that contributes to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently,

minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

At the heart of the NPPF and the Cheshire East Local Plan is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Local Plan Strategy provides clear guidance on how the presumption in favour of sustainable development will be applied locally.

The Local Plan is in three parts:

- 1. The Local Plan Strategy (LPS) (adopted July 2017) provides the overall framework for growth up to 2030 and includes the key strategic policies necessary to achieve sustainable development;
- 2. The Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD) (adopted December 2022) this plan provides further detailed planning policies and site allocations to support the strategic policies and sites contained in the Local Plan Strategy. This includes more detailed policies to manage the impact of new development on the natural environment, climate change mitigation, renewable energy, flood risk management, and natural resources; and
- 3. The Minerals & Waste Plan (MWDP) this plan is in preparation. It plans for the extraction and exploitation of earth minerals in all their forms: sand, aggregate, hard rock, salt, coal, shale gas and peat. It also plans for how the sustainable management of waste in the Borough. It covers the period to 2041. Consideration is being given to incorporating planning policies for minerals and waste into a new Local Plan as an alternative to preparing a separate MWP.

The council has resolved to prepare a new Local Plan which would establish the borough's development needs into the 2040s and identify how they would be met whilst meeting key priorities relating to health and wellbeing as well as the environment. Once adopted it would replace the LPS and SADPD along with saved planning policies for minerals and waste.

#### **Development Management** 6.6.2

The delivery of sustainable development is central to the determination of planning applications ensuring that planning application decisions for new developments are plan led and take proper account of national planning policy. Through the application of local and national planning policies, new developments are required to have regard to key environmental factors such as air quality, access to sustainable transport, and protection and enhancement of the natural and built environment.

New development has the potential to affect air quality. Air quality is one of the material planning considerations considered as part of the planning decision making process. Air Quality Impact Assessments may be required before an application can be determined. Cheshire East Council has produced an Air quality developers quide 2024 (PDF, <u>260KB</u>) to aid developers through the development process.

Developers are advised to read the Environmental Protection Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (PDF, 2.19MB) to ensure their proposed development meets planning policy requirements and is designed to minimise the impacts on public health, wellbeing and amenity. The SPD constitutes formal planning guidance and will be considered as a material consideration when determining relevant planning applications.

#### 6.7 Sustainable Transport and Travel

Transport infrastructure and services are vital to meet our community needs for connectivity to employment, education, health care, shopping and leisure. However, as illustrated in Figure 6-5, on-road transport is the largest source of carbon emissions in Cheshire East and is a significant contributor to air pollution within Cheshire East is road transport. This



impact is indicative of relatively high car ownership in Cheshire East with 40% of households having two or more cars against a UK average of 29%<sup>171</sup>.

Greater use of sustainable transport will help improve air quality and contribute to the decarbonisation of the borough. This means making provision for a range of sustainable transport opportunities to enable travel on foot, by cycle or by public transport; thereby reducing reliance on travel by private cars.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>171</sup> Cheshire East Council Environment Strategy 2020-24 (April 2020)

## 6.9 Summary

Summary of reducing environmental impacts

Section	Key findings	Implications for the LTP
6.2	Transport is responsible for 23% of all the council's operational emissions and boroughwide 34% of all emissions are from transport.	More needs to be done to reduce transport related emissions with required by reducing demand, moving away from private vehicle electric vehicles etc.
6.2	Between 2011 and 2017, there have been 264 internal flood incidents recorded in Cheshire East. As a result of climate change, flooding events are becoming increasingly more frequent and extreme, due to more intense precipitation.	As a result of different flooding affects, there can be multiple in Cheshire East. With the increasing risk and intensity of flooding ev to withstand flood impacts and ensure that infrastructure can reco and minimise economic losses for the borough due to delays to the
6.3	EV uptake is important to reducing emissions from cars, in particularly given vehicle kms travelled is expected to increase. A range of scenarios have very different outcomes in terms of EV proportions and emissions, however. In addition to the transition to EV, there is also a need to reduce demand for transport and achieve modal shift to public transport and active travel to further lower emissions, especially in the short-medium term while there are still a high number of ICE vehicles ahead of a full transition to EV.	A high proportion of trips to/from Cheshire East are within the 0-5 to the walk and cycle network could be effective in encouraging mo travel modes will help to decarbonise and reduce the missions emi
6.4	Cheshire East currently has 12 AQMAs which breach the NO <sub>2</sub> AQO of 40µgm <sup>3</sup> . These are located predominantly in town towns where there are high volumes of traffic, busy junctions and areas of congestion.	More needs to be done to reduce the number of AQMA's within the
6.5	The natural environment provides us with multiple benefits including improving air quality, conserving biodiversity, reducing flood risk and capturing carbon.	More needs to be done to improve the environment within the providing high quality green infrastructure.
6.6	The overall growth proposition set out in the Local Plan Strategy, adopted in 2017, is to deliver at least 36,000 new homes and around 31,000 additional jobs by 2030.	More needs to be done to reduce emissions from growth within the contributes to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and histo of land, helping to improve biodiversity and using natural resource

thin the next LTP period, and therefore a shift is es to public transport, active travel options and

mpacts created to the transport system within vents the transport system needs to be resilient over quickly after floods to maintain connectivity ransport.

ikm bracket which suggests that enhancements odal shift to these modes. Modal shift to active itted within Cheshire East.

e next LTP period.

next LTP period, by improving air quality and

e next LTP period, by ensuring new development oric environment; including making effective use es prudently.

#### 7. Trends

This section sets out some of the current transport trends and projections and forecasts for what the future of transport may look like for Cheshire East. The purpose of reviewing these trends is to understand these in more detail and consider how these can be considered in the forthcoming LTP strategy document for Cheshire East.

#### 7.1.1 Increasing car dependency

#### 7.1.1.1 Yearly modal split of all journey types

Figure 7-1 shows the yearly modal spit for all journey types between years 2017 and 2021 in Cheshire East. The data has been taken from the National Travel Survey (NTS)<sup>172</sup> and is derived from the average mode share for all purposes. It must be noted however that the sample size for Cheshire East is low and that although the trends shown are instructive, further data is required from a larger dataset.



## Figure 7-1: Yearly Modal Split for All Journey Types

Figure 7-1 shows that in Cheshire East the proportion of walking trips has reduced over the five year period between 2017 and 2021 by approximately 5.6% and the proportion of cycling trips has remained relatively similar and at low levels. Therefore, the proportion of active travel trips has declined over the study period. In terms of public transport, the proportion of rail trips has decreased by approximately 2.2% between 2017 and 2021 and the proportion of bus trips has decreased by approximately 1.2%. The overall proportion of public transport trips is low compared to car and van trips.

This dataset suggests that within Cheshire East there is a strong and increasing car dependency, car and van trips make up the highest proportion of trips in Cheshire East, with approximately 75% more trips being undertaken by car and van than the next highest mode which is walking. This proportion has risen by approximately 9% between 2017 and 2021. More investment and support need to be given to increasing the number of public transport and active travel trips in the borough, as this will provide many benefits such as improved health and wellbeing and reduced congestion and Carbon Dioxide emissions. This will help contribute to a better environment and support reaching national objectives for decarbonisation of transport.

#### 7.1.1.2 Car ownership trends

As shown in Section 4.6.8, households with access to 1 or 2 cars or vans has remained relatively similar between the 2011 and 2021 census. Car ownership in Cheshire East is increasing given the number of households with three or more cars or vans has increased by 1.1% and the number of households without access to a car or van has decreased by 1.6%.

#### 7.1.2 Potential future changes to mode demand

#### National Trip End Model 7.1.2.1

Figure 7-2 shows the National Trip End Model (NTEM) forecast for Cheshire East between the years 2018 and 2040<sup>173</sup>. NTEM is a tool used to predict the future demand for travel in England and Wales. The forecast considers national projections of:

- Population
- Employment
- Housing
- Car ownership
- Trip rates

The forecasts are subject to uncertainty, particularly when disaggregated to local zones or travel modes. NTEM forecasts are therefore only a prediction, and the actual demand for travel may differ. Future travel demand and mode share will be partly determined by the vision that is set and the specific measures and policies that are pursued. It also must be noted that these forecasts were made pre-pandemic in 2018, therefore they do not account for changes in behaviour and growth that occurred during this period, as a result the accuracy of the forecasts may be affected.

172 National Travel Survey Statistics

173 National Trip End Model (NTEM)

As can be seen in Figure 7-2, there are six Common Analytical Scenarios (CAS) which aim to capture a range of key drivers of national travel demand uncertainty, these scenarios are based on different uncertainty assumptions about the future and are explained below<sup>174</sup>:

- Core Economy Scenario considers a constant moderate growth in population, employment, and GDP;
- High Economy scenario considers high rates of population, employment, and GDP growth; .
- Low Economy scenario considers low rates of population, employment, and GDP growth;
- **Regional scenario** considers higher relative growth of population, employment, and GDP growth outside • London, the South East and East of England. Households and dwellings are also re-distributed in line with the population;
- Behavioural scenario considers increased flexibility of working and online shopping, a reduction of licence • holdings rates amongst the younger population cohort and changes in trip rates; and
- Technology scenario considers a high uptake of Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAVs) and low-cost Electric Vehicles (EV), increased trip making for the elderly cohort among other assumptions.



## Figure 7-2: NTEM Trip Growth 2018-2040, by mode and by scenario

For each NTEM scenario, Figure 7-2 shows the forecasted growth in 24-hour average any day trips by mode between 2018 and 2040, an explanation of the results follows:

### **Active Travel**

- The largest increase in active mode trips is 7% which is predicted to occur within the High Economy Scenario, this is likely to be the case due to a rise in population and an increased need to travel to work;
- Active travel trips are predicted to fall most significantly (-18%) in the Behavioural Scenario and slightly (-4%) in the Low Scenario, due to a reduced need to travel for work and shopping trips; and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>174</sup> NTEM data release note – Additional Guidance

These forecasts highlight a need for policy and interventions which promote active travel as a mode of transport and actively seeks model shift to walking, wheeling and cycling.

### Bus

- The largest increase in bus trips is forecasted to be 19% which is experienced within the High Economy Scenario - this is likely due to an increased population and demand to travel to work;
- Bus trips are also predicted to rise by 10% in the Regional and Core Scenarios, this may be due to a rise in population and employment growth; and
- Bus trips are predicted to fall most significantly in the Behavioural Scenario, this may be due to the increasing number of people working from home and choosing to shop online.

## Car

- The largest increase in car trips is predicted to be experienced within the Technology Scenario (11%), this is likely due to the high uptake of CAVs and low-cost EVs, and the increased trip making by the aging population;
- The High Economy Scenario is the only other scenario where car trips are seen to increase, the others are all predicted to decrease with the largest decrease experienced in the Behavioural Scenario (-25%). This is likely due to less people travelling to work and more people online shopping as well as there being a lower rate of young people being able to drive a car; and
- The predicted reduction in car use across most of the scenarios has not been borne out in monitoring of traffic levels on A roads and motorways in Cheshire East to date.

Rail

- A significant increase in rail trips is forecasted to be experienced within the High Economy scenario (7%), this is likely due to a rise in the population and the number of people travelling to work; and
- For the Technology, Regional, Core and Low Scenarios, there is predicted to be insignificant change experienced. However, a large decrease is forecasted in the Behavioural Scenario (-14%). This is likely due to less people travelling to work and less people travelling to go shopping, instead they are working from home and online shopping.

#### TfN Future Travel Scenarios 7.1.2.2

Figure 7-3 shows the change in forecasted demand, by mode, across TfN's Future Travel Scenarios for 2050 compared to 2018. The data is derived from the socio-economic and travel implications of TfN's Future Travel Scenarios<sup>175</sup>. These Future Travel Scenarios "represent strategic factors that are external to TfN's direct control and are used as 'reference case' scenarios to test different TfN strategies and policies in terms of their performance against objectives." It must be noted that the forecasts were made pre-pandemic in 2018; therefore, the accuracy of the forecasts may be affected. The four Future Travel Scenarios as defined by TfN are presented below:

## Just About Managing

• This scenario sees a state of inertia, although this should not be taken as neutral. It sees a future where people do not alter their behaviours much from today, or give up certain luxuries, although there is a gradual continued trend towards virtual interaction. Economic growth continues at a moderate rate, but it is largely consumption-

led and unequal, lacking agility and vulnerable to shocks. This scenario is led by markets, without much increase in political direction, with its biggest driver being economic.

## **Prioritised Places**

 This scenario sees a significant shift in political and economic direction to ensure that no place is left behind. Every area, including cities, towns and rural and coastal areas, has a bespoke local economic strategy, supported by investment in local assets, specialisms and economic and social infrastructure. Community, localism and place-making across the North is applied to build a sense of local identity to improve local economies. There is a focus on work-life balance and social equity within and between places. This scenario is led by a change in priorities, with its biggest driver being the push for a fairer redistribution of economic prosperity.

## **Digitally Distributed**

This scenario sees a future where digital and technological advances accelerate, transforming how we work, travel and live. In general, we embrace these technological changes and the move towards a distributed, servicebased transport system. Long-term climate change targets are met, but there is slow progress in the short-term due to a general preference for individualised mobility over traditional public transport. This scenario is led by technology, with the biggest drivers being technical advances and a willingness to embrace mobility-as-aservice and shared mobility in the long-term.

## Urban Zero Carbon

This scenario sees a significant shift in public attitudes towards action on climate change, and strong national Government response to meet it. There is a boost to economic productivity to levels consistent with the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review (NPIER), primarily through a combination of urban agglomeration and place-making. Transport users demand and embrace publicly available transit and active travel options, as there is a blurring of the line between 'public' and 'private' with increasing shared mobility systems online. This scenario is led by attitudes to climate action and urban place-making, with the biggest drivers being strong Government policy and trends of urban densification.

<sup>175</sup> TfN Future Travel Scenarios



## Figure 7-3: Change in demand, by mode, across TfN's Future Travel Scenarios (2018-2050)

For each Future Travel Scenario, Figure 7-3 shows the predicted percentage change in trips, by mode, originating in Cheshire East between 2018 and 2050. An explanation of the results follows:

## **Active Mode**

- The future travel scenarios seem to be unambitious in relation to the growth of active travel, especially when considering this growth would be from a very low baseline;
- The largest predicted increase in active mode trips is 27% which is experienced within the 'Urban Zero Carbon' scenario. This is likely due to an increase in demand and enthusiasm for active travel modes;
- There is also predicted to be a significant increase in active travel trips under the 'Prioritised Places' scenario (19%). This is likely due to all areas being included in economic strategy and prosperity which will improve the infrastructure and facilities needed for active modes; and

The lowest increase in trips is 3% which is experienced under the 'Just About Managing' scenario. This is likely due to there being little change in behaviour under this scenario.

## Rail

- Of the four modes, rail experiences the largest predicted increase in trips for all four scenarios. However, mode share must be considered when analysing demand change as this increase does not translate to a significantly higher mode share;
- The highest trip increase is predicted to be 319% which is experienced under the 'Urban Zero Carbon' scenario, this is likely due to an increased demand for public transport due to a change in perceptions on climate change;
- Similarly to active modes, the next largest trip growth was experienced under the 'Prioritised Places' scenario with a predicted 223% increase. This is likely due to the fairer distribution of economic prosperity providing more people with access to rail trips;
- The lowest forecasted increase was also experienced under the 'Just About Managing' scenario, this is likely due to a lack of behavioural change and political action; and
- This shows that changing perceptions on rail will be important in increasing the number of trips, as will incorporating all areas into strategy and prioritisation.

### Car

- Car trips have the lowest increase in the number of trips between 2018 and 2050, however they have the highest mode share;
- The most notable predicted increase is 17% which is experienced under the 'Digitally Distributed' scenario, this is likely due to the embracing of technological solutions increasing the options available for car travel. This includes a notable uptake in Connected Autonomous Vehicles (CAV), which contributed to an increased demand on the roads:
- Under the 'Urban Zero Carbon' scenario a decrease of 5% in trips is predicted. This is likely due to the public embracing incentives to reduce demand and people choosing to switch to alternative cleaner modes;
- This suggests that digital and technological advancements will not contribute to addressing congestion on the roads, as mode share will be similar to 2018 levels and the number of car trips will increase; and
- It will be important to ensure incentives and alternative modes are in place to shift demand and enable mode shift.

### Bus and shared mobility

- Bus and shared mobility trips are predicted to increase in all the scenarios;
- The increase under the 'Just About Managing' scenario is relatively insignificant at 2%. This is likely due to there being little change in travel behaviour;
- The most significant increases are forecasted under the 'Prioritised Places' and 'Urban Zero Carbon' scenarios, with increases of 67% and 52%, respectively. This is likely due to an increase in the support for traditional forms of public transport such as bus;
- Under the 'Digitally Distributed' Scenario bus trips are predicted to increase less significantly by 39%. This is likely due to new shared private mobility solutions becoming available; and
- This shows that supporting public transport and providing incentives and inclusive strategy will increase the number of bus trips most significantly.

#### Changing trends in travel demand 7.1.3

#### 7.1.3.1 Pandemic impacts on working from home

As discussed earlier in the report, the 2021 Census shows home working to be much more prevalent among those in Cheshire East living in rural areas (42.2% worked at home) than in urban areas (30.9%). The proportion of home working varied from above 50% in Prestbury (55.9%), Goostrey (52.5%) and Alderley Edge (51.1%) to only 20.6% in Crewe (more than 10 percentage points below any other settlement). However, it must be noted that the Census was undertaken during the pandemic lockdown and therefore the data provides a snapshot in time that is not reflective of the current position.

The 2021 Census provides further evidence the proportion of people travelling to work by car was significantly higher in Crewe than more rural areas of Cheshire East. In areas with a lower work from home rate, it is important to ensure public transport and active travel are attractive alternatives to the car for travelling to work to encourage mode shift.

Also presented earlier in the report is the home working habits of employees in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) from an Ofcom survey in 2022. The data support the view that the pandemic has accelerated a shift towards hybrid working within SMEs. If these trends continue, there will be an impact on transport networks and how the workforce utilise various modes, and the frequency of utilisation.

The ONS Opinions and Lifestyle Survey provides monthly data on the social impacts of recent topics of national importance, such as the pandemic and the cost of living<sup>176</sup>. It must be noted the sample size for each month's survey is low, so the results do need to be analysed with caution. The survey covers the period September 2022 to January 2023 it details that among working adults who have worked in the last seven days, 16% reported working from home only and 28% reported both working from home and travelling to work. Also, workers in the highest income band, those who were educated to degree level or above, and those in professional occupations were most likely to report home only or hybrid working.

As hybrid working becomes a popular way of working, with individuals splitting their work time between travelling to the office and staying at home, travel patterns are shifting. This may affect the attractiveness of certain public transport passes, as the value for money of inflexible fixed passes such as a five day or month-long pass may decrease.

Cheshire East should look to offer more flexible public transport offerings that attract those working in a hybrid way. For example, providing a flexible five-day pass where five days of travel within a certain period are allowed as to provide more benefit to the user. This may increase patronage on public transport and shift those travelling to work away from the car.

#### 7.1.3.2 Shared mobility

Shared mobility solutions such as car clubs play an important role in switching to more sustainable modes of travel. As described by Collaborative Mobility UK (CoMoUK)<sup>177</sup>, the national charity dedicated to the social, economic and environmental benefits of shared transport, "Car clubs allow individuals and organisations to have access to a car without being tied to ownership". This can help to cut costs and mileage whilst increasing the use of public transport and active travel. Reported within the CoMoUK Annual Car Club Report 2022<sup>178</sup>, across the UK car club membership has grown 113% since 2019 from 353,726 members to 752,560 members. Therefore, car clubs are becoming a more popular form of sustainable travel and should be considered as part of the transport offering. In Cheshire East car club vehicle numbers are low; there is currently only one car club vehicle available across the borough located in Crewe, which can be accessed through enterprise CarClub<sup>179</sup>.

#### 7.1.4 **Changing Climate**

As explained in section 6.2.6, climate change is already impacting transport infrastructure. As forecasted by the Met Office<sup>180</sup>, UK winters are projected to become warmer and wetter, and summers are to become hotter and more likely drier. Extreme weather events such as heavy precipitation, flooding and heatwaves and are likely to become more frequent and intense due to climate change. All three can cause damage and disruption to transport. Flooding is an example of an extreme weather event which has multiple impacts on the transport system within Cheshire East, these include:

- Flood water can cause damage to roads and railways as they may become submerged, closed or unsafe for travel due to floodwaters.
- During flooding events, travel for passengers, goods and services can be disrupted. This may mean individuals daily lives and journeys are impacted meaning they cannot access work or school.
- Due to a reduction in productivity as a result of goods and services being delayed, businesses may suffer financial losses due to transportation disruptions caused by floods.

Therefore, it is important the borough's transport infrastructure is adapted to be resilient to climate change, be able to recover guickly, and reduce the impacts of extreme weather events on the transport network to maintain connectivity and minimise economic and social losses for the borough.

As a result of climate change, flooding events are becoming increasingly more frequent and extreme, due to more intense precipitation. As a result, the impacts listed above are to become more significant, therefore transportation in Cheshire East needs to be resilient to withstand flood impacts and ensure that infrastructure can recover quickly after floods to maintain connectivity and minimise economic losses for the borough.

Furthermore, as described by the Met Office181, extreme weather events such as heavy precipitation, flooding and heatwaves and are likely to become more frequent and intense due to climate change. UK winters are projected to become warmer and wetter, and summers are to become hotter and more likely drier. By 2050, heatwaves like that seen in 2018 are expected to happen every other year. However, this is likely to cause little change to the risk of drought in the country. Most studies by the Met Office point to a general increase in the frequency and length of meteorological droughts in the UK which is based on the degree of dryness or rainfall deficit and the length of the dry period. Despite the warming climate, severely cold winters are still likely to occur just on a less often frequency. In Cheshire East specifically, the region experienced an estimated 49% increase in rainfall between April 2023 and March 2024. This has led to a 73% increase in service requests and gullies becoming full more often which will inevitably have more of an impact on the network182.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>176</sup>Opinions and Lifestyle Report 2022-2023

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>177</sup> CoMoUK Car Clubs

<sup>178</sup> CoMoUK Annual Car Club Report

<sup>179</sup> enterprise CarClub

<sup>180</sup> Met Office Climate Change

<sup>181</sup> Met Office Climate Change

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>182</sup> Hydrology Data Explorer Worleston

These changes are likely to impact transport considerably, for example the heatwave in 2022, which led to temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius caused many rail services across the country to stop running and speed restrictions were imposed to avoid track buckling 183. Roads across the country also began to melt, which caused closures 184.

