

Corporate Policy Committee

Agenda

Date:	Wednesday, 21st August, 2024
Time:	5.30 pm
Venue:	Committee Suites 1,2,3, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach, CW11 1HZ

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

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

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

1. **Apologies for Absence**

To note any apologies for absence from Members.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

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

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 5 - 14)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 June 2024.

For requests for further information

Contact: Nikki Bishop, Democratic Services Officer

Tel: 01270 686462

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

4. **Public Speaking/Open Session**

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

Members of the public wishing to speak are required to provide notice of this at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting.

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

5. **Submission of Transformation Plan** (Pages 15 - 120)

To consider the report which sets out progress of the council's transformation journey.

6. **Corporate Peer Challenge - Action Plan** (Pages 121 - 142)

To receive the latest draft Corporate Peer Challenge action plan.

7. **Proposed New Senior Management Structure** (Pages 143 - 166)

To consider the report which sets out the proposals, together with timescales, to review the senior management structure.

8. **Devolution - Further Update** (Pages 167 - 178)

To receive an update on the devolution direction from the new government.

9. **Membership of decision making and other bodies, chairs and vice chairs** (Pages 179 - 186)

To consider the report which sets out changes to Chairs and Vice Chairs and to seek agreement to membership changes of outside bodies.

10. **Work Programme** (Pages 187 - 188)

To consider the Work Programme and determine any required amendments.

11. **Minutes of Sub-Committees** (Pages 189 - 204)

To receive the minutes of the following sub-committees:

- Finance Sub-Committee meeting held on 25 June 2024.
- General Appeals Sub-Committee meeting held on 9 July 2024.
- Health and Wellbeing Board meeting held on 2 July 2024.

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

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

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

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

13. **Proposed New Senior Management Structure** (Pages 205 - 214)

To consider appendices 2 and 4 of the Senior Management Structure.

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

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Policy Committee**
held on Thursday, 13th June, 2024 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor S Corcoran (Chair)

Councillors C Bulman, D Clark, J Clowes, M Goldsmith, A Harrison,
N Mannion, C O'Leary, J Pearson, J Rhodes, L Wardlaw, A Moran and
D Edwardes (substitute for Cllr Gorman)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Rob Polkinghorne, Chief Executive
David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance
Adele Taylor, Interim Director of Finance and Customer Services
Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance
Karen Wheeler, Interim Director of Policy and Change
Phil Christian, Acting Head of Business Change
Michael Moore, Head of Communications
Josie Griffiths, Head of Audit and Risk Management
Nikki Bishop, Democratic Services Officer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Michael Gorman, Mick Warren and Jos Saunders. Councillors Arthur Moran and Liz Wardlaw were present as substitutes. Councillor David Edwardes was expected as substitute and would arrive late to the meeting.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor A Moran declared an interest in item 17 (Strategic Risk Register Assurance Report relating to ANSA, Orbitas and Tatton Park Enterprises). Councillor Moran stated he was an Executive Director and Chair of ANSA and would therefore leave the room and not participate in the debate on this matter.

Councillor M Goldsmith declared an interest in item 17 (Strategic Risk Register Assurance Report relating to ANSA, Orbitas and Tatton Park Enterprises). Councillor Goldsmith stated he was a Board Director of Orbitas and would therefore leave the room and not participate in the debate on this matter.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

5 CHESHIRE EAST PLAN 2024-25

The committee considered the report which presented an update to the Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2021-25 for the year 2024-25 and also set out the proposed next steps for the development of a new strategic plan for the Council to follow the current plan. Members noted that the plan would undergo minor editorial changes prior to its consideration at Full Council.

Members agreed that there would be a number of challenges both locally and nationally facing the authority over the coming months and queried the impact this would have on the proposed 2024-25 plan. It was highlighted that the future plan would continue to reflect the aims of the council and its priorities, and that the previous engagement undertaken had been taken into account in developing the 1-year plan and would be further built upon with further activity for a future 2025-onwards plan.

RESOLVED (by majority):

That the Corporate Policy Committee

1. Approve the development of a new Strategic Plan (Corporate Plan) for Cheshire East Council to follow the current plan.
2. Recommend to Full Council the Cheshire East Plan 2024-25 (Appendix 1).

6 DEVOLUTION - UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS

The committee considered the report which provided an update on the current position and proposed next steps for the Council with regard to devolution.

Members noted that devolution presented an opportunity for significant financial benefits and powers for the local authority and sub regional area however agreed that the makeup of any potential deal would need further consideration and scrutiny by the committee. Members agreed that the makeup of any deal should be of benefit to all local authorities and that member involvement was critical as discussions developed.

Members noted that whilst some adaptations would be needed, a devolution deal for a committee system local authority was achievable and that the financial challenges facing the authority would not stop discussions with government from progressing as many local authorities across the country were facing similar pressures.

Cllr David Edwardes arrived at 10.44am

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Policy Committee

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

7 ANNUAL COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT 2023-24

The committee received the report which provided a summary and analysis of complaints and compliments received by the Council during 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024.

Members queried the increase in complaints during 2023-24 and if this was linked to resource gaps across the authority and recent pulse survey results. It was confirmed that trends/themes of complaints were monitored and any complaints relating to time delays as a result of staffing gaps would inform discussions on resourcing and if this was sufficient.

Members asked for the total costs to the council in dealing with complaints and an indication of the impact of complaints on individual committee budgets. Officers committed to providing a written response.

Cllr Pearson arrived at 10.58am

Members queried highways related complaints and noted that these were dealt with by Ringway Jacobs. It was confirmed that not all enquiries to the council were dealt with as formal complaints, and these were often routine 'Service Requests' or 'insurance complaints'. Officers committed to providing a written response which would include a process chart for highways related enquiries and how these were dealt with. Officers also agreed to provide a written response in relation to the process for dealing with damage to cars as a result of potholes and the cost implications arising from these claims/the budget this came from.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Policy Committee

1. Note the complaints and compliments data, and the briefing material provided for 2023-24.
2. Note the issues raised within the report and improvements made in respect to the management of complaints across the council.

3. Note the council's compliance with the Corporate Complaints Policy and recommendations of the Local Government Ombudsman.

8 FINAL OUTTURN 2023/24

The committee received the report which set out the final outturn for 2023-24. Members considered the financial challenges being experienced by the Council and recognised the important activities aimed at minimising the impact on council services. Members noted that the final outturn for the council would be considered by the Finance Sub Committee on 25 June 2024.

Members noted corporate policy committee services had reported an underspend of £4.5m as a result of vacancy management, increased income, reduction in spend and underspend in ICT contact expenditure.

Members queried the underspend relating to vacancy management and noted that whilst the local authority had not stopped recruitment, a more rigorous approach to recruitment was in place to ensure that when a vacancy arose, senior officers considered the full options before progressing to replace leavers (if the role needed to be replaced like for like, or if it could be done differently, and consideration of acting up arrangements).

Members acknowledged that not all savings/underspend was positive and noted that there had been an underspend on staff training. Members agreed that staff development was critical and that individuals should be encouraged and supported to develop the expertise needed to deliver good services.

RESOLVED (by majority):

That the Corporate Policy Committee

1. Noted the factors leading to a positive Net Revenue final outturn of £4.5m underspend against a revised budget of £41.9m (10.7%) for Corporate Policy Committee Services.
2. Note the contents of Annex 1 and any financial mitigations decisions
The committee received the report which set out the final outturn for 2023-24.

9 PERFORMANCE REPORT – Q4 2023/24

The committee considered the report which provided an overview of organisational performance against the priorities and vision set out within the Council's 2021-25 Corporate Plan during Quarter 4 2023-24.

Members noted that the overall number of apprenticeships had decreased during Q4 due to the financial pressures facing the local authority and ongoing service restructures. It was confirmed that the number of supported internships would be expanded from September 2024 from 40, to 65.

Members noted that during Q4 the Council had contracted 237 agency workers totalling £3.6m. Members queried the total number of agency staff/consultants employed over the last year and the impact this has had on the budget. Officers committed to providing a written response.

It was confirmed that there had been a gradual increase in the number of EHCPs during Q4. Members requested further detail around the cause of the increase and the direction of travel for Q1 2024-25. Members raised concerns in relation to the performance of EHCPs being completed on time and noted this had significantly reduced during Q4. Officers committed to providing a written response.