<sup>184</sup> BBC News A14 closures

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>183</sup> Network Rail Red Weather Warning

## 7.1.5 Technology trends

Table 7-1 below describes technology trends and explains the implications for Cheshire East.

Table 7-1: Technology trends

Trend	Description	Implications for CEC
Future of vehicles	Electric Vehicles (EV) are currently more prominent than hydrogen powered vehicles. This is because they are more suitable for use and the infrastructure already exists for them to be charged. Charging times depend on the battery size and type of charging station. As the technology improves, charge times are becoming faster, and the vehicles are becoming cheaper and thus more widely available. Hydrogen vehicles are not as well developed or widespread, however the advantages to hydrogen fuelled vehicles are the quick refill times and range. This could provide the freight industry with a more suited vehicle due to the long distances they can travel.	With EV growing in popularity, it is important that Che this. CEC should also look to stay up to date with new implementing these may be beneficial in supporting See Section 4.5 for further details on implications of 1
Drones and airborne transport for logistics	<ul> <li>According to DHL<sup>185</sup> drones can be useful for logistics in three different ways: <ul> <li>Last mile delivery and short to medium distance transportation</li> <li>Inventory management and order picking</li> <li>Surveillance and inspection</li> </ul> </li> <li>The use of drones as a new mode of delivery could provide quick, point to point shipping. However currently, they are someway off realisation as technology and regulations have limited their use to a few operations globally. DHL predict it will take 5-10 years for drones to have an impactful application.</li> </ul>	Whilst not relevant to the early phase of the LTP, the regarding short journeys within neighbourhoods that
Online shopping trend	As discussed in section 4.8.4 there has recently been a rise in e-commerce and home delivery services. According to Statista, in 2022 online sales accounted for 26.5% of overall retail sales in the UK. This was over double the amount from one decade prior. In 2020 alone internet retail sales grew by 47%; this is the fastest rate recorded in the previous ten years <sup>186</sup> . This has resulted in an increase in the number of delivery vehicles/vans on the roads particularly within residential neighbourhoods.	With an increasing number of high emitting delivery v areas is likely to reduce. Kerbside deliveries also pose kerb can reduce the width of the footway which stops they can also block bike lanes reducing the perceived
Connected Autonomous Vehicles (CAV)	It is predicted that Connected Autonomous Vehicles (CAV), or self-driving cars, will be an integral part in the transformation to a smart mobility future. They are predicted to change transportation, consumer behaviour and society. There is potential for CAVs to make driving safer and more efficient alongside electrifying vehicles, this may increase private car ownership due to their attractiveness. The introduction of CAV infrastructure and regulation must be well thought out and conducive to replacing private cars to reduce the number of privately owned vehicles within Cheshire East.	If CAVs are to have a place in Cheshire East, then the in terms of their infrastructure and policy so that they There is also a risk that this trend entrenches car dep uncertainty around how CAVs will affect private vehic an important influence on these trends. Therefore, it Cheshire East.

eshire East has the infrastructure ready to support *i* findings regarding hydrogen powered vehicles as freight movements.

EVs.

future of logistics may look different, particularly tare currently undertaken by LGVs.

vehicles/vans in residential areas, air quality in these e a problem to accessibility as vehicles parked on the s walkers and wheelers being able to use the footway, d safety for cyclists.

council must understand what changes are required y can be implemented in a safe and effective way. bendency further in the borough. There is a lot of cle ownership, however it is believed policy will have is key to ensure CAV policy is well developed within

<sup>185</sup> DHL Future of Freight

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>186</sup> Statista e-commerce facts and statistics.

Trend	Description	Implications for CEC
Micro-mobility	The sale and use of e-scooters in the UK is increasing, however the use of a privately owned e- scooter on public land (e.g. roads, cycle paths and pavements) is illegal. There have been multiple e- scooter trials across the country in recent years, and the government is considering legalisation more widely. E-scooters could potentially play a role in providing alternative more sustainable modes of transport to cars and they can help to alleviate congestion. In particular, they could provide an option for first and last mile journeys linked to public transport. There are however safety concerns, and their use could abstract from current walking/cycling journeys. There are also other forms of micro-mobility which are growing in popularity, this includes e-bikes which have made cycling a more accessible form of travel and leisure. Cargobikes which enable lower emission delivery services and also other forms of small motorised personal vehicles which offer a convenient and low emission mode of transport.	If e-scooters are legalised, Cheshire East will need to highway and consider integration within the wider tra around reducing their conflict with other modes, for e well as avoiding vandalism.

develop a policy position on their use on the public ansport network. Work will also need to be done example from parking and riding on the footway, as

## 7.1.6 Summary

The table below summarises the key points of the Trends section.

Section	Key Findinos	Implications for the LTP
7.1.1	Cars and vans still hold the largest proportion of yearly journey types by approximately 75% more journeys than any other mode. Car ownership in Cheshire East is also increasing with a lower proportion of households not having access to a car and a higher proportion of households having access to three or more cars. The proportion of active travel and public transport trips has declined and cycling, and public transport hold relatively insignificant proportions of travel modes.	More needs to be done policy and investment wise to impro transport to the car or van, for people to shift from driving t attractive alternatives to the car it may shift some people aw required.
7.1.2.1	Forecasts from the NTEM model predict that active travel trips are most likely to rise within a high economy scenario and fall most significantly in a behavioural scenario. Bus trips are predicted to rise most significantly in a high economy scenario and fall most significantly in a behavioural scenario. Car trips are most likely to increase within a technology scenario and fall most significantly in a behavioural scenario. And rail trips are predicted to increase within a high economy scenario and fall most significantly in a behavioural scenario.	Policy and intervention will be required to ensure active significantly and car dependency is addressed. The LTP sho and how these may impact the LTP strategy and investment sustainable growth. This should be used to shape intervention
7.1.2.2	From the TfN scenarios, active travel and car trips are predicted to experience the least increase in trip numbers, with car trips predicted to fall in the Urban Zero Carbon scenario. Rail trips are predicted to rise most significantly; however, this is due to their low mode share. Bus and shared mobility trips are predicted to rise more significantly than active travel and car trips.	Cheshire East Council should look to improve the choices of shared mobility through strategy and policy, to increase dem
7.1.3.1	<ul> <li>Within Cheshire East the 2021 census revealed that home working is much more prevalent among those living in rural areas than in urban areas, with Crewe having a significantly lower proportion of homeworkers (20.6%) than any other settlement.</li> <li>The ONS Opinions and Lifestyle Survey presents that between September 2022 and January 2023, among working adults who have worked in the last seven days, 16% reported working from home only and 28% reported both working from home and travelling to work.</li> <li>In 2022, Ofcom presented analysis that suggests the pandemic has accelerated a shift towards hybrid work within small and medium enterprises (SMEs).</li> </ul>	In areas with a lower work from home rate, it is important to attractive alternatives to the car to encourage mode shift. If the trends relating to hybrid working continue there will be workforce utilises various modes.
7.1.3.2	Across the UK car club membership has grown 113% since 2019 from 353,726 members to 752,560 members. Currently there is only one car club vehicle available across the whole borough located in Crewe	Car clubs are becoming a more popular form of sustainable consider enhancing the current Car Club offering to help re need for car ownership.
7.1.5	Extreme weather events such as heavy precipitation, flooding and heatwaves can cause damage and disruption and are likely to become more frequent. Flooding is an example of an increasing environmental issue across Cheshire East.	It is important the borough's transport infrastructure is adap to recover quickly, and reduce the impacts of extreme weath connectivity and minimise economic and social losses for th
7.1.6	Technology is changing how individuals travel in terms of modes and frequency, for example the improvements in remote working have allowed for hybrid working. It has also impacted upon commercial travel, for example there has been an increase in delivery vehicles on the roads and in neighbourhoods due to the rise in e-commerce. In the future these deliveries may be able to be completed by drones.	Cheshire East must understand these changes in transport transport offering. There is also a need to consider impacts f

rove the attractiveness of alternative modes of to public transport or active travel. If there are way from owning a car as it is economically less

e travel and public transport trips increase ould consider the different forecast scenarios t decisions, alongside future development and ons and enhance the transport network for all.

on offer for active travel, public transport and nand for these modes.

o ensure public transport and active travel are

an impact on transport networks and how the

e travel in the UK. Cheshire East Council should residents access opportunities and reduce the

pted to be resilient to climate change, be able er events on the transport network to maintain he borough.

ort habits to be able to adapt policy and the from increased deliveries on residential streets.

#### 8. Summary

This chapter summarises key findings from the evidence base.

## Car dependency and its causes

A key theme running through the Local Transport Plan evidence base is very high levels of car dependency in Cheshire East. The latest available comprehensive data on travel choices in Cheshire East was the 2011 Census that reported 74% of people commuting to work travel by single occupancy car, which was significantly higher than both the North West average (69%) and the England average (62%). This is coupled with significantly lower levels of commuting to work by bus (2%) than the North West and England average (approximately 8%), and low levels of walking (10%) and cycling (3%) that are line with the North West and England averages. More recent data from Cheshire East specific respondents to the National Travel Survey indicates that car dependency has only increased in the intervening years with the car and van modal share increasing from 77% in 2017 to 81% in 2019. Corresponding decreases have also been reported in the National Travel Survey data for walking, cycling and public transport over this period. It should be noted that the National Travel Survey has a limited number of responses from Cheshire East and that further data should be analysed to check and verify this finding. Between 2011 and 2021, the percentage of households with access to a car or van increased by 1.6% in Cheshire East and the number of households with access to three or more cars or vans has increased by 1.1%.

The pandemic (between 2020 – 2021) resulted in major impacts to travel behaviours with decreases in car and public transport usage. Since then, traffic levels have been trending back towards pre-pandemic levels and although walking and cycling increased significantly during periods of pandemic restrictions, this has now fallen back towards prepandemic levels. Bus and rail usage is steadily increasing from the low levels during the pandemic, however, there appears to be long lasting impacts on the type and timing of journeys, such as less commuting on weekdays and more leisure journeys at the weekend. There are also greater levels of working from home amongst some employment sectors. Regardless, the pandemic does not seem have significantly changed the long-term trends towards high levels of car dependency in Cheshire East.

There are a range of contextual factors that have contributed to high levels of car dependency in Cheshire East including:

- Approximately 39% of residents in Cheshire East live in rural areas in which travel distances are longer, and the public transport network is more limited. The rural population in Cheshire East increased by 12% between 2011 and 2021 compared to a 5% increase in the urban population over the same time period.
- Digital connections are also more limited in rural areas of Cheshire East with broadband availability currently lower in Cheshire East than the rest of the North West and Superfast and Gigabit broadband availability currently lower in Cheshire East than the UK.
- Cheshire East as a borough has comparatively higher levels of income amongst residents compared to the national average<sup>187</sup> and there is an established link to higher levels of car ownership<sup>188</sup>.

However, policy and investment decisions have also shaped the high levels of car dependency in Cheshire East. At the national level policy and investment has prioritised increasing traffic capacity, with long term declines in bus usage seen outside of London. At the Cheshire East level, the majority of transport investment has previously been targeted at increasing traffic capacity and providing new highway links, with a significant programme of successful delivery of complex schemes. This approach has led to significant benefits including releasing pressure on urban centres such as a Congleton and Poynton and accommodating significant levels of new development to support economic growth. It

should however be noted that currently there is a lack of suitable alternative options to the private car for travel in Cheshire East for many people. Although there are some good examples of active travel infrastructure such as the Connect 2 route between Crewe and Nantwich, there is not a joined-up network that gives people the confidence to walk, wheel and cycle. The bus network has struggled to provide a competitive offer against car travel and long-term declines in usage have placed severe pressure on the ability to run a financially sustainable network.

Since 2019, important steps have been taken in both policy and planning to provide high guality alternative travel choices. An ambitious Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) has been developed that is seeking to stabilise the network and work towards future growth. In-depth planning through Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) has identified the improvements needed to provide a high-guality walking, wheeling and cycling network across some areas. Funding levels of walking, wheeling and cycling have increased, and a number of key schemes have either been delivered or are due for construction in 2024/25. Wider transport policy is also evolving and there is now a consistent approach to car parking tariffs across the borough that is providing the basis for an integrated transport plan. Constrained levels of revenue and capital funding in Cheshire East have however limited the pace of change.

## Challenges associated with car dependency

Notwithstanding the connectivity and flexibility car travel offers people in Cheshire East, particularly those living in more rural areas, there are a number of challenges associated with high levels of car dependency including:

- Carbon emissions Road based travel is a significant contributor to carbon emissions that are driving climate change. In Cheshire East, road based transport contributes approximately 33% of carbon emissions emitted in the borough. The transport sector has not matched the substantial emissions reductions seen in other sectors, with a 36% increase in the contribution transport has made to overall emissions since 2005 nationally. The large majority of emissions are directly generated by road-based trips, particularly private cars. The shift to electric vehicles will play a major role in reducing transport emissions however this in itself is not sufficient to meet net zero targets. An overall reduction in the amount of travel is needed such as through remote working, and a shift to more sustainable modes such as walking, cycling and public transport. Road based transport is also a significant contributor to air quality issues. Again, the shift to electric vehicles is positive however these still produce Non-Exhaust Emissions that affect health.
- A lack of accessibility for many residents to services, education and employment, particularly for people in areas of deprivation – Overall Cheshire East is a relatively affluent borough, however there are large disparities in deprivation and health. In particular, areas of Crewe and Macclesfield are among the top 20% most deprived wards nationally. In some areas of Crewe and Macclesfield, the average life expectancy is 10 years lower than in more affluent areas of Cheshire East. There are roughly 57,600 residents living in wards that are within the top 40% of deprived areas nationally and of that 57,600, 9,200 of them are living in the top 20% of deprived areas nationally, demonstrating the scale of the issue. Levels of car ownership in these areas are significantly lower than in more affluent areas. In some areas of Crewe, the percentage of households not having access to a car is as high as 56%. As noted above there are often limited alternative transport choices to the private car in Cheshire East and this affects the majority of the borough. Although not rating as highly on the deprivation index as Crewe and Macclesfield, urban areas such as Middlewich and many rural areas also experience significant transport barriers. These issues present a major barrier for residents, limiting their access to a wide range of health and other key services. This can also limit access to education and employment opportunities reinforcing entrenched levels of deprivation. This is a particular issue in Cheshire East with many high value jobs

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>187</sup> The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 (publishing.service.gov.uk)

located at out-of-town employment parks such as Alderley Park, Waters and Radbroke that are difficult to access by non-car journeys, particularly from areas such as Crewe and Macclesfield.

- Accessibility barriers limit the ability of key businesses to attract talent and grow Limited alternative travel choices is also affecting the ability of key employers in Cheshire East to attract and retain the talent they need to thrive and grow. Cheshire East's economy has key strengths in the science and technology sectors with key employment sites in Wilmslow, Alderley Edge, Macclesfield and Crewe. However, many employers are concerned about the challenge of recruiting the talent they need, caused in part by limited travel options and longer journey times for people who do not drive a car. Anecdotal information drawn from some employers in the north of Cheshire East are mindful of the significant population in Greater Manchester living car free lifestyles and the competition of employers based in more accessible locations.
- Lack of physical activity and poor health Although overall health in Cheshire East compares relatively well against regional and national figures, in addition to masking the spatial disparities within the borough, this does not recognise the structural issues associated with physical inactivity across the nation. The UK government published the 'Get Active: a strategy for the future of sport and physical activity' in 2023, noting 'the health benefits of sport and physical activity are well known. Active people live healthier, longer and happier lives, with physical activity reducing the risk of disease, helping to support individuals to maintain a healthier weight and wide-ranging musculoskeletal health benefits<sup>189</sup>. In Cheshire East, there are significant proportions of the population who are physically inactive. The UK government recommends adults do at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week, however only 67.1% of Cheshire East residents achieve this figure with 22.4% physically active for less than 30 minutes per week. 62.5% of adults in Cheshire East are classified as obese or overweight and worryingly this is increasingly seen in children with 21.6% of children aged 4-5 and 30.2% aged 10-11 falling into this category. Car dependency and the associated low levels of walking, cycling and public transport use is a contributory factor to these health issues and the associated burden on health services from treating related conditions. Ultimately, choices about how we use highway and public spaces affects the attractiveness and perceived safety of walking, cycling and public transport. At present many routes within the network are not perceived to be safe and/or attractive, and this is limiting the number of people travelling more sustainably.
- Asset management The highway network is the single largest asset that Cheshire East Council maintains. The network includes 2,707 km of carriageways, 2,204 km of footways and cycleways, and 5.8 million square metres of grass verge, plus bridges, road gullies, road signs, street lights, pedestrian crossings, and traffic lights. The current gross replacement cost for the local highway network with its associated assets and land values, stands at over £6 billion. The Cheshire East highway network is used daily by the majority of residents and those passing through the borough and is fundamental to the economic, social, and environmental wellbeing of the community. All highway authorities are experiencing challenges in maintaining highway assets due to large demands on carriageway resurfacing and limited funds. Car dependency and low usage of walking, cycling and public transport is placing more vehicle movements on the network and contributing to this challenge.
- **Maintaining efficient traffic links to support economic growth** Productivity in the local, subregional and national economy is driven in part by efficient transport links and the highway network plays a vital role in connecting people, businesses and places. The reliance on cars for journeys in Cheshire East means that highway links and junctions are dealing with additional demand that exacerbates congestion, journey delay and journey time unreliability. As congestion has grown this has also impacted on the attractiveness of bus travel as journey time delays and unreliability has eroded confidence in services, causing a reinforcing loop in car dependency. CEC has delivered a number of significant highway schemes to expand capacity on the network and relieve key

pressure points in areas such as Crewe, Congleton and Poynton, however these large schemes are costly and the scope for further expansion is limited. Additionally, the expansion of highway capacity can create 'induced demand' so that benefits are eroded by more trips using the upgraded network and congestion returning<sup>190</sup>. This is not to say that new highway links and capacity is inappropriate, however the context is important, and there needs to be a focus on providing high quality alternative travel choices alongside any targeted investment.

## Wider challenges

There are a range of contextual challenges facing Cheshire East that will place additional pressure on the provision of a high-quality transport network in the coming years. The LTP will also need to consider how the inherent uncertainties relating to many of these challenges can be reflected in a strategy that is robust across a range of plausible scenarios. Key linked challenges are set out below:

- Climate change impacts Although local and national government policy is working towards achieving net zero it is clear impacts from climate are already being felt and these impacts will increase. The United Nations Environment Programme says the science is clear – the world is facing a climate emergency. Burning of fossil fuels has emitted enough greenhouse gases to significantly alter the composition of the atmosphere and the average world temperature is rising. According to the Met Office, the global average temperature for 2023 was 1.46°C above the pre-industrial baseline and it was the 10th year in succession that has equalled or exceeded 1.0°C above the pre-industrial period (850 – 1900)<sup>191</sup>. Extreme weather events such as major storms, heavy precipitation, flooding, and heatwaves can cause damage and disruption and are likely become more frequent. however there is significant uncertainty around the scale and timing of such changes. It is important that the borough's transport infrastructure can be resilient to climate change to reduce the impacts of extreme weather events on the transport network. This will be a key challenge set against a backdrop of aging assets and constrained funding. These pressures come on top of already challenging circumstances, and although significant funds are invested in maintaining the network each year using a best practice approach to asset management, the network overall is declining in guality.
- **Demographic changes** Cheshire East currently has a larger proportion of the population in the older age category of over 65 (22.3%) compared to Cheshire West (21.3%), the North West (18.7%) and England (18.4%). This trend is forecasted to continue with an increasingly older population in the borough. The next LTP should consider the specific needs of an older population to keep older residents active and participating within society where possible. Cheshire East's population is also growing at a faster rate compared to the North West and England, and the rural population has increased at a faster rate than within urban areas. Cheshire East's population in 2022 was approximately 406,000 which was a significant increase since 2011 when the population was approximately 370,000. By 2040 the population is forecast to grow to approximately 415,756. The next Local Plan will however have a large bearing on future demographic and spatial changes, and the next LTP should consider varying scenarios for this through joint working with CEC's spatial planning team.
- **Changing habits (home/hybrid working)** The way people work and shop is changing with the rise of remote working and online shopping. At the last census in 2021 there were significantly higher levels of home working. It should be noted that levels of home working have reduced since the pandemic however there are some longer lasting effects on some employment sectors with a move to hybrid working. This increased home working will bring benefits through reduced numbers of trips on the transport network, however the impact of this on public transport commercial sustainability is still being played out. There are also negative effects from this trend from increased carbon emissions from home heating, however the transition to low carbon heating in time should mitigate this.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>189</sup> https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/get-active-a-strategy-for-the-future-of-sport-and-physical-activity/get-active-a-strategy-forthe-future-of-sport-and-physical-activity#executive-summary

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>190</sup> https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1361920901000098 <sup>191</sup> 2023: The warmest year on record globally - Met Office

**Changing habits (e-commerce)** - The move to online shopping is reducing the number of trips on the transport network and is part of wider structural changes to society. However, this is placing significant pressure on the retail and leisure sectors within our town and village centres with some shops closing and the range of services declining. These areas have historically been the beating heart of communities and the borough in facing the challenge of revitalising these centres. There are many factors at play however key considerations for the next LTP will be how access to these areas can be maximised, and how management of the highway network shapes public spaces and their attractiveness to people living and visiting town and village centres. Another key consideration is the management of many delivery vehicles in residential areas which have increased significantly in recent years.

## **Opportunities for change**

Despite the challenges set out in this document there are also significant opportunities that can be unlocked through the next LTP:

**Modal shift** – Although geographically Cheshire East is predominantly rural approximately 61% of residents live in urban areas. For urban areas, particularly Crewe and Macclesfield and their travel catchments, there is significant potential to enable people to travel by more sustainable modes of travel that would tackle persistently high single occupancy car travel. In these areas spatial proximity, travel patterns and the basis of a sustainable transport network offers significant potential. This is not to say that all journeys should be non-car, but a significant proportion could be transitioned to walking, cycling, public transport, or shared transport, if a high-quality alternative is available, or avoiding the need to travel in the first place. Through this evidence base key information relating to the potential to increase walking, wheeling, cycling and local buses has been set out. Cheshire East also benefits from the presence of a number of rail lines, and this too represents a key opportunity to work with the rail industry to improve services and connect with local transport improvements to enable

multimodal journeys. This modal shift would bring a wide range of benefits linking to CEC's Corporate Plan objectives and would release pressure on the traffic network itself.

- **Connecting communities** Although the potential for modal shift will be limited in smaller urban areas, rural communities and for some individuals with specific mobility requirements, accessibility to services and life opportunities is fundamental to health and wellbeing. For these areas and individuals, a different approach is needed that is focussed on meeting accessibility needs. There may be an opportunity to work with local communities to jointly identify needs and collaboratively develop financially sustainable solutions.
- Leveraging new technology New technology will present significant opportunities. The uptake of electric vehicles is already bringing significant benefits for carbon reduction. There will be a range of other opportunities related to micro and shared mobility, connected and driverless vehicles, new forms of transport, and digital connectivity in the future. The LTP needs to consider how these opportunities can be leveraged in a way that is appropriate for the circumstances of Cheshire East. It should also be noted that new technology may also bring potential negative impacts which need to be carefully considered. The evidence set out in this document also notes that a reliance on technology alone will not achieve the pace of change sought and the full benefits required to meet the various challenges facing our community, environment and economy.
- Local Plan CEC has commenced the process of developing a new Local Plan that will provide a strategy and spatial plan for new development in Cheshire East. There is potential to create significant synergy between the next LTP and Local Plan to achieve joint outcomes related to CEC's Corporate Plan. Spatial proximity is a key determinant of accessibility to jobs, education and services, and a key factor in giving people the option to travel more sustainably. The location of new development will also determine potential positive and negative impacts on the transport network and the degree to which new infrastructure and transport services can serve existing communities. For these reasons close coordination is planned between the CEC teams developing these plans.

# **Consultation and Engagement Plan**

Name of engagement / consultation activity:	Local Transport Plan Vision and Objectives – Public Consultation
Senior Responsible Officer (SRO):	Richard Hibbert
Project Manager (PM) (if part of a project):	Jenny Marston
Other Project Team members and roles (if part of a project):	Laura Prendeville
Service / team:	Strategic Transport

The outcome of this Consultation and Engagement will report to:		
Name	Role	
Jenny Marston Transport Policy and Strategy Manager		

Version control:			
Version	Author	Date	Description
v1	Laura Prendeville	13/08/2024	Consultation, Engagement and Communications
			Plan for the Local Transport Plan.
v2	Laura Prendeville	24/12/2024	Updates to the Consultation and Engagement Plan for
			the Local Transport Plan.

**Consultation and Engagement purpose and background:** An explanation of the issues and the purpose of the project, key information to set the scene.

As the statutory Local Transport Authority, the Council is required to maintain an up-to-date Local Transport Plan (LTP) that provides a strategic framework for planning and delivery of improvements in local transport provision. The previous LTP was adopted in 2019 for the period of 2019-2024.

The existing LTP 2019-2024 for Cheshire East was prepared pre-covid, and prior to many recent changes in transport policy including, but not limited to: Gear Change (2020), The Transport Decarbonisation Plan (2021), Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy (2022) and Bus Back Better (2021).

Numerous non-transport policies have also come forward which impact transport including the Levelling Up White Paper (2022) and Clear Air Strategy (2019) for example. As a result, the current LTP is no longer fit-for-purpose as a framework for local transport within Cheshire East. Therefore, the time is right for a new LTP document to ensure that the Council maintains a document that is robust and relevant to both national, regional and local priorities.

As the first step of producing a new LTP, an evidence base has been drafted. A data gathering exercise has been undertaken to establish a list of data and evidence available that can be analysed. We are looking to strengthen this with additional data (household survey and mobile phone data) over the upcoming months.

Additionally, a vision and objectives document has also been developed which will also be consulted on. There will be numerous stages of work going forward and the scope for future consultations as well.

It is expected that the primary purpose of the consultation is to seek the views of stakeholders and residents on the transport challenges and opportunities facing Cheshire East, the extent to which the public agree with the draft vision, aims, objectives and the role transport will play in achieving these, and the extent to which there is agreement with our transport priorities.

**Strategic Objectives:** What the key strategic objectives of the project are, and how these relates to the corporate plan.

The objectives of the LTP consultation are to:

- Understand whether the public and stakeholders agree with the challenges and opportunities set out within the evidence base that transport needs to address
- Understand the extent to which the public and stakeholders agree with the vision and objectives
- Understand the extent to which the public and stakeholders agree with the role transport will play in achieving our vision and objectives
- Understand the extent to which the public and stakeholders agree with our transport priorities

It is acknowledged that the Local Transport Plan will need to align with current corporate priorities, and align with other transport strategy e.g. EV strategy, BSIP, and the needs of local communities.

The desired outcomes of the consultation are to inform the public and stakeholders of the plans for an updated LTP and to obtain a representative picture of local views on the vision and objectives and challenges and opportunities of the next LTP.

**Stakeholders and methods:** A summary of the people and groups you want to engage / consult with from your stakeholder analysis including impacted groups from your equality impact assessment. The methods you will use to gather information, based on the best ways to target your key audiences, or impacted groups.

Stakeholder	Method	What stage
Head of Highways Head of Strategic Transport & Parking	Briefings/meetings	Pre-Consultation Stage
LTP Steering Group (and reporting up to various boards as appropriate)	Meeting	Pre-Consultation Stage Post-Consultation
Chair of H&T Committee Vice Chair of H&T Committee	Briefing	Pre-Consultation Stage
Various transport champions e.g. walking and cycling champion, public transport champion	Email/briefing	Pre-Consultation Stage Consultation Stage Post-Consultation
All CEC Members	Members Briefing	Pre-Consultation Stage Consultation Stage Post-Consultation
MPs	Email	Consultation Stage
Neighbouring local authorities & Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington	Meetings/email	Pre-Consultation Stage Consultation Stage
Town & Parish Councils	Email	Consultation Stage

Stakeholder	Method	What stage
CE residents / Users of the various modes of travel in Cheshire East (bus services, flexible transport, rail, active travel, vehicle driver, freight etc.)	Online survey and paper copies at Libraries, Customer Contact Centres and potentially Leisure Centres	Consultation stage
Statutory transport bodies (Active Travel England, Highways England, Network Rail)	Email	Consultation Stage
Specialists e.g. Confederation of Passenger Transport UK (CPT), Sustrans, Canal and River Trust, Rail Users Association	Email	Consultation Stage
Bus Operators	Email	Consultation Stage
Bus User Groups	Email / targeted engagement (e.g. focus groups)	Consultation Stage
Train operating companies	Email	Consultation Stage
Manchester Airport Group	Email	Consultation Stage
Community and volunteer groups e.g. cycling groups	Email / targeted engagement (e.g. focus groups)	Consultation Stage
Schools and educational establishments, young people	Email / targeted engagement (e.g. focus groups)	Consultation Stage
Healthcare	Email	Consultation Stage
Businesses and chamber of commerce	Email / targeted engagement (e.g. focus groups)	Consultation Stage
Environmental groups e.g. Natural England	Email	Consultation Stage
Equality Groups / vulnerable groups – e.g. older people, those with a disability, deprived areas, younger people as identified in the EqIA	Email / targeted engagement (e.g. focus groups)	Consultation Stage
Partner organisations includingCheshirePoliceemergency services	Email	Consultation Stage
Media	Email	Consultation Stage

A full stakeholder mapping exercise will be conducted ahead of consultation to identify the stakeholders to engage and appropriate communication methods. This will be done through engaging a range of relevant Council service teams within the Council to collate best practice and details of known stakeholders.

Activity plan: The time to take for each stage including preparation, live engagement / consultation, analysis phase and feedback phase.

Activity	Who / team responsible	Estimated date / timescales
Commission work to progress materials for consultation	Strategic Transport	November 2024
<ul> <li>Progress work to progress consultation</li> <li>Liaise with comms to promote consultation</li> <li>Full stakeholder list and contact details</li> <li>Prepare consultation plan</li> <li>Draft and finalise consultation materials <ul> <li>Marketing video</li> <li>Questionnaire</li> <li>Brochure</li> <li>Banner(s)</li> <li>Web page text</li> <li>Email/letters</li> <li>Leaflet</li> <li>Poster</li> <li>Press release</li> <li>Talking newspaper</li> </ul> </li> <li>Organise paper copies to print / distribute if requested.</li> <li>Prepare for and undertake relevant briefings and preconsultation engagement</li> <li>Organise focus groups / targeted engagement events at local market halls in Crewe and Macclesfield</li> </ul>	Strategic Transport	December 2024 – February 2025
weeks)	Strategic Transport	2025
Analysis and Feedback	Consultation Team	April - May 2025

The engagement activities that will take place in the Pre-Consultation Stage and the Consultation Stage:

- Press releases prior to and during public consultation
- Social media posts to encourage participation in the public consultation
- Promotional animated video to share on social media channels and CEC webpage

- Questionnaire
- Webpage information and link to an online questionnaire
- Pull up banners, leaflets, poster and a brochure, all linking via QR code and short URL to webpage and questionnaire.
- Information points at indoor market halls e.g. Crewe and Macclesfield
- College engagement exercises
- Conduct Community Partnerships/Groups engagement
- Conduct engagement with umbrella organisations for people with specialist transport needs.
- Conduct engagement with transport interest groups (such as Crewe & District Bus Users Group, Transition Wilmslow, Active Travel Congleton, Travel Cheshire, Mid Cheshire Rail Users Association, Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership) – to be conducted by specialist transport officers at Cheshire East
- Conduct Local Enterprise Partnership, Chamber of Commerce and large business/major employer engagement (in combination with CEC's Business Growth and Investment Team) Briefings with other key stakeholders enabling them through various different channels such as newsletters and member briefings

**Analysis, Reporting and feedback:** How will analysis be carried out / how will the draft feedback be reported and shared with participants.

Analysis tools and expertise required:	Strategic Transport Team, E&C Team to lead analysis of text and questionnaire via online tools or alternative means such as paper surveys, emails, letters and or comments left through the customer contact centre.
Reporting required:	A report detailing the outcomes of consultation and community feedback.
Public feedback methods:	Full reporting of consultation findings will be published.

Risk Assessment: What are the anticipated risks and mitigations?

Risk	Mitigation
Public not understanding the purpose of the consultation / inability to interpret	Use of plain English
Wording/jargon is too technical	Use of plain English
Consultation material too lengthy	Keep consultation questions short and concise and in plain English.
Not getting consultation started in early 2025.	Weekly project plan, key milestones identified with sufficient lead in time built in, working collaboratively to hit each tasks deadline.
Limited responses to the consultation	Communications and promotions to encourage responses. Ensure consultation material is engaging. Regular stakeholder engagement to keep interested parties engaged. The questionnaire will be available online and a paper version on request.
Unpresented sample/results	Reach out to broadest possible range of age groups, demographics and partners. Development of a marketing video for the consultation.
Various transport themed consultations running concurrently in early 2025	Ensure various consultations are linked together through coordinated communications and ensure

Risk	Mitigation
	staff can answer questions regarding other
	consultations. Ensure that those who manage the
	Cheshire East helpline number and email address
	have approved lines to take on this consultation and
	others in the area.



# Comms190 – Local Transport Plan (LTP) Ches – (last updated 11 December)

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# Classification, resources and timescale

Service	Strategic Transpor	rt	Committee	Highways and Transport		
Corporate Plan Priority	Green – A great place for people to live, work and visit		Communications Strategy for Residents Priority	Promote corporate plan projects, programmes and priorities		
Subject	Planning transformation					
Comms lead	Chris Gibbs		Туре	Strategic programme		
Budget	Tbc		Bloom	n/a		
Start	January 2025	Go-live	Mid-February 2025	End:	Late 2025	

## Background/narrative

As the statutory Local Transport Authority, the council is required to maintain an up-to-date Local Transport Plan (LTP) that provides a strategic framework for planning and delivery of improvements in local transport provision. The previous LTP was adopted in 2019 for the period of 2019-2024.

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Numerous non-transport policies have also come forward which impact transport including for example the Levelling Up White Paper (2022) and Clear Air Strategy (2019). As a result, the current LTP is no longer fit-for-purpose as a framework for local transport within Cheshire East. Therefore, it is now time for a new LTP document to ensure that the council maintains a plan that is robust and relevant to national, regional and local priorities.





As the first step of producing a new LTP, an evidence base has been drafted. A data gathering exercise has been undertaken to establish a list of data and evidence available that can be analysed. We are looking to strengthen this with additional data over the upcoming months.

Additionally, a vision and objectives document has also been developed, which will also be consulted on. There will be numerous stages of work going forward and the scope for future consultations as well.

It is expected that the primary purpose of the consultation is to seek the views of stakeholders and residents on the transport challenges and opportunities facing Cheshire East, the extent to which the public agree with the draft vision, objectives and the role transport will play in achieving these, and the extent to which there is agreement with our transport priorities.

## **Key contacts**

Transport Policy and Accessibility Manager (Cheshire East) Head of service Strategic Transport and Parking (Cheshire East) Director of Transport and Infrastructure (Cheshire East) Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Co-ordinator (Jacobs) Principal Transport Planner (Cheshire East) Project Manager (Jacobs) Research Officer (Cheshire East) Communications Officer (Cheshire East)

# **Communications objectives/outcomes**

Communications activity tries to change what people:

Know	Provide or clarify information and/or correct misinformation, misconception – in ways that are accessible and easy to understand
Think	Put information into context of other knowledge and values, helping people reflect on what information means to them
Feel	Nudge emotional response and personal relationship to knowledge
Do	Provoke or call to action

Communications-specific outcomes and objectives for this plan

- Clearly describe the draft vision and objectives for Cheshire East's next LTP in such a way that it encourages residents to engage with it.
- Set the context for why a new LTP is being undertaken and how work has been progressed to date - doing this effectively will then lead to increased engagement with the proposed plan.
- Get people talking about the LTP at the earliest possible stage getting members on board as ambassadors can help with this process.



Cheshire

Council

# Audiences and stakeholders

								counter
Communications activity can take people on an engagement journey:								
Unaware >>>>	Aware >>>>>	Info	ormed >>> Interested >>>		Involved >>>		Leadership	
We must consider people's starting attitude and position in relation what we are doing:								
Advocate	Agnosti	stic Sc		tical	Critical			Cynical

## Edit/add new rows as the project requires

Audience / stakeholder	Notes
Residents and visitors	Everyone at some point is impacted by the transport network whether as a pedestrian, motorist, commuter, student, parent, pensioner, etc. The transport network interacts with all our lives so there is a captive audience to appeal to.
Customers	We have customers who are already using the transport network who will understand the importance of a well-planned transport network and want to share their everyday experiences.
Children and young people	This group are also important to engage with as they often reply on public transport, walking, wheeling and cycling. School transport links with bus service provision.
Parents and carers	Notify via schools' newsletter and contacting specialist groups.
CEC Staff	As per 'residents and visitors' above.
Bus user groups	We have a very active bus user group in Crewe and an opportunity to engage with its equivalent in Macclesfield. Sharing the consultation with these groups has a very real prospect of increasing engagement levels.
Mid Cheshire Rail Users Association	We will connect with this group by email at appropriate times through established Cheshire East contacts
Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership Community Interest Company (CIC)	We will connect with this group by email at appropriate times through established Cheshire East contacts
The Bus Enhanced Partnership Forum	The Forum itself only meets twice a year but we can share information with them by email - <u>https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport/transport_strategies.aspx#enhancedPart</u> <u>nershipAgreement</u>
Councillor Lata Anderson – public transport member champion	As Cheshire East Council's public transport member champion, Lata can be a fantastic ambassador for increased engagement of the consultation.
Councillor Chris Hilliard – walking and cycling member champion	As Cheshire East Council's walking and cycling member champion, Chris can be a fantastic ambassador for increased engagement of the consultation.



## UNCLASSIFIED

Audience / stakeholder	Notes Cnesnire East Council
Councillor Mark Goldsmith and Councillor Laura Crane	As chair and vice chair of the highways and transport committee – they can be reasonably expected to champion the consultation to their committee and could also share details through their own channels.
Highways and transport committee	They are all invested in a positive and thriving transport network.
All CEC ward councillors/mem bers	All CEC councillors can and should act as advocates for both the plan and the consultation.
Town and parish councillors	The consultation and the plan impacts on every town and village in Cheshire East – they can also be advocates.
Businesses (local, regional and national)	Businesses across the borough have an interest in attracting and retaining talent and the efficient movement of goods to support their business. Transport supports business growth.
Service delivery partners	Would envisage the bus operators being more proactive in sharing our plans as they will be motivated to encourage people to use the services. Engagement with rail operators important too.
Schools, colleges, early years providers	Providing a smooth and efficient transport network is of particular importance to schools given the costs associated with private hire. Being able to access transport links to education in a rural economy remains a very important aspect of daily life. Walking, wheeling and cycling opportunities to access schools etc. is important.
Town and parish councils	A key stakeholder. Each of the town councils may have their own transport development plans to promote as was the case when the LTP 2019-2024 was agreed, and this provides incentive to encourage discussion. Would be helpful to develop links in each of the town councils if they don't exist already.
MPs	All MPs operating in Cheshire East will be monitoring engagement with the consultation closely. We could ask them to promote the consultation through their social media channels and perhaps have paper copies in their constituency offices.
Neighbouring Authorities	Could also be advocates especially in towns and villages sharing a border with Cheshire East.
Those with protected characteristics / organisations for people with specialist transport needs (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation)	Important to gain feedback and input from those with protected characteristics to understand their views and any mitigation required in forthcoming stages of LTP development.

🔵 Open 🧴 Fair 💙 Green

UNCLASSIFIED

# Tactics/approach



How we are going to achieve the communications objectives/outcomes

- Issue press releases, promoted also via social media, to outline clearly why the LTP is being
  updated, why the public are being engaged, what the draft vision and objectives are and what the
  next steps will be.
- Press releases/social media must generate interest in the topic to encourage participation in the public consultation.
- Briefings to key stakeholders in advance of consultation going live and during the first week of consultation.
- Promotional animated video to share on social media channels.
- Questionnaire
- Webpage
- Pull up banners, leaflets, poster and a brochure, and potentially roundabout advertising (subject to additional costs)
- Information points at local markets
- Secondary school/college engagement exercises
- Community partnerships/groups engagement
- Engagement with umbrella organisations for people with specialist transport needs
- Engagement with transport interest groups
- Local Enterprise Partnership, Chamber of Commerce and large business/major employer engagement.

## Products/types of activity

Examples of what we are going to do

- Press releases prior to and during public consultation to encourage uptake.
- Social media posts to encourage participation in the public consultation.
- Promotional animated video to share on social media channels.
- Questionnaire
- Webpage information and link to questionnaire.
- Pull up banners, leaflets, poster and a brochure, and potentially roundabout advertising subject to additional costs), all linking via QR code and short URL to webpage and questionnaire.
- Information points at indoor market halls in Crewe and Macclesfield.
- Two secondary school/college engagement exercises one in each of Crewe and Macclesfield in school in an educational setting is the most effective way to engage with this demographic.
- Conduct Community Partnerships/Groups engagement.
- Conduct engagement with umbrella organisations for people with specialist transport needs.
- Conduct engagement with transport interest groups (such as Crewe & District Bus Users Group, Transition Wilmslow, Active Travel Congleton, Travel Cheshire, Mid Cheshire Rail Users Association, Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership) – to be conducted by specialist transport officers at Cheshire East.
- Conduct Local Enterprise Partnership, Chamber of Commerce and large business/major employer engagement (in combination with CEC's Business Growth and Investment Team).
- Briefings with other key stakeholders enabling them through various different channels such as newsletters and member briefings. Examples of newsletters include the monthly residents' newsletter and the quarterly highways newsletter (next editions January and April).

## Key messages

The key messages and lines to take

• We have had a global pandemic since the last Local Transport Plan was adopted five years ago and as well as the economy having to recover from that, there have been changes to national, regional and local policies. It is essential to produce a new LTP now.





- Opportunity for residents to input on the transport challenges and opportunities facing Cheshire East and shape the draft vision and objectives which set the scene for the forthcoming LTP strategy.
- This is the beginning of the process there will be future rounds of consultation on the draft LTP document in due course this isn't the only opportunity to contribute but early engagement can often lead to more meaningful discussion.