Members highlighted that the council was a member of APSE which was a large voluntary public sector benchmarking service and queried why no benchmarking had been included in the report. Members agreed that it would be helpful to have this information in future. Officers confirmed that an updated approach would be taken to future performance reports, and these would include benchmarking data where possible.

The committee thanked staff across the organisation for their hard work, and recognised the pressure that vacancies had upon them. Members were pleased to note that staff turnover had improved, and that the number of agency staff had reduced during Q4.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Policy Committee note the organisational performance for Q4 of 2023-24.

10 SERVICE BUDGETS 2024/25 (CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE)

The committee considered the report which set out the allocation of the approved budgets for 2024-25 to the Corporate Policy Committee.

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for Cheshire East Council for the four years 2024/25 to 2027/28 had been approved by full Council on 27 February 2024. Service committees were being allocated budgets for 2024/25 in line with the approved MTFS. The financial reporting cycle would provide regular updates on progress on delivery of the budget change items, the forecast outturn position, progress on capital schemes, movement on reserves and details of any supplementary estimates and virements.

Members thanked officers for the report and the RAG ratings/commentary which set out clearly the progress on implementation of MTFS proposals for 2024-25.

Members discussed the recommendation to remove the saving relating to the parish compact item from the MTFS. Some concerns were raised in relation to the proposal as it was felt that this would generate savings for 2025-26 onwards. It was confirmed that this item had been investigated which highlighted that the proposal would require growth funding for an additional post to administer the service and therefore the proposal was to remove the item at this time however officers were committed to working more closely with town and parish councils.

RESOLVED (by majority):

That the Corporate Policy Committee

1. To note the decision of the Finance Sub Committee to allocate the approved revenue and capital budgets, related budget policy changes and earmarked reserved to the Corporate Policy Committee as set out in Appendix A.
2. To note the financial reporting timetable for 2024-25 set out in Appendix B as approved at Finance Sub Committee on 22 March 2024.
3. To note progress on the delivery of the MTFS 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.
4. Agree to remove the parish compact item from the MTFS as it is not deliverable at present.

11 APPOINTMENTS TO SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS, PANELS, BOARDS AND JOINT COMMITTEES

The Committee considered a report on the appointment of and appointments to sub-committees, working groups, panels, boards and joint committees for the 2024-25 municipal year. A list of nominations submitted by the political groups was circulated at the meeting.

Members noted the proposal that an Electoral and Polling District Review Sub Committee be appointed, with the same roles and responsibilities as the existing Electoral Review Sub Committee, together with additional powers to undertake a polling district review by 2025, as required by legislation.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Corporate Policy Committee

1. agrees the appointment of and appointments to sub-committees, working groups, panels, boards and joint committees for 2024-25, as set out in the report, as follows:

Constitution Working Group (6 members) (2:2:2:0)

Councillor J Clowes
Councillor L Crane
Councillor K Edwards
Councillor D Jefferay
Councillor C O'Leary
Councillor M Warren

Staffing Appeals Sub-Committee (pool of 10) (4:4:2:0)

Councillor L Anderson

Councillor R Bailey
Councillor D Clark
Councillor N Cook
Councillor E Hall
Councillor C Naismith
Councillor J Pratt
Councillor G Smith
Councillor L Wardlaw
Councillor F Wilson

General Appeals Sub-Committee (pool of 10) (4:4:2:0)

Councillor R Bailey
Councillor S Bennett-Wake
Councillor T Dean
Councillor S Edgar
Councillor H Faddes
Councillor E Gilman
Councillor R Moreton
Councillor C Naismith
Councillor B Puddicombe
Councillor L Smetham

Shared Services Joint Committee (3 members) (1:1:1:0)

Councillor J Bird
Councillor P Redstone
Councillor J Rhodes

Electoral and Polling District Review Sub Committee (7 members) (3:3:1)

Councillor S Corcoran
Councillor F Wilson
Councillor J Bratherton
Councillor D Jefferay
Councillor J Clowes
Councillor C O'Leary
Councillor J Pearson

Joint Member Scrutiny Task Group (3 members) (1:1:1:0)

Councillor B Drake
Councillor A Moran
Councillor J Pearson

Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board (1 member)

Councillor S Corcoran

Joint Extra Care Housing Management Board (1 member)