# Action plan and timeline

#	Date	Time	Activity/Event	Comms lead	Audience(s)	Channel	Service	Ctte	Subject	Notes
1.	2-6 December 2024		Agreeing content to go on Local Transport Plan web page as holding text before project goes live	CG	General public	Website	Transport	H+T	Consultation preparation	CG to seek approval at next weekly meeting, LP to share with web team
2.	9-13 December 2024		Scripting of animated film	JD/CG	Project team	Video	Transport	H+T	Video promoting consultation	This is to be very broad brush approach – must appeal to a wide audience so no jargon or technical language
3.	9-13 December 2024		Agree script for film	JD/CG	Project team	Video	Transport	H+T	Video promoting consultation	Script needs to be agreed before animation work can be started
4.	10-16 December 2024		Storyboard to be agreed for animation script	JD/CG/JM	Project team	Video	Transport	H+T	Video promoting consultation	Supporting images for film that will be animated
5.	Mid- December 2024	n/a	Pre go live preparation of assets	ТВ	General public	Website	Transport	H+T	Pre go live preparation	TB to lead from R&I
6.	w/c 16 December 2024		Provide first draft of printed materials	JD/CG	Project team	Physical materials	Transport	H+T	Developing the campaign	Roll banners, brochure, double sided leaflet, posters
7.	w/c 16 December 2024		Video team to start producing animation	JD	Project team	Video	Transport	H+T	Setting the tone for the campaign	Video length not to exceed 80 seconds
8.	18 December 2024		Project meeting	All	Project team	Video	Transport	H+T	Update on storyboard	Draft already provided
9.	By 8 January 2025		Comments back on first draft of printed materials	JD/CG	Project team	Physical materials	Transport	H+T	Developing the campaign	May need to organise a meeting around this time to feedback any comments in a timely manner
	6-10 January 2025		Director/exec director to brief leader/deputy leader on plans	JM	Political leadership	Face-to- face/email	Transport	H+T	Awareness of campaign	Project team to establish who will do this briefing
	6-10 January 2025		Director/exec director to brief committee chair and vice chair	JM	Key committee members	Face-to- face/email	Transport	H+T	Awareness of campaign	Project team to establish who will do this briefing
10.	Monday 13 January 2025		Preparation of second draft of printed materials implement all requested changes	JD/CG	Project team	Physical materials	Transport	H+T	Developing the campaign	No director sign off at this stage
11.	w/c 13 January 2025		Initial cut of video to be shared with project team (date achievable if script is fully signed-off early December)	JD	Project team	Video	Transport	H+T	Setting the tone for the campaign	Broad agreement needs to be reached at this point for direction of the video
12.	Wednesday 15 January 2025		Present second draft of physical assets to project team	JD/CG	Project team	Physical materials	Transport	H+T	Fine tuning the campaign	
13.	w/c 13 January 2025		Production of overview of consultation for sharing at highways and transport committee	JD/CG	ТМ	PowerPoint presentation	Transport	H+T	Introducing the plans to members	JM and RH to approve this content by end of this week – to be top level key facts only
14.	Tuesday 21 January 2025		All comments on physical assets to be fed back to JD for final tweaks to be made	JD/CG	Project team	Physical materials	Transport	H+T	Fine tuning the campaign	



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#	Date	Time	Activity/Event	Comms lead	Audience(s)	Channel	Service	Ctte	Subject	Notes Council
15	Thursday 23 January 2025		Highways and transport committee	JD/CG	тм	Highways and Transport committee	Transport	H+T	Top lines overview of consultation	
16	Late January 2025	tbc	Councillor briefings	JM	Committee members	Highways and transport committee	Transport	H+T	Approval to consult and information on consultation material	
17	. w/c 27 January 2025		Proposed final cut of animated film presented to project team	JD/CG	Project team	Video	Transport	H+T	Setting the tone for the campaign	
18	Late January 2025	tbc	Review of relevant pages on the website to ensure that information is ready to go live	CG	General public	Website	Transport	H+T	Connection of website to consultation	Will need to establish a named person in the web team to be ready to make page live when consultation is cleared for publication. Also need to know where on the website the consultation will be published.
19	Monday 3 February 2025		Physical assets and animation to be approved at director level	JD/CG	RH/TM	Project team decision makers	Transport	H+T	Finalising the campaign	JM to confirm who needs to sign off on assets
20	Early February 2025	tbc	Press release to promote consultation start date	CG	General public	Press	Transport	H+T	What the consultation is about and how to participate	
21	. Mid- February20 25	tbc	Social media post regarding LTP and public consultation start date	CG	General public	Social Media platforms	Transport	H+T	What the consultation is about and how to participate	Naturally we will put out a social media post when the consultation goes live but we also need reminder posts once this has happened. Highways can also share posts from their X account
22	. Mid- February 2025	tbc	Online publication regarding LTP and public consultation start date	CG	General public	Online (council webpage)	Transport	H+T	What the consultation is about and how to participate	Council website to be the primary source for providing this information.
23		tbc	Update via Members bulletin (opportunity every two weeks)	CG	Members	Members bulletin	Transport	H+T	What the consultation is about and how to participate	
24	Mid-late February 2025	tbc	Town and Parish Council newsletter (opportunity every month)	CG	Town and Parish Councils	Town and Parish Council newsletter	Transport	H+T	What the consultation is about and how to participate	
25	. 10-11 February 2025		Final opportunity to make any last changes to physical assets before committing to print	CG/JD	Internal process	Roll banners, brochure, double sided leaflet, posters	Transport	H+T	Preparation for campaign launch	
26	12-14 February 2025		Commit all assets to print	JD/CG	General public	All physical assets	Transport	H+T	Preparation for campaign launch	
27	Wednesday 19 February 2025		Receipt of all physical assets for campaign	CG	General public	Physical assets	Transport	H+T	Campaign launch	Assets to be delivered to Delamere House, Crewe unless otherwise stated
28	Monday 24 February 2025		Launch of LTP Public Consultation	CG	General public	Physical assets	Transport	H+T	Campaign launch	Assets to be distributed from Crewe to locations across Cheshire East prior to 24 February



#	Date	Time	Activity/Event	Comms lead	Audience(s)	Channel	Service	Ctte	Subjec
29.	24 February-21 April 2025		Social media posts to announce launch of consultation	CG	General public	Social media platforms	Transport	H+T	Remind consulta open
30.	Late Feb/early March 2025		Public consultation has launched	CG/AG	Subscribers	Residents' newsletter	Transport	H+T	
31.	Tuesday 22 April 2025		Consultation has closed	CG	General public	Online	Transport	H+T	Outline
32.	Mid-March 2025	tbc	Press Release at halfway stage to further encourage participation in public consultation	CG	General public	Press	Transport	H+T	How to and cor end dat
33.	Mid-March 2025	tbc	Social media post at halfway stage to further encourage participation in public consultation	CG	General public	Social Media platforms	Transport	H+T	How to and cor end dat
34.	Mid-March 2025	tbc	Online publication at halfway stage to further encourage participation in public consultation	CG	General public	Online (council webpage)	Transport	H+T	How to and cor end dat
35.	17 April 2025		Last chance to engage with consultation – closes on Easter Monday (21 April)	CG	General public	Social media	Transport	H+T	How to and end consulta
36.	April – May 2025		CEC-led analysis of questionnaire responses	LP/TB	LP	Internal	Transport	H+T	Outcom next ste
37.	May-June 2025		CEC-prepared report summarising consultation feedback and analysis	LP/JB	General public and stakeholders	Internal	Transport.	H+T	Outcom next ste
38.	Tbc	tbc	Media release/social media to promote outcome of the consultation	tbc	General public and stakeholders	Website, media release & social media	Transport	H+T	Outcom next ste

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Council

t	Notes Council
der that the ation is	This is complementing the messages that already exist with all the physical assets
next steps	All responses will now be reviewed is the type of language that will be used
participate nsultation te	
participate nsultation te	
participate nsultation te	
participate d ation date	
nes and eps	
nes and eps	
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# **Evaluation, performance, reporting**

How are we going to demonstrate how well we have delivered the communications objectives and outcomes?

- Number of detailed email responses received (where respondents have added information that they felt they were unable to include within the survey.
- Report on media pickup indicating what audiences are being reached (this will be measured through media monitoring within the communications team).
- Number of visits to the scheme web page and the number of people linking through to the Smart Survey following on from that initial visit any opening of the survey will contribute towards engagement figures (partial completion of the surveys is an example of this).



# **Appendix 1: Communications products**

Record/link to final versions of media releases, statements and other products.

твс

UNCLASSIFIED



# Appendix 2: Notable coverage

List press, online, broadcast and social coverage TBC

## Appendix 5

## Local Transport Plan (LTP) Member Reference Group – Draft Terms of Reference

### General remit of the Group

- An informal reference group of elected members established to support the preparation of the Council's Local Transport Plan, providing a sounding board on progression of the work.
- The Group will not make formal decisions, which will be responsibility of the Highways and Transport Committee or Council.

### <u>Main tasks</u>

- To consider and provide informal feedback to officers about matters related to the preparation of the Local Transport Plan, including evidence, issues and policy options and strategic transport on a boroughwide basis.
- To contribute to proposals for stakeholder and community involvement in the Local Transport Plan.

### <u>Membership</u>

- Membership to comprise of members including either the leader or deputy leader of the Council, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, the Chair of the Environment and Communities Committee, and other members as appropriate, for example the Walking and Cycling champion.
- Membership to be reviewed on an annual basis (or post-elections as appropriate).
- A Chair will be selected by the Group from amongst its number.
- Members attend on a voluntary basis and receive no remuneration.
- Other attendees may include the Chief Executive/Executive Director of Place and other attendees will include technical officers by exception, where the agenda dictates.

### **Meetings**

- Member Reference Group meetings will not be open to the public.
- Meetings to be held as and when necessary.
- Agendas to be sent to attendees five days prior to each meeting.
- Substitutes will be subject to the approval of the Chair prior to the meeting.
- The Secretariat for the Board will be provided by Cheshire East Council Officers, preparing agendas and supporting papers.
- Meetings will either be held by Teams or a Council venue will be provided for face to face meetings.

### **Confidentiality**

The way in which the Member Reference Group operates (not having decision making powers and not open to the public or press) is intended to encourage members to have a free and frank debate, in which they may test concepts and ideas at a formative state. These ideas may not be subsequently taken forward. Papers will therefore (minutes, reports etc.) be treated as confidential. Members will be expected to maintain the confidentiality and integrity of any confidential information that they may receive that is not publicly available.

## OFFICIAL

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# Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and our equality duty

The Equality Duty helps public bodies to deliver their overall objectives for public services, and as such should be approached as a positive opportunity to support good decision-making.

It encourages public bodies to understand how different people will be affected by their activities so that policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs. By understanding the effect of their activities on different people, and how inclusive public services can support and open up people's opportunities, public bodies are better placed to deliver policies and services that are efficient and effective.

Complying with the Equality Duty may involve treating some people better than others, as far as this is allowed by discrimination law. For example, it may involve providing a service in a way which is appropriate for people who share a protected characteristic, such as providing computer training to all people to help them access information and services.

Whilst <u>the Gunning Principles</u> set out the rules for consulting with 'everyone', additional requirements are in place to avoid discrimination and inequality.

Cheshire East Council is required to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Equality Act 2010 simplified previous anti-discrimination laws with a single piece of legislation. Within the Act, the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149) has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, by consciously thinking about equality when making decisions (such as in developing policy, delivering services and commissioning from others)
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, by removing disadvantages, meeting their specific needs, and encouraging their participation in public life
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not

The Equality Act identifies nine 'protected characteristics' and makes it a legal requirement to make sure that people with these characteristics are protected from discrimination:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnerships
- Pregnancy and maternity

- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation



#### Applying the equality duty to engagement

If you are developing a new policy, strategy or programme you may need to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment. You may be able to ascertain the impact of your proposal on different characteristics through desk-based research and learning from similar programmes, but you also need to carry out some primary research and engagement.

People with protected characteristics are often described as 'hard to reach' but you will find everyone can be reached – you just need to tailor your approach, so it is accessible for them.

Please feel free to contact the <u>Equality and Diversity mailbox</u> who will try to help you to assess the impacts of your proposals and will ensure that you help the Council to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

# Section 1 – Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of a service, strategy, function or procedure

Proposal Title	Local Transport Plan			
Date of Assessment	16/10/2024			
Assessment Lead Officer	Laura Prendeville along with contributions from officers in the			
involved				
Directorate/ Service	Place/ Highways and Transport			
Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of the	As the statutory Local Transport Authority, the Council is required to maintain an up-to-date Local Transport Plan (LTP)			
service, strategy, function	of improvements in local transport provision. The previous			
or procedure.	LTP was adopted in 2019 for the period of 2019-2024. Therefore, now the time is right for a new LTP document to ensure that the Council maintains a document that is robust and relevant to both national, regional and local priorities. The existing LTP 2019-2024 for Cheshire East was prepared pre-covid, and prior to many recent changes in transport policy. As a result, the current LTP is no deemed longer fit-for- purpose as a framework for local transport within Cheshire East.			
	In addition several recent and emerging changes will ha impacts on Cheshire East; for example, Bus Servi Improvement Plan and Local Cycling and Walki			

#### (Please delete the guidance in italics once you complete a section)



	Infrastructure Plans. There are potential implications and opportunities for local transport within Cheshire East.
	To ensure that the Council has a clear, evidence-based position on these matters there is a need for them to be considered as part of our next LTP.
	Therefore, the time is right for a new LTP document to ensure that the Council maintains a document that is robust and relevant to both national, regional and local priorities.
	A methodology has been prepared which ensures our planning is informed and influenced by robust data and stakeholder consultation. In 2024, we have developed an evidence base along with a vision and objectives document.
	An 8-week consultation is proposed in early 2025 to seek the views of stakeholders and residents on the transport challenges and opportunities facing Cheshire East.
	The consultation will also assess the extent to which stakeholders agree or disagree with the draft vision, objectives and will explore the role transport will play in achieving the vision and objectives, and the extent to which there is agreement or disagreement with our transport priorities.
	As the LTP is developed, consideration will be given to transport requirements of the borough across all modes of transport.
	Once the LTP strategy is drafted (anticipated in 2025) another round of consultation will take place on the draft document.
Who is impacted?	All residents of Cheshire East could be impacted by projects which are eventually delivered as part of the LTP.
	The LTP strategy provides a strategic framework to guide schemes and investment for the future.
	As such, future work will be undertaken to implement schemes and investment programmes.
	Further Equality Impact Assessments will be conducted for schemes and investment programmes as they come forward.
	At this stage, whilst a draft vision and objectives have been produced and will be consulted on, the LTP strategy is yet to be written.



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Th st	This EIA will be updated following the development of the strategy.				
A	A new LTP strategy will impact all residents.				
Tł	The following are likely to be affected by a new LTP:				
	<ul> <li>The public (including residents and visitors to the borough)</li> <li>Cheshire East Council stakeholders</li> <li>Public transport operators and staff</li> <li>Local businesses / organisations</li> <li>Schools and education establishments</li> <li>Neighbouring local authorities</li> <li>Governmental bodies (e.g. Local Enterprise Partnership)</li> <li>Statutory transport bodies (E.g. Department for Transport, Transport for the North and Highways England)</li> <li>Partner organisations</li> <li>Business organisations incl. Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>Town and Parish Councils</li> <li>Manchester Airports Group</li> <li>Ambulance Services</li> <li>Umbrella organisations for people with specialist transport needs, such as: <ul> <li>Age UK</li> <li>Space4Autism</li> <li>Disability Information Bureau (DIB)</li> <li>Cheshire Centre for Independent Living</li> <li>Deafness Support Network</li> <li>ADCA Medical Transport Service</li> </ul> </li> </ul>				
	<ul> <li>ADCA Medical Transport Service</li> <li>Congleton Disabled Club</li> </ul>				
	<ul> <li>Care4CE</li> <li>Leonard Cheshire Disability</li> </ul>				
	<ul> <li>The Stroke Association</li> </ul>				
	<ul> <li>The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory</li> <li>CEC adult and casial care convince</li> </ul>				
	<ul> <li>O LEC adult and social care services</li> <li>O Disability Info Bureau</li> </ul>				
	<ul> <li>Transport interest groups, such as:</li> </ul>				
	<ul> <li>Crewe &amp; District Bus Users Group</li> </ul>				
	• Transition Wilmslow				
	<ul> <li>Active Travel Congleton</li> </ul>				
	• Travel Cheshire				
	<ul> <li>Campaign for Better Transport</li> <li>Local Cycling Croups</li> </ul>				
	Local Cycling Groups     Active Chechire				

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	Working for a brighter futurës together			
	<ul> <li>Crewe Bus Users group</li> </ul>			
	<ul> <li>NW Transport Activists Roundtable</li> </ul>			
	<ul> <li>Passenger Transport Consortium</li> </ul>			
	• Transport Focus			
	Alliance of British Drivers     Environmental interasts, such as:			
	Environmental interests, such as:			
	<ul> <li>Campaign for the Protection of Rural England</li> </ul>			
	<ul> <li>Cheshire Wildlife Trust</li> </ul>			
	<ul> <li>Canals and Rivers Trust</li> </ul>			
	<ul> <li>The Environment Agency</li> </ul>			
	Natural England     The Joint Network Concernation Committee			
	<ul> <li>The Joint Nature Conservation Committee</li> </ul>			
	<ul> <li>Macclesfield Canal Society</li> </ul>			
	<ul> <li>Countryside Access Forum</li> </ul>			
	Transport Charities, such as:			
	<ul> <li>Cycling UK</li> </ul>			
	<ul> <li>Living Streets</li> </ul>			
	<ul> <li>Sustrans</li> </ul>			
	Members of Parliament			
	<ul> <li>Freight transport operators</li> </ul>			
	National Trust			
	This list has been devised considering those that are impacted by transport across the borough who could be affected positively or negatively by the LTP strategy.			
	Getting input from these groups at this early stage,			
	particularly those who share one or more protected			
	characteristics, will help to shape the LTP vision and			
	objectives, which will eventually be being consulted on.			
	Feedback will also help shape the LTP strategy when this is written. Until the LTP is written, it is difficult to assess the impact upon all stakeholders, but particularly those who share one or more protected characteristic.			
Links and impact on other	The Cheshire East plan recognises the importance of the			
services, strategies,	transport network in supporting key strategic objectives. For			
functions or procedures.	example, the plan sets out a vision for a 'thriving and			
	sustainable place', to achieve this vision one of the plan's			
	priorities is to provide 'a transport network that is safe and			
	promotes active travel'. This includes improving active travel			
	routes and bus services, as well as providing improved			
	connectivity across the local authority.			
	connectivity across the local authority.			



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	Like the existing LTP, the new LTP strategy will outline the role transport will play in delivering the key strategic vision and objectives.
	Consultation on the draft LTP will take place in early 2025 to gain feedback on the proposed vision and objectives.
	Internal steering groups and the Member Reference Group will also be engaged throughout development of the LTP strategy.
	The Cheshire East Local Plan outlines the planning policies and proposals for development in the Cheshire East area. It guides decisions on where new housing, employment, and infrastructure should be located, while also protecting important open spaces and enhancing community facilities.
	The Local Plan aims to ensure sustainable growth and improve the quality of life for residents. It is important that the LTP and Local Plan are coordinated to enable sustainable development.
	Once the LTP strategy has been developed, this EIA will be revised specially outlining the impact of the LTP strategy on transport across the borough and its impacts upon those who share one or more protected characteristic.
How does the service, service change, strategy, function or procedure help the Council meet the requirements of the <u>Public Sector Equality</u> <u>Duty</u> ?	The LTP vision and objectives draft development will involve producing a stakeholder list to contact regarding the consultation. This includes representatives and groups who share one or more protected characteristic. This direct engagement will help to foster good relations and ensure these groups are contacted about the LTP at this early stage and that they can use their experience and influence to help develop the LTP.
	The draft LTP vision will seek to develop a transport system that is safe and accessible to all. With this draft vision in mind for transport provision going forward, the aim will be to make a transport network more equitable including for those with one or more protected characteristics.
	One of the draft sub-objectives focuses on providing enhanced safety and sense of security for every journey, regardless of the mode of transport. With a goal to improve accessibility of public transport by having a safer environment



Working for a brighter future; toget			
	and provide more equal opportunity for both those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.		
	The LTP strategy will impact all residents, and once this is written, more will be understood about any impacts, positive or negative, on the protected characteristic groups.		

## Section 2 - Information – What do you know?

What do you know?	What information (qualitative and quantitative) and/or research have you used to arrive at the decision to commission/ change/ decommission the service, strategy, function, or procedure?				
Information you used to arrive at the decision	<ul> <li>s part of the LTP evidence base, numerous data has been ollected. Some information which relates to the protected haracteristics include:</li> <li>Patronage data for the Council's supported bus network reveals that a significant number of passengers use concessionary passes. As of February 2024, this equates to over 24,000 passengers which is 36% of total travellers on supported bus services. These concessionary pass holders are likely to have one or multiple protected characteristics, including disabilities and being of young or old age. Consideration will be given to specific engagement</li> </ul>				
	<ul> <li>Consideration will be given to specific engagement with this group during consultation, this may include measures such as providing physical copies of documents, and engagement via the bus user groups.</li> <li>According to the National Travel Survey 2021 there is little difference between the number of trips taken by bus for those with and without mobility difficulties. However, the number of trips by rail, car, cycle, and walking are significantly lower for those with a mobility difficulty compared to those without.</li> <li>The Census 2021 shows that Cheshire East has a lower proportion of residents who have a registered disability compared to the Northwest, however it is similar to the national average of 17.3%.</li> <li>Taken from the 2021 Census Cheshire East's households speaking English as their first language is between 90 and 99.6%. The areas with a lower percentage are in and around Crewe, with around 60.9% to 90%.</li> </ul>				



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<ul> <li>According to the 2021 Census Cheshire East's population is 96.7% white, this is a larger proportion compared to the Northwest and England, being 6.5% higher than the North West and 10.7% higher than England. The percentage of all other ethnic groups is lower than the national average, the most significant difference is the 6% lower percentage population of Asian/Asian British people in Cheshire East compared to the national average.</li> <li>The Census 2021 shows there is a significant proportion of the Cheshire East population in the 65+ age category which has increased since the 2011 Census. Cheshire East has a larger proportion of the population in the older age category of over 65 (22.3%) compared to Cheshire West (21.3%), the Northwest (18.7%) and England (18.4%) which demonstrates that Cheshire East has a higher ageing population.</li> <li>UK Opinions and Lifestyle Survey, undertaken in 2021, shows that one in two women and one in seven men felt unsafe walking alone after dark in a quiet street near their home, with two out of three women aged 16 to 34 years having experienced one form of harassment in the previous 12 months.</li> <li>The experiences of women and girls in a transport report<sup>1</sup> produced in March 2022 found that 85% of participants thought about safety when planning a journey which influenced routes, times travelled and avoiding certain modes. Furthermore, those that felt very safe across several modes was between 15-30%, much lower than those using a car (59%). Factors such as visible staff and lighting were suggested as elements that would improve safety, however the research has emphasised that it is often others behaviour that was the issue.</li> </ul>
The LTP is an overarching policy for the borough and therefore the document will have the potential to impact everyone across the borough including those with protected characteristics. The draft LTP vision and objectives will be consulted on in early 2025, giving those with protected characteristics to have their say at an early stage. As part of developing the draft vision and objectives, engagement with wider teams within Cheshire East Council such as Public Health and Adults has been conducted to gain a more

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Experiences of women and girls on transport



Working for a brighter futurës toge				
	rounded view across the council of what is required from			
	the LTP vision and objectives. As part of the consultation, a			
	series of focus groups or similar will take place, for example			
	with schools and other groups to get their input.			
	The LTP strategy will be developed and will be consulted on			
	in due course providing an opportunity to input and shape			
	the strategy. Once developed, the impact on those with			
	protected characteristics will be explored in greater detail in			
	future iterations of this EIA.			
Gaps in your Information	The LTP evidence base is comprehensive, however given the			
	breadth of the LTP covering all forms of transport, there is			
	some information on some of the protected characteristics			
	that will be unavailable. The public consultation in early 2025			
	provides an opportunity to have greater engagement with			
	these groups to improve knowledge on these protected			
	characteristics and ensure the LTP impacts are understood			
	and mitigated against. The consultation on the LTP strategy			
	will be undertaken once the document is in draft.			