Councillor N Mannion

Cheshire East Health and Care Partnership Board (3 members)

Councillor J Clowes
Councillor A Moran
Councillor J Rhodes

Mental Health Partnership Board

Councillor J Snowball
Councillor M Edwards

Safeguarding Adults Board

Councillor R Vernon

2. Agrees the replacement appointments to the outside organisations to represent the local authority until May 2027, as follows:

Tatton Park Board

Councillor H Moss (Independent representative)

Councillor A Harrison (Conservative representative)

Manchester Airport Consultative Committee

Councillor L Braithwaite

3. Agrees that a sub-committee be appointed (Electoral and Polling District Review Sub-Committee) with the same roles and responsibilities as the existing Electoral Review Sub Committee, to make recommendations to the Corporate Policy Committee in respect of all matters relating to the Cheshire East Council Electoral Review and also to formally determine all matters relating to the Cheshire East Council Polling District Review, without any further reference to the Corporate Policy Committee.

4. Note the terms of reference of the bodies referred to in the report.

12 WORK PROGRAMME

The committee considered the Work Programme and noted the following:

- Workforce Terms and Conditions report would be considered by the committee in October 2024.
- Implementation of an Assurance Panel – the committee noted that due to pre-election restrictions, the LGA would not publish the Corporate Peer Challenge results until 8 July 2024 and therefore proposed that, due to the urgency of this matter, that the report be taken to Full Council in July. Members agreed that a briefing with all members as soon as possible after the LGA publication on 8 July would be needed, prior to debate at Full Council.
- The committee agreed that the Financial Outturn reports for the entire council, as well as corporate policy committee services, should be received by the committee going forward with the Q1 outturn scheduled for October 2024. Members stated that a summary indication of the direction of travel for Q2 would also be helpful in October.
- The committee agreed that horizon scanning was a critical part of the role of councillors and the committee and asked that consideration be given to preparing a report which sets out, post 5 July 2024 election/King's Speech a summary of the key announcements, changes and impact of services. Officers agreed to consider this further.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be noted.

13 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Finance Sub Committee held on Friday 22 March 2024 be received and noted.

14 REPORTING OF URGENT DECISIONS

RESOLVED:

That the committee note the urgent decision made by the Chief Executive on behalf of the committee relating to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Grant.

15 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER ASSURANCE REPORT Q4 2023-24

The committee considered the report which set out the activity of the council's Strategic Risk Register for Quarter 4 2023/24; January to March 2024.

Members stated that a number of risks set out within the report had remained unchanged since Q1 2023-24, such as 'Failure to adhere to governance processes' and queried if the mitigation actions needed to be reviewed. Officers confirmed that a detailed piece of work was underway to review the actions associated with strategic risks and provide assurance on the progress on actions identified, in terms of implementation and the impact they achieve.

The committee noted that Strategic Risk 13, Information Security and Cyber Threat and agreed that risk was a very real threat, which would have significant impact for the organisation. The committee welcomed the opportunity to receive a briefing on this matter and noted that a number of officer business continuity workshops were being held this month with colleagues from the Emergency Planning Service, which included a focus on cyber-attacks.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Policy Committee

1. Note the position of the Council's Strategic Risk Register for Q4 2023-24.

Councillor A Moran and Councillor M Goldsmith left the meeting at 12.18pm and did not return.

16 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972

on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

17 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER ASSURANCE REPORT

The committee considered the Strategic Risk Register for the council's wholly owned companies ANSA, Orbitas and Tatton Park Enterprises for the period Q4 2023-24.

RESOVED:

That the Corporate Policy Committee

1. Note the Strategic Risk Registers for Q4 2023-24 of ANSA, Orbitas and Tatton Park Enterprises.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 1.10 pm

Councillor S Corcoran (Chair)

OPEN

Corporate Policy Committee

21 August 2024

Submission of Transformation Plan

Report of: Rob Polkinghorne – Chief Executive

Report Reference No: CP/29/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

- 1 The report sets out on the progress of the council's transformation journey.
- 2 It asks members of the committee to consider the draft transformation plan prior to it being submitted to the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).
- 3 There is a requirement, in order for the Council to access Exceptional Financial Support, to submit a transformation plan to MHCLG by no later than the 27th August 2024. This report is to enable members to scrutinise the plan ahead of that submission.