## Section 3 - Information - What did people tell you?

What did people tell you about your proposals?	Consultation and engagement are yet to be undertaken. Future updates to this EIA will be made following the public consultation in February and March 2025.
Details and dates of the consultation/s and/or engagement activities	At this stage a period of consultation is planned to run for 8 weeks during February and March 2025. Groups representing those who share one or more protected characteristics will be included within the stakeholder list and contacted when the consultation goes live. Whilst the specific detail is being worked through, several focus groups are expected to be undertaken, for example with schools and transport user groups to allow them to feed into this process.
Are there any gaps in consultation and engagement feedback?	As part of the preparation for the consultation, a list of key stakeholders will be drawn up and engagement will be ongoing throughout the consultation. This consultation will be undertaken through email and online, as well as a several focus groups and promotional material provided across the borough.



# Section 4 - Review of information, consultation feedback and equality analysis

Protected	What do you know?	What did	What does this mean?
characteristics	Summary of information	people tell	Impacts identified from the
groups from	used to inform the	you?	information and feedback
the <u>Equality</u>	proposal	Summary of	(actual and potential).
<u>Act 2010</u>		customer	
	<u>Refer to Section 2</u>	and/or staff	These can be either positive,
		feedback	negative or have no impact.
		<u>Refer to</u>	
	The Course 2021 shares	section 3	
Age	The Census 2021 shows	Engagement	It is necessary to ensure
	there is a significant	yet to be	residents can access the key
	Cheshire East nonulation	undertaken.	needed in everyday life, such
	in the 65+ age category		as GPs hospitals
	which has increased since		supermarkets and leisure
	the 2011 Census.		opportunities. This is
			increasingly important for
	Cheshire East has a larger		older people and more
	proportion of the		vulnerable groups, helping to
	population in the older		reduce social isolation. It is
	age category of over 65		important to recognise that
	(22.3%) compared to		different ages groups have
	Cheshire West (21.3%),		differing needs, of transport.
	the Northwest (18.7%)		
	and England (18.4%)		More elderly adults face
	which demonstrates that		mobility issues, and
	Cheshire East has a higher		therefore rely on more
	ageing population.		specialised transport services
	Patronage data for the		to maintain their
	Council's supported hus		independence
	network reveals that a		
	significant number of		Therefore. it is essential that
	passengers use		well connected, accessible
	concessionary passes. As		bus routes are provided
	of February 2024, this		around Cheshire East to
	equates to over 24,000		better serve those with
	passengers which is 36%		mobility difficulties.
	of total travellers on		
	supported bus services.		
	These concessionary pass		



	holders are likely to have one or multiple protected characteristics, including disabilities and being of young or old age.		
Disability	According to the National Travel Survey there is little difference between the number of trips taken by bus for those with and without mobility difficulties. However, the number of trips by rail, car, cycle, and walking are significantly lower for those with a mobility difficulty compared to those without. <sup>2</sup> According to the 2021 Census Cheshire East has a lower proportion of residents who have a registered disability compared to the North West, however it is similar to the national average of 17.3%.	Engagement yet to be undertaken.	It is essential that well connected, accessible bus routes, active travel routes, rail stations and services are provided around Cheshire East to better serve those. There is a need for a cohesive, accessible public transport network for all in the borough – including those with disabilities whom suffer a higher risk of social isolation and poor standards of living with mobility difficulties.
Gender	No information reviewed	Enaaaement	Impact of the forthcomina
reassignment	at present	yet to be undertaken.	LTP not understood at this stage (not yet written).
Pregnancy and maternity	No information reviewed at present	Engagement yet to be undertaken.	Impact of the forthcoming LTP not understood at this stage (not yet written).
Race/ethnicity	Taken from the 2021 Census Cheshire East's households speaking English as their first language is between 90 and 99.6%. The areas with a lower percentage are in	Engagement yet to be undertaken.	It is important transport information is provided in alternative languages, as appropriate, to promote inclusivity.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> National Travel Survey: 2021 - GOV.UK



	1		Working for a brighter futures together
	and around Crewe, with around 60.9% to 90%.		
	According to the 2021 Census Cheshire East's population is 96.7% white, this is a larger proportion compared to the North West and England, being 6.5% higher than the North West and 10.7% higher than England. The percentage of all other ethnic groups is lower than the national average, the most significant difference is the 6% lower percentage population of		
	in Cheshire East compared		
	to the national average.		
Religion or	No information reviewed	Engagement	Impact of the forthcoming
belief	at present	yet to be	LTP not understood at this
		undertaken.	stage (not yet written).
Sex	UK Opinions and Lifestyle Survey <sup>3</sup> , undertaken in 2021, shows that one in two women and one in seven men felt unsafe walking alone after dark in a quiet street near their home, with two out of three women aged 16 to 34 years having experienced one form of harassment in the previous 12 months.	Engagement yet to be undertaken.	Cheshire East need to improve the perception of safety on public transport through inclusive design. This would encourage more women and girls to access the public transport network for example. Factors such as visible staff and lighting were suggested as elements that would improve safety, however the research has emphasised that it is often others

<sup>3</sup> UK Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

<sup>4</sup> Experiences of women and girls on transport



			Horning for a original natures together
	participants thought		
	about safety when		
	planning a journey which		
	influenced routes, times		
	travelled and avoiding		
	certain modes		
	Furthermore those that		
	folt very safe across		
	several modes was		
	between 15-30%, much		
	lower than those using a		
	car (59%).		
Sexual	No information reviewed	Engagement	Impact of the forthcoming
orientation	at present	yet to be	LTP not understood at this
		undertaken.	stage (not vet written).
iviarriage and	No information reviewed	Engagement	impact of the forthcoming
civil	at present	yet to be	LTP not understood at this
partnership		undertaken.	stage (not yet written).

# Section 5 - Review of information, consultation feedback and equality analysis

Mitigation	What can you do to mitigate any negative impacts or further enhance positive impacts?
Please summarise the impacts listed in <b>section 4</b> and what will be done to	Consultation will be undertaken in early 2025 on the vision and objectives and in due course on the LTP strategy which is yet to be written.
mitigate these impacts	These consultations will help to understand the potential impact of the LTP on residents including the protected groups and help to identify any mitigation / actions in relation to the protected characteristics.



#### Section 6 – Monitoring and review

Details of monitoring activities	The LTP will be subject to KPIs, monitoring and review. This monitoring will consider whether any negative impacts mitigation has been successful.
Date and responsible officer for the review of the EIA	Please include the date of review, responsible officer role and service. It is recommended that the EIA be reviewed approximately 6 months after it has been signed off.

#### Section 7 – Sign off

When you have completed your draft EIA, it should be sent to the <u>Equality, Diversity and</u> <u>Inclusion Mailbox</u> for review.

*If your EIA is approved, it must then be signed off by a senior manager within your Department (Head of Service or above).* 

Name	Richard Hibbert
Date	13/01/2025
Signature	Aston

Once the EIA has been signed off, please forward a copy to the <u>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</u> <u>mailbox</u> for it to be published on the website.

For Transparency, we are committed to publishing all Equality Impact Assessments relating to public engagement.

**Help and support** - For support and advice please contact the <u>Equality, Diversity and</u> <u>Inclusion mailbox</u> Page 375



OPEN

## **Highways and Transport Committee**

23 January 2025

## **Highways Service Peer Review Improvement Action Plan**

## Report of: Thomas Moody, Director of Transport and Infrastructure

### Report Reference No: HTC/39/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: All

### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 On 25 January 2024, the Highways and Transport Committee approved that an independent external peer review was to be commissioned to inform decision making regarding the potential exercise of a break clause in the Highway Service Contract. On 19 July 2024, the Highways and Transport Committee received and considered the report from the peer review and resolved that the break clause was not exercised.
- 2 The Committee delegated responsibility to the Director of Transport and Infrastructure to develop and implement an Improvement Action Plan to respond to the findings of the peer review.

### **Executive Summary**

- 3 The Highway Service Contract Peer Review was undertaken by Future Highway Research Group (FHRG) in Spring 2024. The review used FHRG's value for money assessment tool to undertake a comprehensive, independent and external assessment of the services in the scope of the Council's Highway Service Contract. It also compared how the Council's services were rated against other Highway Authorities comprising FHRG's 40 members. FHRG's members comprise a broad range of authorities from across the country, mostly non-metropolitan county councils, with a minority of metropolitan authorities.
- 4 The Council is already a Level 3 Highway Authority, demonstrating good asset management practice to receive the maximum Integrated Transport Block Incentive Fund allocation. Overall, the Council's services ranked in the second quartile - 14<sup>th</sup> out of the 40 authorities. This indicates that the Council gets reasonable value for money for the services in the contract. In this

context, value for money was measured using FHRG's framework assessment tool. This measured value for money across six dimensions (economy, efficiency, effectiveness, strategic value, stakeholder value, mutuality). FHRG's recommendations identified areas for improvement and these have been considered in developing the response.

5 The Improvement Action Plan in Appendix 1 is the Council's proposed response to these recommendations. The Council's intends to commission FHRG to undertake a further review in two to three years' time to measure progress.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Highways and Transport Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the progress made with the implementation of the Improvement Action Plan to date.
- 2. Approve that the Director of Transport and Infrastructure continues to progress implementation of the Improvement Action Plan in Appendix 1.
- 3. Notes that progress with the plan will be monitored and managed through:
  - a. the Place Directorate Management Team; and
  - b. in conjunction with Cheshire East Highways through the Transportation and Infrastructure Partnership Board,
  - with any significant issues reported to the committee.
- 4. Approve that the Director of Transport and Infrastructure commissions a further peer review before April 2028 to assess progress.

#### Background

- 6 The report from FHRG is shown in Appendix 1 to the <u>report to the Highways</u> and <u>Transport Committee on 19 July 2024</u>, listed as a background paper.
- 7 FHRG's report identified eight priority recommendations and 13 other recommendations. The recommendations are listed in the Appendix to the Improvement Action Plan. The Appendix also identifies how the Council plans to respond to each of the recommendations.
- 8 The priority recommendations were regarding:
  - (a) Increasing the skills and capacity of the Council's Highways client team;
  - (b) Reviewing the governance and management of the contract;
  - (c) Refreshing the contract performance framework;
  - (d) Refreshing the Council's asset management policy and strategy;
  - (e) Considering the future contract model and scope of services;

- (f) Developing more rigorous and open benchmarking within the contract;
- (g) Undertaking earlier budget setting; and
- (h) Developing a stakeholder management plan.
- 9 Other areas for recommendation included the Council's depot strategy, income generation, target costing, review of professional services, productivity indicators and contract processes and social value measures.
- 10 Actions in the plan have been grouped by the ten features of top performing highway authorities that FHRG identifies in its assessment tool. The actions are designed to take the steps that will directly address these factors. While the majority of the actions within the plan concern how officers manage the services within the contract, there is a specific section relating to the role of members.
- 11 One of the strengths that the peer review identified was the strength of the collaborative relationship that the Council has with its Highways service delivery partner, Cheshire East Highways (CEH). As part of that collaboration, the Improvement Action Plan has been developed jointly with CEH senior managers. Ownership of the actions in the plan is allocated to both Council and CEH managers.
- 12 Officers have been working on developing the Improvement Action Plan and towards delivering its improvements since the peer review report was received. The plan in Appendix 1 provides a summary of progress with the actions. Many of the actions within the plan will, over the course of its implementation, lead to specific further actions. For example, changes to the Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy will be brought to this Committee.

#### **Consultation and Engagement**

- 13 In preparation of the plan, officers have discussed the draft proposed actions with FHRG. This was specifically to confirm that the actions proposed, if implemented, are likely to address FHRG's recommendations.
- 14 FHRG's feedback was as follows:
  - (a) The plan is considered a comprehensive response to the recommendations.
  - (b) The proposals to address resourcing have been noted positively, but it has also been noted that recruitment in the Highways sector is challenging.
  - (c) The plan is appropriately challenging and ideally would have additional resource to support its implementation. While this has not been possible, it is noted that the plan is owned by those implementing it, which will support implementation.

- 15 The actions in the plan have been developed jointly with the senior management team of CEH. This ensures that the actions are challenging yet achievable.
- 16 Certain actions within the plan also require specific consultation. The restructure of the Highways service was subject to staff and trade union consultation in October and November 2024, which has now been completed.

#### **Reasons for Recommendations**

17 The recommendations in this report are necessary to implement and manage the delivery of the Improvement Action Plan.

### **Other Options Considered**

18 No alternative option is applicable. Producing a plan is necessary to respond to the recommendations. The actions within the plan are considered appropriate and have been confirmed by FHRG as appropriate to respond to its recommendations.

#### **Implications and Comments**

#### Monitoring Officer/Legal

19 The legal team will provide legal advice and support as necessary with the legal issues arising from recommended contract, governance and policy reviews/amendments set out in this report and the Improvement Action Plan. Given the length and value of the contract, the proposed review of the contract in four years is a prudent contract management tool both to review the impact of the changes post implementation and to drive continuous improvement and efficiencies.

#### Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 20 The Improvement Action Plan is being implemented within the existing resources for the Highway Service Contract.
- A restructure of the Highways service in the Council was implemented on 1 January 2025, with a net increase in staff costs of £374k (full year, 2024-5 costs). This is funded from income from fees and charges relating to permits and licences issued by the service.

#### Policy

22 The Improvement Action Plan is in line with the priorities identified in the Cheshire East Plan 2024-5, as follows:

An open and enabling organisation (Include which aim and priority)	A council which empowers and cares about people (Include which aim and priority)	A thriving and sustainable place (Include which aim and priority)
1.3 Support a sustainable financial future for the council, through service development, improvement and transformation	N/A	<ul><li>3.2 Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods</li><li>3.4 A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel</li></ul>

#### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 23 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been conducted and is published under "H" on the <u>Council's web page</u>.
- 24 The EIA has identified that while the delivery of services under the HSC can have impacts on equality and diversity issues, taking this decision does not fundamentally change the council's approach to the delivery of service in respect of protected characteristics.

#### Human Resources

- 25 There are no direct impacts on human resources arising from the decisions in this report.
- 26 Implementing the recommendations of the peer review relating to increasing the capacity of the Highways service client team will have human resource implications that have been considered in the decision to restructure the Highways service.

#### **Risk Management**

- 27 The Improvement Action Plan itself will not directly affect risk management. Implementing the measures in the plan will however have a generally beneficial effect for the Council in terms of:
  - (a) Improving assurance that services procured through the HSC are being delivered;
  - (b) Improving value for money under the HSC; and
  - (c) Improving the management of cost of Highway services between the Council and CEH.

#### **Rural Communities**

28 There are no direct implications for rural communities arising from the decisions in this report.

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

29 There are no direct implications for children and young people and cared for children arising from the decisions in this report.

#### Public Health

30 There are no direct implications for public health arising from the decisions in this report.

#### Climate Change

31 There are no direct implications for climate change arising from the decisions in this report.

Access to Information		
Contact Officer:	Domenic de Bechi, Head of Highways	
	Email: Domenic.deBechi@CheshireEast.gov.uk	
Appendices:	Appendix 1: Highways Service: Improvement Action Plan	
Background Papers:	Highway Service Contract: Report to the Highways and Transport Committee, 19 July 2024	

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Appendix 1

## OPEN

Improvement Action Plan

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# **Highways service**

# Improvement Action Plan January 2025 [DRAFT, subject to DMT approval]





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## Introduction

In April 2024, the Highways service commissioned the Future Highways Research Group (FHRG) to conduct a review of the council's Highways service using its value for money assessment tool.

FHRG's report was presented to the Highways and Transport Committee (H&TC) on 19 July 2024. The H&TC approved that the Director of Transport and Infrastructure should prepare an action plan to respond to the report. The report to the Committee (including FHRG's report and the relevant background to the review) can be found on the council's web page <u>here</u>.

This action plan contains a comprehensive set of actions that officers will take to improve the service in line with FHRG's recommendations. We consider that implementing this action plan will support transformation within the council's Transport and Infrastructure services.

#### How this plan is organised

**What we plan to do** is set out as a series of specific actions. These are grouped into themes, for which we have used the ten features of top performing highway authorities that FHRG identifies. These are as follows:

- A. Adequate investment.
- B. Appropriate **elected member** behaviour and support:
  - Informed, knowledgeable and supportive lead member.
  - Constructive and proportionate challenge.
  - Adherence to formal mechanisms and protocols for communications.
  - Advocates for the service.
- C. Culture of **collaboration and mutuality**. Collaborative behaviours championed by all partners.
- D. Good governance:

- Comprehensive polices and strategies that flow through to operational delivery plans.

- A clear understanding of and accountability for roles and responsibilities across all partners.

- E. Effective stakeholder management.
- F. Robust budgetary control and financial management.
- G. Properly resourced intelligent **client function**. Including adequate commissioning, contract management and commercial skills and capacity.
- H. Robust **performance management** framework with productivity and outcome measures that span the whole service and cascade from strategic objectives to team and individuals' targets.
- I. Fit for purpose, fully functional and integrated information technology systems.
- J. Comprehensive **forward programming** with robust, joint planning and risk management.

To show how each of these actions links back to the original recommendations of FHRG, we have linked these in **Table 1** in <u>Appendix 1</u>.

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In developing this plan we have also identified some **Further Actions**. These are beyond FHRG's recommendations but are important elements that we consider are needed to improve Transport and Infrastructure services. These are shown in **Table 2** in <u>Appendix 1</u> and for ease have been grouped into the FHRG themes.

#### Improvement actions

Each of the following sections sets out, by theme, the improvement actions we are taking to implement the recommendations from FHRG. These are organised as follows.

Improvement actions	What we are doing
Target date	The current target date for completion. If this has changed, the original target date is shown in brackets.
CEC Lead	Who is responsible for implementing the action. All leads are senior managers in CEC's Transport and Infrastructure Directorate and the Highways service.
CEH Lead	Who is responsible for implementing the action. All leads are senior management team members in CEH.
Progress	A summary position on the current progress.
Status	Red: At risk of not being achieved. Amber: Not achieved, beyond timescale. Green: Achieved. Blue: Not achieved but not beyond timescale.



#### Managing delivery of this plan

This plan is jointly owned between Cheshire East Council (CEC) and our service delivery partner, Cheshire East Highways (CEH).

Senior managers within CEC's Transport and Infrastructure Directorate and Highway service and CEH's senior management team are identified to lead on the implementation of the actions. The leads are:

Cheshire East Council	Abbreviation	Cheshire East Highways	Abbreviation
Director of Transport and Infrastructure	DT&I	Managing Director, Ringway- Jacobs	MDRJ
Head of Highways	НоН	Contract Director	CD
Contract Asset Manager	CAM	Contract Manager, Asset	CM(A)
Contract Operations Manager	СОМ	Contract Manager, Operations	CM(O)
Contract Performance and Customer Experience Manager	CP&CEM	Commercial Manager	СМ
Head of Infrastructure	Hol	Head of Planning and Communications	HoP&C
Head of Strategic Transport	HoST	Management Accountant	MA

The plan will be managed through the boards within the Highway Service Contract governance structure.

Progress will be reported periodically to the CEC Place Directorate Management team.

#### Review

We provisionally propose to invite FHRG to review our implementation of this plan during the 2027-8 financial year and assess the council's progress against its value for money tool.

# A. Investment

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<b>A.1 Explore cross-service opportunities</b> Examine opportunities to combine and fund highway maintenance activity to deliver savings through other outcomes, such as reductions in slips, trips and falls.	31 Mar 25	НоН	-	
<ul> <li>A.2 Asset Management Policy and Strategy Review the Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy through the Asset Management Board:</li> <li>Create a working group to provide ownership and input from a wider section of the service into this process.</li> <li>Revise the approach to the Asset Management Levels to include a fourth level of resurfacing.</li> <li>Embed the asset management approach into day-to-day business, with regular staff briefings and improve visibility of asset data for teams.</li> <li>Use the updated asset management approach as the starting point for business planning.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 26	САМ	CM(O) / CM(A)	
<ul> <li>A.3 Specification and design guide</li> <li>Develop a Cheshire East Highway Asset Specification and design guide and introduce on a phased basis.</li> <li>Agree and implement through the Asset Management Board.</li> </ul>	31 Jan 26	САМ	CM(O) / CM(A)	

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
A.4 Asset management team Review the Asset Management team / scheme development in CEH to identify roles, responsibilities, skills to ensure the focus and ownership of asset management is clear and embedded.	30 Jun 25	-	CD / CM(A)	
<ul> <li>A.5 Asset data intelligence</li> <li>Develop an Asset Data Intelligence Strategy to: <ul> <li>Identify all asset data;</li> <li>Undertake a gap analysis;</li> <li>Review our approach and options to collection highway asset data, including consideration of Al;</li> <li>Identify options costings and associated risks; and</li> <li>Ensure we are maximising the benefit of asset data that we hold.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Agree and implement through the Asset Management Board.</li> </ul>	31 Oct 25	САМ	CM(A)	
<ul> <li>A.6 Zero-Base Budget</li> <li>Undertake a Zero-Base Budget exercise to ensure that the agreed strategy and approach to budgets aligns to the strategic objectives of the service.</li> <li>Present the options and recommended changes to members for approval as part of the preparation of the 2025-6 budget.</li> <li>Develop an investment case to make the case for further capital investment, including benefits and approach, along with identifying the risks on revenue and reputation in not investing further capital.</li> </ul>	31 Dec 24	НоН	CD	A zero-base budget exercise has been undertaken with CEH service managers to review costs, priorities, funding and opportunities. This is being fed into the 2025-6 corporate budget setting process. Ultimately, the decision on the budget rests with Council. However, where recommendations are not approved then the exercise will inform the level of service that can be expected by choosing the alternative.