Executive Summary

- 4 The first stage of the transformation process has been to identify those opportunities that offer the greatest value as well as the initial quantification of the resource that will be required to implement those changes.
- 5 Over the last 12 weeks, a significant amount of work has been undertaken, and more than 100 opportunities have been identified, with potential savings identified in the range of £59-£91 million over the next 4 financial years. These figures do not include a range of digital projects that have an estimated £14 million benefits, and some of the other opportunities identified through the work to date which required further development through a 'rapid' business case development process.

- 6 Several deep dives into service areas have also been undertaken to explore the opportunities in more detail, these include:
- (a) Early intervention and prevention
 - (b) Strategic asset management and economic growth
 - (c) Becoming a digital first organisation
 - (d) Adult social care commissioning and brokerage
 - (e) Children services placement optimisation

RECOMMENDATIONS

Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the transformation plan contained at Appendix A and the submission of the plan to MHCLG by no later than 27 August 2024.
2. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council to take all necessary steps including the relevant decisions to implement the transformation plan.
3. Agree that the committee will receive regular updates on the progress of the transformation plan.

Background

- 7 In March of this year, the transformation approach for the council was approved by Corporate Policy Committee. As part of that report the appointment of a delivery partner to help the Council with its transformation journey was approved. Inner Circle, following a competitive procurement process, were appointed as the Council's transformation partner on the 29th April 2024.
- 8 Since May, a blended team consisting of colleagues from Inner Circle (councils delivery partner) and the Council has been working together to undertake a full review across all services of the Council.
- 9 The review yielded more than 120 opportunities, with a total potential savings opportunity in the region of £91m over the next 4 years. In addition, a range of digital projects that have an estimated £14 million benefits have been identified which require further development through a 'rapid' business case development process.
- 10 As stated in previous reports, the Council must transform the way it delivers its services. The reality is that the organisation needs to spend £100m less by 2028.

- 11 To achieve this a robust and deliverable transformation plan working with Inner Circle has been established which is contained at Appendix A.
- 12 The proposed transformation plan will support the delivery of approved/proposed savings, cost avoidance, cost mitigation and identifying new savings for the coming years.
- 13 There are six programmes proposed, each containing a range of projects and other initiatives:
 - (a) Workforce
 - (b) Social Care
 - (c) Place
 - (d) Early Intervention and Prevention
 - (e) Digital
 - (f) Special Projects
- 14 Additional support will be required, across all services, to support the change process and implement new ways of working, particularly if this is to happen at the pace required to ensure financial stability in the short-term as well as over the longer-term.
- 15 The plan is necessary to satisfy government and in support of the current conditional agreement to provide Exceptional Financial Support.
- 16 This information must be provided to government prior to the 27th August 2024 and therefore final member approval via committee on 21st August 2024 is needed. The provisions within the Constitution at Chapter 3 Part 1 section 2 paragraphs 4.20 and 4.21 as to 'Referral of Decisions' therefore do not apply as the decision is 'urgent' as it is in the public and the Council's interest that the transformation plan is submitted by 27th August 2024 for the reasons stated above. To wait for the requisite 5 clear working days before implementation of any decision as per the recommendations would prevent its timely submission.

Consultation and Engagement

- 17 A Manager "Share and Support" session took place in July, to connect, inform and update the workforce on the transformation programme and potential changes ahead.
- 18 Members received briefings in July, with the choice of attending a face to face or Teams event. These briefings communicated the roles and responsibilities, as well as outlining the pace of change required to

support financial stability whilst providing the opportunity for members to have visibility and engagement regarding the proposals.