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<ul> <li>A.7 Depot strategy</li> <li>Develop the service's strategy in respect of its future requirements for depots, considering: <ul> <li>Opportunities for synergy between services;</li> <li>Premises repair and investment requirements;</li> <li>Capacity for the future service.</li> <li>Approvals through Place DMT and corporate capital approval processes.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	30 Jun 25	НоН	CD	A high-level feasibility paper is being developed to look at potential synergies with other services as part of the Council's Asset Strategy.



## **B. Elected members**

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<ul> <li>B.1 Strategic Board: Role of members</li> <li>Confirm the role of elected members and attendees on the Transport and Infrastructure Partnership Board.</li> <li>Agree the terms of references and focus for the Strategic Board across the highway and infrastructure service.</li> </ul>	31/1/25	DT&I	MDRJ	A proposed terms of reference for the Transport and Infrastructure Partnership Board has been developed and is being considered. This will provide for a two-part meeting agenda, distinguishing between the parts relevant to officers and officers and members.
<ul> <li>B.2 Improve information and data sharing to better inform Members</li> <li>Develop and issue (via email and the members portal) information leaflets to members on key topics (e.g. Winter service, potholes, drainage, flooding and street lighting).</li> <li>Explore improved reporting and information updates for Members.</li> <li>Consider a management 'buddy' system to provide regular support and engagement.</li> </ul>	31 Jan 25	CP&CEM	HoP&C	Key leaflets were produced for the October 2024 member event and have been emailed to members. They are also available on the Councillor Hub within CEntranet. Road Safety, Patching and Resurfacing leaflets are also in progress.
<ul> <li>B.3 Increase performance focus – look ahead</li> <li>Create a one-page look ahead summary for Highways and Transport Committee on the measures for the forthcoming Performance Management Framework (PMF).</li> </ul>	30 Apr 25	-	HoP&C	
B.4Increase performance focus – annual summaryDevelop a quarterly Highways Performance Management Framework Summary for Highways and Transport Committee.	31 Aug 25	CP&CEM	HoP&C	It is proposed that this will be in place for the 2025-6 financial year, with the first quarterly update being provided for Q1 2025. The updates will be provided via online member briefings with slides produced for reference.

# C. Collaboration and Mutuality

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<ul> <li>C.1 Professional services review</li> <li>Review the delivery of professional services by Jacobs and develop specific actions to improve productivity and timeliness.</li> <li>Develop appropriate indicators of performance and productivity.</li> </ul>	30 Apr 25	DT&I	MDRJ	Initial meeting took place on 12 Sep 24 with a senior Jacobs director to review professional services delivery.
<ul> <li>C.2 Transport and Infrastructure Capital Schemes</li> <li>As part of the production of the Transport and Infrastructure capital programmes from 2025-6 onwards (and including LTP4, when government guidance is published), develop measures to get closer alignment between:</li> <li>Areas where maintenance is required;</li> <li>Delivery of major transport infrastructure projects;</li> <li>Developer-led and s106 schemes; and</li> <li>Schemes promoting active travel.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	HoST	CM(A)	Workshop to be arranged with CEH to gain input.
<ul> <li>C.3 Social value outcomes</li> <li>Identify clear social value outcomes that are delivered through the contract.</li> <li>Report annually on progress to the Transport and Infrastructure Partnership Board.</li> </ul>	31 May 25	-	HoP&C	

# D. Governance

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<b>D.1 Implement strategic board structure</b> Implement the new strategic board structure.	31 Jan 25	DT&I	MDRJ	Links to <b>B.1 - Strategic Board: Role of members</b> . Strategic board ("Transport and Infrastructure Partnership Board") meetings for 2025 to be arranged.
<b>D.2 Agree strategic outcomes</b> Agree strategic outcomes that align with CEC's strategy.	31 Mar 25	DT&I	-	
D.3 Confirm overall governance structure for Transport and Infrastructure CEC senior team to review and confirm feeder board structure (into the Strategic Board).	31 Jan 24	DT&I	-	



# E. Stakeholder Management

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<ul> <li>E.1 Legal support</li> <li>Identify areas where there are issues that cause delays between the Transport and Infrastructure and Legal Services teams.</li> <li>Identify proposed actions to address these issues, including potential for delegated responsibility or client team approvals.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	DT&I		CEH has started to collate all interactions with CEC Legal with a view to developing a list of issues where there can be delegation.
<ul> <li>E.2 Develop a Customer and Stakeholder Management Plan</li> <li>Create a CEH Highways Customer and Stakeholder Management Plan.</li> <li>Incorporate a mechanism for surveying stakeholder views and feedback, on the 'You said, we did' principle.</li> <li>Approve through the Transport and Infrastructure Partnership Board.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	CP&CEM	HoP&C	Draft document in progress.
E.3 Develop a Highways Stakeholder Communications Strategy Develop a 2025/26 Highways Stakeholder Communications Strategy.	31 Mar 25	CP&CEM	HoP&C	
<ul> <li>E.4 Manage the introduction of TraCE (Netcall)</li> <li>Identify specific risks relating to the implementation of the TraCE system.</li> <li>Identify required success criteria prior to sign off. Agree all success criteria have been met to sign off all Highways aspects in Netcall.</li> <li>Manage through CEC / CEH risk management processes.</li> </ul>	Prior to the implementation date for TraCE (currently TBA)	CP&CEM	HoP&C	Risks continue to be included within the Highways Risk Register and escalated to Executive Director, Place where appropriate. Key success criteria have been identified, which are to be met before the system can be approved by Highways.

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<ul> <li>E.5 Develop web communications for Highways</li> <li>Review what other authorities do (sample of relevant comparators). Identifying existing good practice and further opportunities for improving customer experience.</li> <li>Recommend a plan for improving web communications based on the review.</li> </ul>	30 Sep 25	CP&CEM	HoP&C	
<ul> <li>E.6 Develop contact centre capacity</li> <li>Work with the Customer Contact Centre to identify areas where staff skills and knowledge can be improved to support more effective delivery.</li> <li>Agree a plan of specific actions to deliver these improvements.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	CP&CEM	HoP&C	These actions will be picked up through regular liaison with the Contact Centre that is used to develop issues such as Friendly Texts. We are also reviewing the potential for technology such as Artificial Intelligence to support this activity.

# F. Budgetary Control

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<ul> <li>F.1 Benchmarking and VFM</li> <li>Using MHA+ upload scheme / costing details to the MHA+ review database.</li> <li>Review comparison data through the Contract and Commercial Board.</li> <li>Agree the frequency for periodic review thereafter through the Contract and Commercial Board.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	СОМ	СМ	Frequency of review will be aligned to appropriate timescales with MHA+.
<ul> <li>F.2 Professional Services</li> <li>Develop a value for money strategy for accessing professional services.</li> <li>Review the current engagement process.</li> <li>Propose and agree changes through the Transport and Infrastructure Partnership Board.</li> </ul>	31 May 25	Hol	CM(A)	Links to <b>C.1 - Professional services review</b> . COM / CM to support as appropriate.
<ul> <li>F.3 In-contract Benchmarking</li> <li>Review the existing price / quality comparison process for existing supply chain partners.</li> <li>Propose and agree changes through the Transport and Infrastructure Partnership Board.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	СОМ	СМ	
<ul> <li>F.4 Formal Tendering</li> <li>Create a three-year programme defining list of disciplines that are to be tendered (one per year, with a rolling three-year programme).</li> <li>Propose and agree changes through the Contract and Commercial Board.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	СОМ	СМ	
Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------	----------	----------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
<ul> <li>F.5 Review and revise the Target Cost process</li> <li>Develop and agree a process for Target Cost schemes.</li> <li>Prepare a shortlist of Target Cost schemes prior to the start of the 2025-6 financial year.</li> <li>Review and re-design the Target Cost Register.</li> <li>Propose and agree changes through the Contract and Commercial Board.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	СОМ	СМ	List of target cost schemes to be presented and agreed as part of annual business planning process.
<ul> <li>F.6 Develop a Contract Manual Develop a manual for the contract that:</li> <li>Describes key contract management processes undertaken by both the CEC and CEH teams.</li> <li>Describes the key allocations of risk that have been accepted by CEC and CEH on entering into the contract.</li> <li>Provides guidance on how these processes are to be implemented within the framework of NEC.</li> </ul>	31 Aug 26	Сом	СМ	
<ul> <li>F.7 Review and revise the Task Order process</li> <li>Review and identify proposals to streamline the number of Task Orders (TO).</li> <li>Review and identify proposals to simplify and automate Task Orders and Service Manager Instructions (SMI).</li> <li>Develop training, including a simple guide to HSC contract management with process maps to support the process.</li> <li>Propose and agree changes through the Contract and Commercial Board.</li> </ul>	28 Feb 25	СОМ	СМ	Trial commenced in Nov 24 with review Jan 25.

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<ul> <li>F.8 Income generation Develop an income strategy for Highways, to include: <ul> <li>Commercial review of fees and charges;</li> <li>Charging commuted sums for maintenance more consistently;</li> <li>Consider opportunities for advertising;</li> <li>Opportunities for CEH to identify and generate income for CEC.</li> <li>Examine the business case for CEH to generate income for CEC and link to similar review in Essex.</li> </ul></li></ul>	31 Mar 25	НоН	CD	
<b>F.9 Red claims</b> Close out Schedule 13 of the contract regarding handling of claims against the council as Highway Authority.	31 Mar 25	НоН	CD	A draft schedule has been produced and is currently under discussion.

# **G.Client Function**

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<b>G.1 Highways service restructure</b> Implement a restructure of the Highways client team to provide greater capacity and recruit to the new structure.	31 Aug 25	НоН	-	A restructure of the Highways was implemented on 1 Jan 25. Recruitment to vacancies is being progressed, subject to approvals remaining in place and identifying suitable applicants.
<ul> <li>G.2 Contract management training</li> <li>Review training needs within CEC and CEH job profiles and specifically and individually a potential need for NEC contract management training.</li> <li>Consider specific training on Option C (Target Cost).</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	НоН	CD	NEC training has been identified within Person Specifications as part of <b>G.1</b> . Requirements for training will be assessed on an individual level following implementation of the Highways service restructure. We will also look to extend this to other client areas, including the Strategic Transport and Infrastructure teams. Provision of training will be considered jointly with CEH.
<b>G.3 Team-building</b> Arrange a workshop to develop working between the CEC and CEH senior management teams, including use of psychometric profiles.	30 Apr 25	DT&I	MDRJ	We are planning the workshop for April 2025, to include new staff within the Highways team. We will look at the merits of repeating the workshop on a regular basis (every six to twelve months).
<ul> <li>G.4 Shared services delivery review</li> <li>Consider the optimum delivery model for council services that may have synergy with those in the scope of the Highway Service Contract.</li> <li>Identify options for consideration and methods of implementation and advise to CLT.</li> <li>Support the transfer of highway verge grass cutting activity to ANSA.</li> </ul>	30 Jun 25	НоН	CD	
<ul> <li>G.5 Examine potential for efficiency in highways inspections</li> <li>Review the feasibility of using AI devices to support highway inspections.</li> <li>Review the potential for installation on ANSA refuse vehicles.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	CAM	CM(O)	Initial work is being undertaken with Triple Value Impact to evaluate the capability of the Route Reports system to support safety and condition inspections and surveys. If there is a business case for this equipment then the method of deployment can be considered.

# H. Performance Management

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<ul> <li>H.1 Performance Management Framework</li> <li>Develop measures for the 2025-6 Performance</li> <li>Management Framework and beyond that are:</li> <li>Outcome-based; and</li> <li>Align to CEC's Strategic Objectives.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	CP&CEM	HoP&C	
<ul> <li>H.2 Increase performance focus – visibility</li> <li>Improve visibility of contract performance for 2025-6 through performance focused dashboards, using Confirm and Power BI.</li> <li>Include productivity indicators in the dashboards.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	CP&CEM	HoP&C	
<ul> <li>H.3 Performance benchmarking</li> <li>Review comparative authorities' performance targets.</li> <li>Report to Performance and Customer Board to provide confidence in CEH targets being set as realistic yet challenging targets.</li> </ul>	28 Feb 25	CP&CEM	HoP&C	
<ul> <li>H.4 Review capital scheme progress reporting</li> <li>Review reporting on capital schemes progress to demonstrate:</li> <li>The volume of delivery on site relative to that planned, by activity; and</li> <li>An accurate forecast to support accrued work estimates.</li> </ul>	30 Sep 25	СОМ	MA	
<b>H.5</b> Annual condition of asset reporting Collate annual data on condition of assets to upload to Place Performance SharePoint Site.	30 Apr 25	CP&CEM	-	

# I. IT Systems

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<ul> <li>I.1 Project Mapper</li> <li>Support the coordination of highway maintenance, strategic infrastructure improvements and developer schemes by developing a programme for the full development and roll-out across CEH of the Project Mapper system.</li> <li>Implement the programme.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	Hol	CM(A)	The implementation of the Project Mapper is currently being prepared and an introductory session for staff was held in November 2024. Consideration needs to be given to how Project Mapper fits with the council's approach and strategy for Geographical Information Systems (GIS).
<b>I.2</b> Network Resilience Mapping Complete CEH highway network resilience maps, aligned to LTP4 and include on Project Mapper.	31 Mar 25	CAM	CM(O)	
<ul> <li>I.3 Data analytics</li> <li>Review data analytics capacity / capability and (if appropriate) the business case for its future role.</li> <li>Report to Transport and Infrastructure Partnership Board and agree future actions.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	DT&I	MDRJ	
<ul> <li>I.4 Finance and Commercial systems and process</li> <li>Convene working group to review and optimise information management between finance systems (Dynamics – Unit4).</li> <li>Implement changes to clarify and simplify processes.</li> </ul>	30 Sep 25	СОМ	MA / CM	
<ul> <li>I.5 Payment Process</li> <li>Put in place assurance measures to trial the payment for accruals based on forecast cost.</li> <li>Assurance measures should demonstrate that CEH is forecasting with reasonable accuracy and challenging subcontractor cost.</li> </ul>	28 Feb 25	HoH / COM	CD / MA / CM	A three- month trial was implemented from October 2024 and will be reviewed following the January 2025 valuation payment.

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<ul> <li>I.6 Contract Management System</li> <li>Assess requirements and options for using contract management software.</li> <li>Review options and recommendations.</li> <li>Decide on the way forward and set out a plan to implement the new system.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 26	СОМ	СМ	



# J. Forward Programming

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<ul> <li>J.1 Longer term programming approach</li> <li>Visualisation and development of three-year, medium-term programmes for assets (carriageways and drainage) to enable coordination and buy-in from various teams.</li> <li>Link this to the approach to C.2 (Transport and Infrastructure Capital Schemes).</li> </ul>	31 May 25	-	CM(A)	
<b>J.2</b> Lessons Learned / Best Practice Review requirements for lessons learned capture and dissemination. If required, formalise a process that enables continuous improvement across the Service.	30 Jun 25	COM / CAM	CM(O) / CM(A) / CM	

# Appendix 1: Link to FHRG recommendations

#### Table 1: FHRG Recommendations

FHRG report recommendations	Feature / Theme	Proposed action
<ol> <li>Determine and recruit the additional skills and capacity required by the client team to deliver clear direction and comprehensive contract management. An experienced service manager with a clear understanding of the contract provisions is essential. A good cost engineer is also vital.</li> </ol>	G - Client Function	G.1 Highways service restructure
2. Review the governance structure to ensure it remains fit for purpose and develop a robust approach to contract management with a clear contract management structure and procedures.	D - Governance	D.1 Implement strategic board structure D.2 Agree strategic outcomes D.3 Confirm overall governance structure
a. Supplement this with training for both parties on the contract ethos and provisions.	G - Client Function	G.2 Contract management training
<ul> <li>b. Consider member involvement in the Strategic Board to build buy in to the contract and service.</li> </ul>	B - Elected members	B.1 Strategic Board: Role of members
<ul> <li>c. The governance structure should be supported by a clear and concise contract manual, regularly updated with Service Manager decisions.</li> </ul>	F - Budgetary Control	F.6 Develop a Contract Manual F.7 Review and revise the Task Order process
<ul> <li>Resolve the current conflict of interests for Legal Services, whereby timeliness is impacted by the need for CEC client approvals.</li> </ul>	E - Stakeholder Management	E.1 Legal support
3. Refresh the performance management framework to ensure it cascades from outcome-based metrics that support delivery of the strategic objectives, encompasses all functions within the service, and contains milestones and targets that are benchmarked externally.	H - Performance Management	<ul> <li>H.1 Performance Management Framework</li> <li>H.2 Increase performance focus – visibility</li> <li>H.3 Performance benchmarking</li> <li>H.4 Review capital scheme progress</li> <li>reporting</li> <li>H.5 Annual condition of asset reporting</li> </ul>

FHRG report recommendations	Feature / Theme	Proposed action
4. Refresh the asset management policy, strategy, and plans to reflect the service's strategic priorities and rebalance the current urban / rural approach which perhaps drives a reactive spiral at the expense of preventative work. Demonstrate explicitly how the asset management strategy and full lifecycle asset plans cascade through budgets and into operational delivery plans. A more preventative approach to maintenance would make better use of scarce resource.	A - Investment	A.2 Asset Management Policy and Strategy A.3 Specification and design guide A.4 Asset management team A.5 Asset data intelligence
5. Use the contract break point as an opportunity to reinvigorate the service:		
<ul> <li>a. Use the refreshed polices and strategies to define priorities for CEH over the short- and medium-term planning periods.</li> </ul>	D - Governance	D.2 Agree strategic outcomes
<ul> <li>Engage with RJ to understand its vision and plans for the integrated model going forward. Determine whether there are concepts that could usefully be explored and trialled during the remainder of the contract.</li> </ul>	D - Governance G - Client Function	D.2 Agree strategic outcomes G.4 Shared services delivery review
<ul> <li>c. Consider whether there are certain elements of the service that could be delivered more economically in house. Stakeholder suggestions included:         <ul> <li>i. Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs).</li> <li>ii. Verge cutting.</li> <li>iii. Utilising CEC's refuse fleet to undertake highways inspections.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	F - Budgetary Control G - Client Function	F.9 Red claims G.4 Shared services delivery review G.5 Examine potential for efficiency in highways inspections
d. Consider whether there may be a de minimis value beneath which the formal task order process could be simplified.	F - Budgetary Control	F.7 Review and revise the Task Order process

FHRG report recommendations	Feature / Theme	Proposed action
<ol> <li>Develop a more rigorous and open approach to benchmarking to help apply commercial challenge to RJ, identify any issues and give confidence to the wider public and members.</li> </ol>		
<ul> <li>a. The use of MHA+ and APSE should help but absolute clarity on the data used will be critical as evidenced by the eclectic approach in the current data. A single source of the truth approach may be required to ensure clarity and consistency.</li> </ul>	F - Budgetary Control	F.1 Benchmarking and VFM F.3 In-contract Benchmarking
<ul> <li>b. Infrequent open tendering of packages of work for professional services will also help CEC gain assurance around cost competitiveness.</li> </ul>	F - Budgetary Control	F.2 Professional Services F.4 Formal Tendering
7. Use the opportunity presented by the corporate commitment to earlier budget setting to develop longer term work, preventative work programmes that are made visible to the supply chain and general public. A zero-based budget exercise incorporating cross asset prioritisation should also be a regular feature of budget setting.	A - Investment J - Forward Programming	A.6 Zero-Base Budget J.1 Longer term programming approach
<ol> <li>Develop and deliver a comprehensive plan to improve stakeholder management and drive efficiency, including:</li> </ol>	E - Stakeholder Management	E.2 Develop a Customer and Stakeholder Management Plan E.3 Develop a Highways Stakeholder Communications Strategy
a. Delivering current initiatives to upskill staff in customer communications and replace Fix My Street.	E - Stakeholder Management	E.4 Manage the introduction of TraCE (Netcall)
<ul> <li>Engaging with the Contact Centre to ensure staff have the requisite knowledge and skills to properly triage enquiries.</li> </ul>	E - Stakeholder Management	E.6 Develop contact centre capacity
c. Continue to develop the website as the primary information portal for all enquiries from elected members and customers.	E - Stakeholder Management	E.5 Develop web communications for Highways
d. In alignment with longer term planning and programming, better communicate strategy and planned activity to local communities.	E - Stakeholder Management	E.2 Develop a Customer and Stakeholder Management Plan E.3 Develop a Highways Stakeholder Communications Strategy

FHRG report recommendations	Feature / Theme	Proposed action
e. Equip elected members with the skills and knowledge to be effective advocates for the service.	B - Elected members	<ul> <li>B.2 Improve information and data sharing to better inform Members</li> <li>B.3 Increase performance focus – look ahead</li> <li>B.4 Increase performance focus – annual summary</li> </ul>
<ol> <li>Execute the depot strategy to enable greater self-delivery and realise cost savings.</li> </ol>	A - Investment	A.7 Depot strategy
10. Ensure the learning gained from risk events that materialise is used to improve the relevant systems and processes.	J - Forward Programming	J.2 Lessons Learned / Best Practice
11. Develop a business case for additional resource to extend the breadth of income generation activities being undertaken.	A - Investment F - Budgetary Control I - IT Systems	A.1 Explore cross-service opportunities F.8 Income generation I.3 Data analytics
12. Increased Target Costing would help to build skills during the second half of the contract period, as Option C is likely to be the main pricing approach for any replacement contract.	F - Budgetary Control	F.5 Review and revise the Target Cost process F.6 Develop a Contract Manual
13. Undertake an end-to-end review of the delivery of professional services and determine what each party needs to do better or differently to facilitate a more productive and timely service.	C - Collaboration and Mutuality	C.1 Professional services review
14. Ensure productivity indicators are in place for all functions and easily visible to all parties, through Confirm dashboards or otherwise.	H - Performance Management	H.2 Increase performance focus – visibility
15. Consider how information management systems can be further integrated between CEC and RJ to eliminate the need for separate spreadsheets and manual reconciliations.	I - IT Systems	<ul><li>I.4 Finance and Commercial systems and process</li><li>I.5 Payment Process</li><li>I.6 Contract Management System</li></ul>
16. Ensure management information explicitly demonstrates the volume and mix of activity delivered relative to that planned.	H - Performance Management	H.4 Review capital scheme progress reporting
17. Ensure there is adequate resilience to cover core client functions that cannot be delegated to RJ.	G - Client Function	G.1 Highways service restructure G.3 Team-building

FHRG report recommendations	Feature / Theme	Proposed action
18. Reinvigorate the Innovations Group and ensure it properly defines, determines, monitors and measures strategic and operational innovation.	J - Forward Programming	J.2 Lessons Learned / Best Practice
19. Consider how CEC can strengthen its approach to social value and contribute more fully to the good work being delivered through the CEH partnership.	C - Collaboration and Mutuality	C.3 Social value outcomes
20. Survey each of the stakeholder groups considered in the Stakeholder Value dimension of the vfm assessment to ascertain directly their views of the service and any suggestions for improvement.	E - Stakeholder Management	E.2 Develop a Customer and Stakeholder Management Plan

#### Table 2: Further actions

Actions	Feature / Theme	Proposed action
21. Develop our capacity as an 'intelligence-led' service area.	A - Investment I - IT Systems	A.5 Asset data intelligence I.1 Project Mapper I.2 Network Resilience Mapping I.3 Data analytics
22. Work in collaboration to develop CEC's Local Transport Plan 4.	C - Collaboration and Mutuality	C.2 Transport and Infrastructure Capital Schemes

# Agenda Item 9

OPEN



# **Highways and Transport Committee**

# 23 January 2025

Middlewich Eastern Bypass – Approval to enter into Construction Contract

Report of: Tom Moody, Director of Transport and Infrastructure

Report Reference No: - HTC/41/24/-25

# Ward(s) Affected: Middlewich and Brereton Wards

# **Purpose of Report**

- 1 To authorise officers to enter into a contract with Balfour Beatty to build the Middlewich Eastern Bypass (MEB) but subject to receiving a positive decision by the Department of Transport (DfT) to award the Council grant funding of £46.78 million towards the cost of the scheme. (In line with previous decisions)
- 2 To highlight to members the possible impacts of any delay to the DfT grant decision on the potential start date and estimated costs of the scheme.
- 3 To authorise officers to make decisions on undertaking some contract preparation work prior to receiving the DfT decision which would enable some site works to start as soon as possible after the Council receives notification of a positive DfT decision.
- 4 To confirm the funding and budgetary arrangements for the scheme.