- 19 The briefings were provided by the transformation board and transformation partner alongside the Leader and Deputy Leader.
- 20 The information shared, to all stakeholders, is imperative to the success of the transformation programme and establishes a shared understanding of the scale of the challenge that the local authority is undertaking. The various events, clearly communicated that transformation, and the associated planned change activities, are everyone's role, to consolidate how all the workforce and members need to work together, as we move in to Phase 2 of the programme.
- 21 Monthly Trade Union briefings have been arranged to update on the progress of the plan.
- 22 Regular communications have been sent to all staff through Team Voice, Core Brief and Centranet articles to update on transformation activity and bring people on the transformation journey.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 23 The current financial situation of the council means it has no option but to transform the way it delivers services.
- 24 Transformation on this scale represents a new and difficult challenge for the council. The programme will be delivering an ambitious and far-reaching portfolio of change programmes and projects, that address a range of fundamental issues the council faces in responding to the changing needs and expectations of residents and communities.
- 25 Recommendations 1 ensures that Corporate Policy Committee is fully conversant with the information that will be provided to central government in support of the current conditional agreement to provide Exceptional Financial Support. This information must be provided to government prior to the 27th August 2024.
- 26 As part of any large scale and dynamic change programmes, it is important to continue to flex and adapt to ensure that the council continues to meet its strategic objectives and the changing operating environment.
- 27 It is important that the future transformation plan is compiled with this in mind as it will require us to effectively manage change, alongside building and maintaining relationships with external partners and developing new financial and staffing structures.

- 28 The emerging opportunities will require a structured transformation approach which will be supported by dedicated resource both from Inner Circle and an internal council.
- 29 We are now starting to look ahead to the medium-term, setting our strategic direction and ambitions for the organisation through a defined operating model which is likely to need to be fundamentally different to the one today. This will be developed alongside a new Cheshire East Plan for 2025 and beyond.
- 30 A new operating model will articulate how the organisation will run at a future point in time when the transformation from the 'As-Is' state to the 'To-Be' has been achieved. The basic parameters that need to be considered in that model are:
- (a) The outcomes and benefits of what we offer, including Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
 - (b) The target client(s), customer(s), and resident(s) that the model is looking to address.
 - (c) Relations with key stakeholders including the motivations to work in partnership.
 - (d) The structure of the organisation to ensure that the core capabilities are in place to deliver.
 - (e) Configuration of activities and services and how we deliver systems through the use and adoption of technology.
 - (f) The overall cost and core financial structure of the organisation.
- 31 The Council will need to deliver at pace the opportunities that have being identified; it is important to recognise that the transformation programme is one of several elements that need to be progressed in parallel to deliver stability in the council's financial position, the others being:
- (g) Sound day-to-day budget management.
 - (h) Monitoring delivery of savings, growth, and income in MTFS (Medium Term Financial Strategy) 2024-28.
 - (i) Developing robust proposals (business cases) for MTFS 2025-29; and
 - (j) Recommendations from LGA Corporate Peer Challenge
 - (k) Establishment of the independent assurance panel.

- 32 As part of the submission of a transformation programme plan to MHCLG it is important to recognise that over the past 18 months Adults, Health and Integration, Children and Families, Corporate services and the Place directorates have all been undertaking bespoke, service specific programmes of improvement, change and transformation.
- 33 Whilst each of these standalone programmes will individually deliver efficiencies and improve outcomes, we are missing opportunities to identify those changes that will deliver the greatest benefit. We must adopt consistent approaches to change, deploy time and resource appropriately and ensure that we prioritise the actions that will make the biggest difference to deliver savings and change in the most effective and efficient way.

Other Options Considered:

- 34 The Council, to achieve the required savings identified within the MTFS must transform how it currently delivers its services, there is not an option to do nothing. The only viable option to progress the transformation plan as quickly as possible.

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	The Council would not meet the conditions for Exceptional Financial Support. There would be no access to the capitalisation of revenue expenditure that was required to manage in-year financial risks. Without the change required to create sustainable finances the council may be unable to fulfil its statutory obligations.	Insufficient funding to fulfil statutory requirements of the Council. This could lead to an unlawful financial position that requires the issue of a s114 report.
Transformation, resourced in house	Reduced costs associated with procurement of a delivery partner, development, and ownership within existing resource.	Existing capacity and/or capability is insufficient to deliver the transformation programme resulting in the required level of savings not being achieved.