## **Executive Summary**

- 5 The Middlewich Eastern Bypass scheme will improve the highway network in Middlewich by relieving congestion and road safety concerns in Middlewich town centre, improving journey times on the wider highway network and will enable the full development of Strategic Location LPS 44 (Midpoint 18) in the adopted Local Plan Strategy. The Scheme will support economic growth, employment and housing delivery in the town and the surrounding area.
- 6 The estimated total cost of the scheme is £97.94 million. The council has spent approximately £27 million to date on activities such as

scheme preparation, ground investigation, environmental works and land assembly to date.

- 7 The current programme is for the main works to start in late Summer 2025, with an estimated 26-month construction period, but this programme depends on a timely decision by DfT on their grant funding.
- 8 This report recommends that the Council enters into the main construction contract with Balfour Beatty to construct the scheme after a DfT decision is made to award the grant.
- 9 Any delay to the DfT decision will mean the main construction commencement would be pushed further into late Autumn 2025 (or even beyond) which would cause increased costs due to less favourable earthworks conditions than currently allowed for, which may mean it would be advantageous to start in Spring 2026 rather than work through the winter months.
- 10 It may therefore be necessary to do some contract preparation work is done prior to the DfT grant decision to ensure that when a positive decision is received, a site start can be made as quickly as possible. This would mean that some main construction work could be brought forward from the Stage 2 (main construction) contract the current Stage 1 (Pre-construction) contract so that construction work could start as soon after the DfT decision as possible. To minimise risk, the work would not begin on site until the DfT decision is known.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Highways and Transport Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the previous financial and delivery decisions and delegations in previous reports.
- Subject to DfT grant approval and that the construction target cost and other scheme cost estimates are in line with the budget and funding arrangements in the 2024/2025 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and subsequent approved virements, delegate authority to the Director of Transport and Infrastructure to enter into Stage 2 of the construction contract under the SCAPE framework.
- 3. Delegate authority to the Director of Transport and Infrastructure, in consultation with the S151 Officer, to make all necessary arrangements prior to the DfT decision (for example including, but not limited to, expenditure on preparing the target cost and value engineering design work) to enable the scheme to start on site in Summer 2025. (The Contract Preparation Works)

- 4. Delegate authority to the Director of Transport and Infrastructure to bring forward appropriate elements of construction (The Early Site Works) into Stage 1 of the existing Scape Contract (This work to be contractually awarded only after a positive decision on the DfT grant award)
- 5. Note the possible impacts of a delay to a DfT Decision on the start date and estimated cost of the scheme.
- 6. If any delays or any other factors cause estimated scheme costs to rise above the current approved capital budget, authorise the Director of Transport and Infrastructure to:
  - a. request the Finance Sub Committee and Council make any necessary adjustments to the MTFS and
  - b. make any minor scope changes to the scheme which may arise as a result of a value engineering exercise to ensure the scheme is affordable.
- 7. Authorise the Director of Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer to take all the remaining steps necessary to obtain all rights required for any land necessary for the construction of the scheme.

# Background

- 11 The MEB is a critical project for the Council, supporting the delivery of 1,950 new homes and the creation of an estimated 6,500 jobs.
- 12 A list of previous reports on the MEB considered by Cabinet and the Highways and Transport committee is attached as Appendix 1. The links are to the agendas and decisions of those meetings.
- 13 The most recent decisions of this committee were made in September 2023 when it authorised the submission of the Full Business Case (FBC) to the DfT, in the expectation of a decision by them on the grant funding being made in early 2024. No decision was made at that time, but a series of further clarification questions were received from DfT in April which have now been responded to and a revised FBC was submitted in September 2024.
- 14 Of most relevance to the considerations in this report regarding the construction contract were the resolutions at the September 2023 meeting to:
  - Note the authorisation already given by Cabinet on 15 January 2019 to delegate to the Executive Director Place in consultation with the Finance and Communications Portfolio Holder, exercise powers to undertake all the necessary and

prudent preparatory site clearance and general construction works in advance of Stage 2 Construction phase before funding approval from DfT.

- Note the authorisation given by Cabinet on 15 January 2019 to delegate to the Executive Director – Place in consultation with the Finance and Communications Portfolio enter into a two stage Delivery Agreement with the Contractor for the delivery of the MEB via the Scape Framework.
- 15 Table 1 below shows the current scheme programme which assumes that a decision is received on the DfT grant fund in February 2025:

# Table 1: Programme Key Dates (estimated based on no advanceTarget Cost preparation work)

Activity	Programme Date
Submit FBC to the DfT	6 September 2024
Approval of FBC / Receive DfT Funding	28 February 2025
Receive Contractor Offer for Stage 2 works (Target Cost)	10 June 2025
Instruction to Proceed (Notice to Proceed) to Stage 2 construction	23 July 2025
Exercise Land and Property agreements via agreement (After Target Cost is known)	11 June 2025
Implement the Orders (After Target Cost is known)	11 June 2025
Site Clearance and Advance works start	23 July 2025
Access Date – All of the site for main works	23 July 2025
Scheme in Use	21 September 2027
Planned Completion	12 October 2027
Completion Date	15 February 2028

## **Scheme Costs**

16 The total scheme cost estimate figure includes all sunk costs to date in developing the scheme, the estimated costs to purchase the land, an allowance for compensation costs (known as Part 1 Claims), the contract costs for construction, future professional fees, utility diversions and allowances for future risks. These costs must assume that funding is made available at a certain time; and this is assumed to be by the end of February 2025. A breakdown of the estimated scheme cost is contained in Table 2 below

Project Stage	Estimated Cost £m	Expended Cost to date £m	Remaining Cost £m
CONSTRUCTION			
Stage 1 Preconstruction	6.80	6.80	
Stage 2 Construction	48.85		48.85
Combined Stage 1 and Stage 2	55.65		
DEVELOPMENT			
Development Cost [Design, fees, compensation, inflation]	13.89	13.89	
Project Management, Support and Site Supervision	3.25		3.25
Utilities	2.83	1.55	1.28
Land and Property and Compensation	17.90	4.82	13.08
Project Risk	4.42		4.42
Total Development Cost	42.29	27.06	70.88
TOTAL PROJECT COST	97.94		

## **Table 2: Estimated Scheme Costs**

Note – this total is greater than that shown in the 2024-28 MTFS because of the delay to the original DfT decision which was expected In February 2024, which resulted in inflationary pressures on the original scheme cost estimate. The additional costs have been covered by savings made on the Congleton Relief Road project with a virement to this scheme.

- 17 Scheme costs incurred to date amount to approximately £27.0 million – of which approximately £4.82 million is for the land acquired to date. The remaining is for development and design work, ground investigation and early enabling works including service diversions and environmental and ecology work which has already been carried out.
- 18 The above costs and programme are based on a decision by or before 28 February 2025.

#### **Scheme Funding**

19	Table 3: Funding Arrangements	
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FUNDING	FUNDING CONTRIBUTION
	£m
Department for Transport (DfT) Grants:	
Outline Business Case (OBC) Stage – DfT funding received	1.26
Full Business Case (FBC) Stage – subject to final approval	46.80
Local Contributions:	
Cheshire East Council (CEC) – Local Contribution	24.81
Developers S106 Contribution*	22.87
Additional identified Local Contribution from Savings in Highways and Transport Capital Programme	2.20
Funding Available	97.94

\*S106's relate to signed agreements of £16.12m; and with the balance estimated S106 receipts from future development opened up by the bypass.

- 20 The Council has spent approximately £27.0m to date, and will need to fund another £25m to build the scheme, with an estimated £23m of this total returned to the council over an estimated ten years (linked to the pace and development of the related developments that will pay the S106 contributions)
- 21 The previous Government's additional Network North funding for the scheme, referenced in previous reports, remains uncertain so it is assumed for the purposes of this report that it will be unavailable. The Council will however lobby to ensure that if this funding does become available, then the scheme will benefit from it in line with the government announcements made at the time of cancellation of the northern sections of HS2.

#### **Department for Transport Grant**

- 22 The scheme secured entry into the DfT Large Local Majors (LLM) Programme by demonstrating a compelling case for funding in the Outline Business Case.
- 23 Although elements of the business case have been impacted\_by high levels of inflation, the scheme retains a positive Benefit Cost Ratio; and the Council has highlighted the major strategic benefits of the Scheme, such as opening up access to jobs.

National Objective	How MEB Scheme Supports	
Improving Performance on the Railways and Driving Forward Rail Reform	<ul> <li>Reduces congestion on local roads, improving access to rail stations.</li> <li>Supports Midpoint 18 strategic employment site, potentially increasing rail service demand.</li> </ul>	
Improving Bus Services and Growing Usage Across the Country	<ul> <li>Reduces congestion, improving bus service delivery</li> <li>Enhances bus network reliability</li> <li>Addresses issues in the Bus Service Improvement Plan</li> </ul>	
Transforming Infrastructure to Work for the Whole Country, Promoting Social	<ul> <li>Supports economic growth in Cheshire</li> <li>Unlocks employment growth at Midpoint 18</li> </ul>	

24 The Governments' new National Objectives linked to the scheme in the following ways:

Mobility and Tackling Regional inequality	<ul> <li>Facilitates creation of 6,500 jobs and 1950 new homes</li> <li>Contributes to closing the productivity gap between the North and the rest of England</li> </ul>
Delivering Greener Transport	<ul> <li>Provides 4km of new cycle and pedestrian facilities</li> <li>Reduces congestion and improves journey time reliability</li> <li>Creates conditions for more efficient public transport, encouraging a shift from private car use</li> </ul>
Better Integrating Transport Networks	<ul> <li>Connects A54 Holmes Chapel Road to A533 Booth Lane, enhancing the strategic road network</li> <li>Improves conditions for private vehicles and public transport</li> <li>Incorporates active travel infrastructure alongside the new road</li> </ul>

# **Consultation and Engagement**

25 The scheme has been subject to extensive local consultation at the planning stage and demonstrated high levels of local support, including from the recently elected MP for the Mid-Cheshire constituency. The Council has lobbied hard with senior politicians to communicate the importance of the timing of a decision on final DfT funding.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 26 Although there have been previous resolutions regarding entering into the main construction contract with Balfour Beatty using the SCAPE public sector framework and to commit to arranging all pre-main construction work prior to the DfT grant decision, given the changed risk profile following no DfT decision being received last year, alongside the Council's own financial situation, it is necessary re-visit and reconfirm those resolutions now.
- 27 Before the main construction contract can be awarded, the scheme FBC must be approved by the DfT (thus releasing the £46.78 million DfT grant) and a target cost for the construction contract must be

agreed and the Council must be certain all of the land needed can be acquired.

- 28 Recommendation 2 confirms that subject to the grant award, and continued affordability, the committee will authorise the Director of Transport and Infrastructure to enter into a contract for the construction of the scheme using the Scape framework.
- 29 Recommendations 3 and 4 are to authorise the Director of Transport and Infrastructure to make delegated decisions to do (or not do) Contract Preparation Works and Early Site Works if either or both of these prove to be of financial benefit to the Council at a time when all the relevant information is accurately known.
- 30 These delegations are sought now to enable decisions to be made quickly outside the committee cycle as information becomes available and when the DfT announce their decision. Working to the committee meeting cycle would introduce additional delay and costs to the process.
- 31 The following paragraphs highlight the considerations that will need to be taken into account in the decisions on the Contract Preparation Works and Early Site Works:
- 32 The current programme assumes a decision by the DfT on the grant award will be received in February 2025. This would allow a site start in Autumn 2025.
- 33 Clearly, if there is any significant delay to the DfT decision, this will put the programme at risk and will increase scheme costs as a result of inflationary pressures and the amount of initial earthworks that would need to be done in the winter months. The Council would then need to further review the MTFS provision for the scheme.
- 34 Even if the DfT decision is received on time, there may be benefits in undertaking certain works at risk now to ensure the challenging programme can be delivered. One example is having a contract target cost developed and 'ready to go' from February, which could produce overall programme savings. This would only be done if the forecast savings were significant enough to balance any further spending at risk.
- 35 As a result, discussions have been held with the contractor for the scheme, Balfour Beatty, to assess what opportunities could be available to reduce scheme costs from the baseline programme. Work is ongoing, but it has been identified that there could be savings achieved by advancing the target cost preparation and some other value engineering design work.

- 36 The costs for these Contract Preparation Works are estimated to be in the region of approximately £0.5m; and are already included in the overall scheme cost estimate. These works to prepare a target cost are significant and involve engaging the contractor's sub-contractors to arrive at firm contractual costing for all elements of the scheme. Completing the target cost work early would enable the scheme risk profile to be reduced as the scheme would be able to commence in the summer months. The issue will be, therefore, does the Council wish to risk spending this sum before the DfT grant confirmation to take advantage of the programme and cost savings.
- 37 Although no site works would begin prior to a decision by DfT, it may be beneficial to move some site preparatory works (the Early Site Works) from the main Stage 2 construction contract, into Stage 1 (pre-construction) which the Council has already entered. The scenario assessment has shown that such an approach could result in significant scheme savings. It would also allow a very quick mobilisation of resources on site soon after the council is notified of a positive DfT grant decision. Example of these measures would be such things as establishment of site offices and construction of access routes.
- 38 Recommendation 6 is necessary to allow flexibility to request adjustments to budgets and / or to make minor changes to design (eg to improve "buildability") where necessary so that the scheme can progress without reverting to Committee.
- 39 The delegated decision makers for all the recommended delegated decisions will consider the relative costs, benefits and risks to the Council of each decision at the time on the basis of updated and accurate information that will be available. Decisions would be made and recorded using the formal Officer Decision Record process.

**Options Considered** 

Option	Impact	Risk
Preferred Option :Authorise the delegation to the Director of Transport and Infrastructure (DoTI) to award the SCAPE construction contract under subject to it being affordable.Delegate to the DoTI a decision on doing Contract Preparation Works prior to the DfT Decision at risk.Delegate to the DoTI a decision on bringing some Early Site Works into Stage 1 of the Scape contract	These authorisations will allow earliest award of contract and could accelerate the programme, providing financial benefits compared to the costs if this option was not implemented. Contract Preparation Works will cost approximately £0.5m (already included in overall scheme costs) Early Site Works are also already included in overall scheme costs.	The £0.5m Contract Preparation Works cost will be at risk of not getting a positive DfT decision and in that event would add to the sunk costs already incurred on the scheme.
Other Options Considered:		
Await the DfT decision on the grant award before the Committee decides on construction contract award. (Stage 2)	Full information in front of members, but would cause delay and therefore additional programme costs, which are avoided by delegating authority within the strict criteria outlined in the recommendations.	Increased scheme costs which would affect affordability and could lead to cancellation.
Await a complete set of financial information on the Contract Preparation Works and Early Site Works before the Committee making a formal decision on each element.	Full information would be in front of members, but would cause significant delay and therefore additional programme costs, which are avoided by delegating the decision.	Increased scheme costs which would affect affordability and could lead to cancellation.
Cancel the scheme	The MEB is a Local Plan led scheme which will deliver the main strategic employment allocation and housing growth as well as transport benefits. 1,950 new dwellings and 6,500 additional jobs are	Cancellation of the scheme at this stage could cause reputational damage with funders and would lead to a significant financial

	directly or indirectly linked to the delivery of the scheme These benefits will be lost. The expenditure to date on the scheme of approximately £27 million would need to be met by the Council's Revenue budget.	impact to the Council. It could also affect the credibility of any future Council funding bids. Additional costs are expected via potential Blight Claims from landowners.
Seek an alternative Procurement route	Major impact on scheme timeline, could necessitate a further re-submission of the Final Business Case as the Commercial element would be different	Minimum further 12- month delay to the Scheme. No certainty on Scheme Cost. Compulsory Purchase Orders and other and agreements could expire, adding further delay and cost.

# **Implications and Comments**

Monitoring Officer/Legal

40 Any decision to undertake additional early works for the scheme prior to the DfT grant; ("Contract Preparation Works"); runs the risk of their being substantive abortive costs if the DfT funding decision is not favourable. If the Council undertakes the Contract Preparation Works and the scheme does not proceed for whatever reason, it may be necessary to remove the works and for the land to be restored to its original condition, and the Council would in that scenario have to fully fund the restorative works. This needs to be balanced against the risk of a favourable DfT funding decision so that the scheme can proceed; but you find out at that stage that the delay in carrying out the works makes them much more expensive. If the decision is taken to accelerate the Early Site Works cognisant of the risks in so doing; then the Stage 1 (pre-construction) contract will need to be modified, but Legal does not anticipate any difficulty in resolving this under the ambit of the Scape Framework.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 41 The Middlewich Eastern Bypass is included within the Capital Programme published as part of the 2024-2028 Medium Term Financial Strategy and its current approved budget is £96.6m plus a further £1.34m of budget relating to MEB that sits within assets, in total £97.94m.
- 42 The outlined approach means that further costs in the region of £0.5m may be incurred in addition to the £27m that has already been spent before the DfT decision has been received. The remaining budget would not be incurred until after a favourable decision has been received but the recommendations, if approved, would allow the Council to act promptly upon receipt of a positive outcome to avoid cost escalation due to timing delays. The approach does not necessitate the addition of further budget to the project and the Council is clear that in the event that the DfT approval is not forthcoming (or significantly delayed) the current financial position would require a complete review of the project before any further agreements are undertaken to decide if the project should still proceed or not. To date £27m has already been spent by the council on this project and without the DfT approval serious consideration would need to be given to the financial implications of stopping the programme and this would need to be weighed against the cost of incurring the remaining approved budget from its own resources rather than grant funding
- 43 If the project were to cease following no approval from the DfT then costs incurred to date could not be capitalised and would need to be written back to revenue. This would put additional pressure upon the current financial position and unless a Capitalisation Directive could be obtained from the Secretary of State would have serious implications. Ceasing the scheme would also leave the council without the benefit of the asset and its potential to unlock the surrounding area for development together with the loss of potential developer contribution in future years which are part of the current funding position for the scheme in order to pay back the borrowing undertaken to date.
- 44 Should the Director of Transport and Infrastructure and the S151 officer decide to use the delegation under Recommendation 3 any cost incurred, estimated at approximately £0.5m in paragraph 35, would add to the £27m spent to date that would potentially be abortive costs.
- 45 The alternative would be to continue with the project but to fund it entirely from our own resources. This would have significant long term implications for the Capital Financing Budget due to the cost of the borrowing that would be required as well as the Minimum Revenue Provision that would need to be made annually to repay that borrowing. However, it would allow for the future development of the

area surround the Bypass and the developer contributions that could help offset some of the costs of the borrowing incurred.

#### Policy

46 The policy implications of the scheme are unchanged from those reported in previous cabinet and committee reports listed at Appendix 1, most recently and comprehensively in the report to Highways and Transport Committee on 21 September 2023. (Link to Report)

#### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

47 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion implications of the scheme are unchanged from those reported in previous cabinet and committee reports listed at Appendix 1, most recently and comprehensively in the report to Highways and Transport Committee on 21 September 2023. (Link to Report)

#### Human Resources

48 It shall be necessary to ensure that sufficient resource is allocated in Estates, Highways, Legal and Planning Services to support delivery of the scheme. If additional temporary resources are required these will be met from the project budget.

#### Risk Management

- 49 The Council will be required to accept all responsibility for cost increases beyond the cost envelope provided within the FBC when it is approved for funding by the DfT.
- 50 Until the point at which the DfT make their final investment decision based on the FBC, any Council funding of scheme development is at risk.
- 51 The Procurement route is fixed by previous decisions taken by the Council, and given the link between pace of delivery, inflation and the validity of Statutory Orders, etc it is not considered possible (or beneficial) to revise the delivery approach of this scheme.
- 52 Despite the Council's best efforts to highlight the issues of programme and finance related to a timely DfT decision, this is largely out of the Council's control and any delay will be inflationary.
- 53 A statutory blight claim notification has been received from one of the major landowners impacted by the Scheme. Legal advice is currently being sought in respect of the validity and likelihood of success of the claim, but if successful, the Council could be forced to purchase land regardless of whether the scheme progresses or not. If the scheme progresses, there is no further impact on costs associated with the blight claim.

54 Other risk management issues are unchanged from previous Cabinet / Committee reports. A risk register has been produced in the preceding stages of the project development and this will be reviewed and updated through the current stage of works. Capital cost risks are informed by a comprehensive qualitative risk assessment and currently there is sufficient risk allowance within the Scheme budget to cover any unforeseen issues during construction. However, any exceptional risks beyond the provision made would necessitate further Council funding (Should this be the case this will be reported and decisions made through further Committee reports)

#### Rural Communities

55 The rural communities implications of the scheme are unchanged from those reported in previous cabinet and committee reports listed at Appendix 1, most recently and comprehensively in the report to Highways and Transport Committee on 21 September 2023. (Link to Report)

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

56 The Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) implications of the scheme are unchanged from those reported in previous cabinet and committee reports listed at Appendix 1, most recently and comprehensively in the report to Highways and Transport Committee on 21 September 2023. (Link to Report)

#### Public Health

57 The public health implications of the scheme are unchanged from those reported in previous cabinet and committee reports listed at Appendix 1, most recently and comprehensively in the report to Highways and Transport Committee on 21 September 2023. (Link to Report)

#### Climate Change

58 The climate change implications of the scheme are unchanged from those reported in previous cabinet and committee reports listed at Appendix 1, most recently and comprehensively in the report to Highways and Transport Committee on 21 September 2023. (Link to Report)

#### Access to Information

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Contact Officer:	Chris Hindle, Head of Infrastructure (Job Share)
	chris.hindle@cheshireeast.gov.uk
	Paul Griffiths, Head of Infrastructure (Job Share)
	paul.griffiths@cheshireeast.gov.uk
	Neil Grundy, Infrastructure Delivery Manager
	neil.grundy@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – List of all previous scheme reports, including links. (below)
	Appendix 2 – Scheme Plan
Background Papers:	See Appendix 1

Date	Committee	Decided / Report	Link
19/09/2024	H&T	To report urgent decision by CX	Report of Urgent
	Committee	to re-submit FBC	Decision
21/09/2023	H&T Committee	To submit FBC	Report to submit FBC
09/12/2021	Н&Т	To authorise the making of a	2 <sup>nd</sup> CPO report
	Committee	CPO / SRO / Bridge scheme.	
21/09/2021	H&T	To authorise withdrawing the	Withdraw CPO report
	Committee	first CPO / SROs	
07/07/2020	Cabinet	Approval to proceed with CPO / SRO	1 <sup>st</sup> CPO report
09/07/2019	Cabinet	Approval to proceed with land	Land acquisition
		acquisition	
15/01/2019	Cabinet	Delivery strategy	Delivery Strategy
12/06/2018	Cabinet	Planning and delivery update	Delivery update
12/09/2017	Cabinet	Update on OBC and approve	OBC update and
		further work for planning	planning app
		application	
11/04/2017	Cabinet	Authorise submission of OBC	OBC submission
03/05/2016	Cabinet	Authorise consultation exercise	<u>Consultation</u>
09/02/2016	Cabinet	Authorise feasibility work on	Feasibility for new
		revised route	route
11/10/2012	Council	Recommendation by Cabinet	CEC to be grant
		that the Council be grant	recipient report
		recipient of KGF and	
1	1	accountable body for the MEB.	1

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OPEN

# **Highways and Transport Committee**

23<sup>rd</sup> January 2025

Proposed Public Path Creation Agreement in the Parish of Wardle

**Report of: Phil Cresswell, Executive Director - Place** 

Report Reference No: HTC/43/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: Bunbury

# For Decision or Scrutiny: Decision

## **Purpose of Report**

- 1. This report seeks approval to enter into a Public Path Creation Agreement with the owner of land in order to add a Public Footpath to the Definitive Map and Statement, the legal record of Public Rights of Way.
- 2. The work of the Public Rights of Way team contributes to the Corporate Plan aim to achieve "A thriving and sustainable place" and the policies and objectives of the Council's statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

## **Executive Summary**

3. The Council has the agreement of a landowner to enter into a Public Path Creation Agreement under section 25 of the Highways Act 1980 to create a new public footpath in the Parish of Wardle. The new footpath would form a link between a cul-de-sac footpath and another existing footpath in the network. This report seeks the decision to enter into the Agreement to create the route.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Highways and Transport Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Decide that a Public Path Creation Agreement should be entered into under Section 25 of the Highways Act 1980 to add a Public Footpath to the Definitive Map and Statement in the Parish of Wardle, as illustrated between points A and B on Plan No. HA/156.
- 2. Decide that public notice of the making of the Agreement should be given.
- 4. A landowner in the Parish of Wardle is willing to create a new Public Footpath on their land. The proposal would see a new footpath to link the currently cul-de-sac footpath of Bunbury Footpath No. 31 / Haughton Footpath No. 17, with Wardle Footpath No. 13, as shown on Plan HA/156.
- 5. The aspiration to form new links in the Public Rights of Way network has been identified through consultation on the Council's statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan. By linking the cul-de-sac footpath to the rest of the Public Rights of Way network, the proposed new footpath would offer additional circular route options for local users in the Bunbury-Haughton-Wardle-Alpraham area, including links to the towpath of the Shropshire Union Canal. When travelling in a westerly direction, the proposed new footpath would offer views across the Cheshire countryside to the Sandstone Ridge landmarks of Beeston Castle and the Peckforton Hills.
- 6. The proposed footpath would commence at its junction with Public Footpath No. 17 in the Parish of Haughton at OS grid reference SJ 5866 5773 at point A on Plan No. HA/156, and run in a generally easterly direction for a distance of approximately 244 metres to OS grid reference SJ 5890 5769, and then continue in a generally easterly direction for approximately 239 metres to OS grid reference SJ 5912 5778 at its junction with Public Footpath No. 13 in the Parish of Wardle, at point B on Plan No. HA/156.
- 7. The public footpath would have a width of 2m, running over agricultural land, currently held as pasture. Two new footbridges, each with wicket gates at each end, would be required to be installed to enable the public to use the route, along with waymarking. Contributions towards the cost of the furniture installation are being sought to assist in the creation of the route should the proposal come to fruition.

# **Consultation and Engagement**

- 8. Due to the proximity of the route to administrative boundaries, consultation regarding the proposed Public Path Creation Agreement has been undertaken with the Ward Members of Wrenbury and Bunbury Wards, and with Bunbury and Wardle Parish Councils and Haughton Parish Meeting. No comments were received.
- 9. Consultation was also undertaken with the tenants of the land over which the proposed public footpath would run. Comments were received to say that they had no objection to the proposal.
- 10. Consultation regarding the proposed Public Path Creation Agreement has also been undertaken with the landowners of the cul-de-sac footpath as the proposal would increase use of that Public Right of Way. Comments received from one landowner indicated an opposition to the proposal due to the increased usage of the footpath and associated issues with dog faeces and livestock worrying.
- 11. Consultation has also been undertaken with the Council's Nature Conservation Officer. A verbal update on any comments received will be provided to the Committee meeting.
- 12. User groups were also invited to make comment on the proposal. The Peak and Northern Footpaths Society responded to say that they considered it "good to see a new footpath being created rather than footpaths being closed" and offered a contribution to fund the costs of the bridges and gates required on the footpath.
- 13. Public notice of any Public Path Creation Agreement would be placed in a local newspaper, as required in the Highways Act 1980, as well as on site and on the Council's website.

#### **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 14. In accordance with Section 25 of the Highways Act 1980 it is within the Council's discretion to enter into a Public Path Creation Agreement with any person having the necessary power for the dedication of a public footpath.
- 15. The Act creates a duty of the Council to have due regard to the needs of agriculture (including the breeding or keeping of horses) and forestry, and to the desirability of conserving flora, fauna and geological and physiographical features. It is considered that these matters have been assessed through the consultations undertaken.

# **Options Considered**

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	Not entering into the Public Path Creation Agreement would leave the cul-de-sac footpath as an anomaly.	Leaving the status quo may cause inconvenience to the landowner should members of the public seek to attempt to form a connection between Public Rights of Way where currently there is none.

## **Implications and Comments**

#### Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 16. Under s25 Highways Act 1980 a Public Path Creation Agreement can be made in respect of a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway. A Public Path Creation Agreement under s25 Highways Act 1980 shall be entered into with the landowner if the recommendations are supported by the Committee.
- 17. From the date stated in the Public Path Creation Agreement the path will become a public path of the description given in the agreement and become maintainable at the public expense.

#### Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 18. There are no financial implications that require an amendment to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- 19. Contributions towards the costs of the installation of the proposed footpath are being sought from user groups and Parish Councils, with contributions to cover the majority of costs having been offered. Should such contributions not be forthcoming, or not cover the full costs of the materials and installation, the costs would be covered from existing budgets of the Public Rights of Way team.
- 20. The maintenance of the proposed new footpath would be undertaken within existing budgets of the Public Rights of Way team.
## Policy

21. The work of the Public Rights of Way team contributes to the Vision of the Corporate Plan of a greener Cheshire East, with the aim of "a thriving and sustainable place" and the policies and objectives of the Council's statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Vision – An open, fairer, greener Cheshire East

Aim - 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 2027

### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

22. There are no direct equality, diversity and inclusion implications.

### Human Resources

23. There are no direct human resources implications.

### Risk Management

24. There are no direct risk management implications.

### Rural Communities

25. There are direct positive effects from the Public Rights of Way network for rural communities, through connectivity, access to services, leisure and active travel.

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

26. There are no direct implications for children and young people.

### Public Health

27. The work of the Public Rights of Way team contributes to the health and wellbeing of Cheshire East residents.

### Climate Change

- 28. The Council has committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2027 and to encourage all businesses, residents and organisations in Cheshire East to reduce their carbon footprint.
- 29. The work of the Public Rights of Way team encourages a reduction in carbon emissions and increased environmental sustainability by reducing energy consumption and promoting healthy lifestyles through active travel.

Access to Information							
Contact Officer:	Genni Butler Countryside Access Development Manager genni.butler@cheshireeast.gov.uk						
Appendices:	Plan No. HA/156						
Background Papers:	The background papers and file relating to the report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.						



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# **Highway and Transport Committee**

23<sup>rd</sup> January 2025

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Section 257 Proposed Diversion of Public Footpath No. 12 (Part) in the Parish of Nether Alderley

# **Report of: Phil Creswell, Executive Director of Place**

Report Reference No: HTC/45/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: Chelford

## For Decision or Scrutiny: Decision

## **Purpose of Report**

- 1 The report outlines the investigation to divert part of Public Footpath No. 12 in the Parish of Nether Alderley following receipt of an application from a local resident in relation to a planning application.
- 2. The work of the Public Rights of Way team contributes to the Corporate Plan aim of "A thriving and sustainable place", and the policies and objectives of the Council's statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

### **Executive Summary**

- 3. This report outlines the investigation to divert part of Public Footpath No. 12 in the Parish of Nether Alderley and includes a discussion of the consultations carried out in respect to the proposals and the legal tests to be considered for a diversion order to be made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 4. The recommendation is that a public path diversion order be made under section 257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 on the grounds that Cheshire East Council is satisfied that it is necessary to do so to enable development to be carried out.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Highways & Transport Committee is recommended to:

- Decide that a public path diversion order be made under section 257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for part of Public Footpath No. 12 in the Parish of Nether Alderley as shown on Plan No. TCPA/080 on the grounds that Cheshire East Borough Council is satisfied that it is necessary to do so to enable development to be carried out.
- 2. Decide that public notice of the making of the Order be given and in the event of there being no objections within the period specified, and in the event that planning consent has been granted, the Order be confirmed in the exercise of the powers conferred on the Council by the said Act.
- 3. Note that in the event of objections being received, Cheshire East Borough Council be responsible for the conduct of any hearing or Public Inquiry.

# Background

- 5. An application has been received from the residents of Beacon Lodge, Nether Alderley requesting that the Council make an Order under section 257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to divert part of Public Footpath No. 12 in the Parish of Nether Alderley as it appears necessary to allow for the construction of a home office with art studio, within the grounds of Beacon Lodge under Planning Application Ref: 24/2978M
- 6 Public Footpath No. 12 in the Parish of Nether Alderley commences at Nether Alderley Footpath No. 13 close to Macclesfield Road SK10 4UB then runs in a generally north easterly direction, for 495 meters, to the junctions of Nether Alderley Footpath No. 45; Nether Alderley Footpath No. 14 and Over Alderley Footpath No. 26.
- 7. The section of the current definitive line of Nether Alderley FP12 affected by the proposal is shown as a bold black line on plan TCPA/080 between points B – A. This section of the path is to be stopped up. Beginning at point B at its junction with Nether Alderley FP13, it runs in a generally north easterly direction, in part, across the garden of Beacon Lodge for approximately 178 metres to point A at its junction with Nether Alderley FP45.
- 8. The proposed diversion is shown on the attached plan no. TCPA/080 as a dashed black line running between points C A. From point C at the junction with Nether Alderley Footpath No. 13 it runs in a generally

northerly direction for approximately 146 metres to point A, at the junction with Nether Alderley FP12 and Nether Alderley FP 45. It is unenclosed, with a stone surface 1.5 metres wide, edged with wooden sides. It is 32 metres shorter than the existing path. It has a gradient very similar to the existing path.

- 9. The proposed diversion route currently exists on the ground on land belonging to the National Trust. Written permission has been obtained by the applicant from the senior countryside manager of the National Trust giving agreement to having the proposed diversion route on the land. No change is proposed to the surface or width of the diversion route. The diversion route is surfaced with stone and wooden edging with a varying width no less than 2 metres along its length. It is unenclosed in a woodland.
- 10. The proposed diversion would be an improvement to the public rights of way network, in accordance with the Cheshire East Local Transport Plan and Rights of Way Improvement Plan, specifically: *Policy H3: Public rights of way and green infrastructure Protect and enhance our public rights of way and green infrastructure and endeavour to create new links were beneficial for health, safety or access to green spaces.* The proposed diversion has a better surface than the current section of path, as it has a firm, stone/gravel surface and is unenclosed in a woodland environment. The current section of Nether Alderley Footpath No. 12 is grass/lawn surface and in a private garden.

## **Consultation and Engagement**

- 10. The Ward Member for Chelford, Nether Alderley Parish Council, the user groups, statutory undertakers, and the Council's Nature Conservation Officer have been consulted.
- 11. The Cheshire East Ramblers responded commenting, "East Cheshire Ramblers have no objection to the diversion of Nether Alderley FP12."
- 12. The Peak & Northern Footpath Society, after their inspector conducted a site visit, responded commenting, "Our inspector noted that many people were using the proposed diversion route on the day of their visit. In view of the fact that the proposed diversion route has been available as a permissive path for many years and is clearly well used, there are no objections to this proposed diversion. It will be helpful to have this formally recorded as the definitive route."
  - 13. One objection was received from the Open Spaces Society, who's representative commented, "We write to object to the proposed diversion, as it is far in excess of that required to allow the development to proceed.

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In fact, it could reasonably be argued that the development could proceed without any diversion at all, as walkers could easily negotiate the proposed hard standing."

14. Two further submissions were received from Scottish Power and Cadent Gas respectively, each stating that they had no objection.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

- a. In accordance with section 257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 ("TCPS") as amended by section 12 of the Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013:
- b. "(1A) Subject to the section 259, a competent authority may by Order authorise the stopping up or diversion of any footpath, bridleway or restricted byway if they are satisfied that-
- c. An application for planning permission and respected development have been made under Part 3, and
- d. if the application were granted it would be necessary to authorise the stopping up or diversion to enable the development to be carried out.
- e. The Council, as the Local Planning Authority, can make an Order diverting a footpath if it is satisfied that it is necessary to do so to enable development to be carried out, providing that the planning application has been formally registered with the Council.
- f. It appears necessary subject to planning permission to divert part of Public Footpath No. 12 in the Parish of Nether Alderley as illustrated on Plan No. TCPA/080, to allow the construction of a home office and art studio as detailed within the planning reference 24/2978M.
- g. The work of the Public Rights of Way team contributes to the Green aim for the Corporate Plan, the "thriving and sustainable place" priority and the policies and objectives of the Council's statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

## **Other Options Considered**

15. If the authority was to do nothing the development would obstruct the Public Right of Way.

# **Implications and Comments**

### Monitoring Officer/Legal

16. Once an Order is made it may be the subject of objections. If objections are not withdrawn, this removes the power of the Local Authority to confirm the Order itself and may lead to a hearing or Public Inquiry. It follows that the Committee decision may be confirmed or not confirmed. This process may involve additional legal support and resources.

### Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 17. If objections to an Order lead to a subsequent hearing/inquiry, the Council would be responsible for any costs involved in the preparation and conducting of such. The maintenance of the Public Right of Way would continue to be the responsibility of the landowner and Council in line with legislation. The associated costs would be borne within existing Public Rights of Way revenue and capital budgets.
- 18. See point 18 above.

### Policy

19. The work of the Public Rights of Way team contributes to the Vision of the Corporate Plan of a greener Cheshire East, with the aim of "a thriving and sustainable place", and the policies and objectives of the Council's statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

#### Vision - An open, fairer, greener Cheshire East

### Aim - 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 2027

### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

20. An assessment in relation to the Equality Act 2010 has been carried out by the Public Rights of Way Network Management and Enforcement Officer for the area and it is considered that the proposed diversion would be no less convenient to use than the current one.

### Human Resources

a. There are no direct implications for Human Resources.

### Risk Management

b. There are no direct implications for risk management.

### Rural Communities

c. 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)

d. There are no direct implications for Children and Young People

### Public Health

e. The recommendations are anticipated to offer a positive overall impact on the health and wellbeing of Cheshire East residents.

### Climate Change

f. The recommendations will help the Council to reduce its carbon footprint and achieve environmental sustainability by reducing energy consumption and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Access to Information								
Contact Officer:	Mark Greenhough. Public path orders officer							
	mark.greenhough@cheshireeast.gov.uk							
Appendices:	Consultation for the diversion of Public Footpath No.12 (part) in the parish of Nether Alderley. Plan No: TCPA/080							
Background Papers:	The background papers and files relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.							



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Highways & Transport Committe e	Report Reference	Title	Purpose of Report	Corporate Plan Priority	Lead Officer	Exemp t Item	Consultatio n	Equality Impact Assessmen t	Part of Budget and Policy Framewor k	Is the report for decision or scrutiny?
3 April 25										
03/04/25	HTC/23/24- 25	Service Budgets 2025/26 (Highways & Transport 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	Open	Director of Finance & Customer Services	No	No	No	Yes	Scrutiny and Decision
03/04/25	HTC/42/24- 25	Greater Bollin Trail and A556 Bowden Active Travel Link	To confirm the preferred corridor and strategy for the Greater Bollin Trail and recommend a preferred option for a Active Travel Link between Bowden and Altrincham.	Green	Executive Director of Place	No	No	No	No	Decision
03/04/25	HTC/44/24- 25	Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)	The Council's current Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)	Green	Executive Director of Place	No	Yes	Yes	No	decision

lune 2025			covers the period 2011- 2026. It is a statutory duty of the Council to prepare and publish a ROWIP, under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 s60, and it is therefore proposed to develop a new ROWIP.							
(draft date)										
19/06/25	TBC	Appointments to Sub Committees, Working Groups, Panels, Board and Joint Committees	To appoint members to the Public Rights of Way Consultative Group and to agree the Terms of Reference for the Public Rights of Way Consultative Group and to note the membership of the Enhanced Partnership Board.	Open	Head of Democratic Services and Governance	No	No	No	No	Decision
19/06/25	TBC	Final Outturn 2025/25	To note and comment on the final financial and performance	Open	Interim Executive Director Resources,	No	No	No	Yes	Decision/ Scrutiny

			outturn positions and (if necessary) to approve Supplementary		and S151 Officer					
			Estimates and Virements.							
Sept 2025 (draft date)										
18/09/25	TBC	First Financial Review 25/26	To note and comment on the First Financial Review and Performance position of 2025/26 and (if necessary) approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements.	Open	Interim Executive Director Resources, and S151 Officer	Νο	No	No	Yes	Scrutiny/Decision
18/09/25	HTC/14/24- 25	Application to approve a Lane Rental Scheme	To outline the process required to develop a Lane Rental Scheme and to consider implementation of the scheme	Open	Executive Director of Place	TBC	No	Yes	No	Decision
November 2025 (draft date)										
20/11/25	TBC	Second Financial Review 25/26	To note and comment on the Second Financial Review and Performance	Open	Interim Executive Director Resources, and S151 Officer	No	No	No	Yes	Scrutiny/Decision

20/11/25	TBC	Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2026/27- 2029/30	position of 2025/26, and (if necessary) approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements. To provide feedback in relation to their financial responsibilities as identified within the Constitution and linked to the budget alignment approved by the Finance	Open	Interim Executive Director Resources, and S151 Officer					Scrutiny
			Sub-Committee in March 2025							
January 2026										
22/01/26	TBC	Third Financial Review 2025/26	To note and comment on the Third Financial Review and Performance position of 2024/25, and (if necessary) approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements.	Open	Interim Executive Director Resources, and S151 Officer	No	No	No	Yes	Scrutiny
22/01/26	TBC	Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation	To provide feedback in relation to their financial	Open	Interim Executive Director Resources,	No	No	No	Yes	Scrutiny and Decision

		2026/27 to 2029/30 Provisional Settlement	responsibilities as identified within the Constitution and linked to the budget alignment approved by the Finance Sub-Committee in March 2025.		and S151 Officer					
April 2026										
02/4/26	TBC	Service Budgets 2026/27	To set out the allocation of approved budgets for 2025/26 for services under the Committee's remit, as determined by Finance Sub Committee	Open	Interim Executive Director Resources, and S151 Officer	No	No	No	Yes	Scrutiny

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