Transformation resourced completely externally	Rapid deployment of resources to achieve savings, up-front cost required and ongoing costs.	This option is not financially sustainable in the long term.
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Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 35 The request for Exceptional Financial Support falls within the amended legislation introduced under The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023. This inserted an amended Section 12A as a trigger event within the Local Government Act 2003, by way of section 12A (2)(c)(i) in relation to capital finance risk management.
- 36 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 set out in section 12B.
- 37 The delivery of transformation plan and individual programmes or activities under the transformation programme will require individual consideration decision making and reporting. This is proposed to be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Deputy. Ongoing oversight will be required by the transformation board as well as the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring officer. It is also noted that the Assurance Panel will provide ongoing scrutiny and there will be regular reports back to committee to ensure ongoing full member oversight.
- 38 It is necessary for the decisions set out in the report to be made and implemented within a short timescale and it is appropriate that the provisions within the Constitution as to referral, do not apply in this instance.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 39 The council has set a balanced budget for 2024/25. In section 25 of the MTFS report, the section 151 officer stated:
 - (a) The council must transform to create sustainable services and support infrastructure projects that reflect 'whole life' costs. This must cover the medium to long term and be backed by reserves that can manage any emerging risks.

- (b) It is highly likely that the council will require additional capacity to manage this programme, in a way that is yet to be determined, but it will inevitably require additional funding, which will need to be met from within existing resource.
- 40 The council received a grant award from the LGA for £100,000 to support the transformation programme which is being used to offset the Phase 1 costs.
- 41 The council received confirmation from MHCLG that they are minded to approve the council's request for Exceptional Financial Support. However, there are several conditions that will need to be met prior to formal approval, in summary the council must:
 - (a) Undergo an external assurance review on the council's financial position and financial management policies, and the council's work to improve its productivity and efficiency.
 - (b) Produce an improvement and transformation programme within six months (27th August 24) that is focused on delivering the council's key objectives and securing the medium-term financial position.
 - (c) The programme should incorporate any recommendations identified as part of the external review.
- 42 Members agreed at full council to establish a budget envelope of up to £3m to fund Phase 2 of the transformation programme. This will be funded through existing reserves of the council in the first instance. This funding will need to be replaced either through any initial delivery of in-year savings or through identifying any additional flexible capital receipts that can be used to fund transformation work. Without this investment, the council will not have the capacity to deliver the required level of savings that have been identified in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, of at least £100m over the life of the MTFS.
- 43 This transformation plan links closely with other improvement work, particularly in Children's services where the council must respond to the external inspection and the need to improve outcomes for our children and young people. This transformation programme includes investment across all service areas but is also aligned with the improvement plan following our ILACS (Inspection of Local Authority Childrens Services) inspection.

Policy

- 44 The principle and themes of the transformation programme are aligned with the council's vision, priorities and values as outlined in the Corporate Plan 2021-2025 and refreshed Cheshire East Plan 2024/25.

- 45 The transformation programme seeks to directly support the aims of being an open and enabling organisation, a council which empowers and cares about people, working together with residents and partners, and a thriving and sustainable place.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

- 46 The fundamental principles underpinning the need to transform have equality, diversity, and inclusion as a golden thread at the heart of all plans for change.
- 47 At all stages of transformation, consideration is given to the Public Sector Equality Duty under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010 and it is recognised that we must remove or minimise disadvantage and take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing all protected characteristics such as a disability or age.
- 48 The duty also provides that public authorities must encourage persons with a protected characteristic to participate and influence where participation and engagement by such persons is disproportionately low.
- 49 The previous periods of public service change have impacted disproportionately across communities. At times, those stakeholders and residents who have the greatest needs have lost out relative to others.
- 50 The Transformation programme has an aim to improve the experience of all customers when interacting with the council and will seek to ensure that the council recognises and addresses individual needs and/or barriers to accessing services now and in the future.
- 51 An equality impact assessment has been undertaken for the overall programme and is included in Appendix D of this report.
- 52 The transformation programme is likely to affect the following:
- (a) Cheshire East Council staff – The transformation programme will establish a target operating model for the council, which will be fundamentally different to the one in place now. When an organisation embarks on transformation of this scale, it can either have a positive or negative impact on culture depending on the approaches taken therefore, it is critical that the transformation programme builds on the culture and behaviour work which has already been embedded into the organisation, and is key to forming cross directorate relationships, ensuring in collaboration, transformation is integral to the way the Council conducts its business.

- (b) Residents of Cheshire East Council – this includes people of all characteristics who live within Cheshire East and will be affected by changes to the services.
- (c) Non-residents who use council services that will change as a part of the transformation plan – People who travel through the area or into the area for work/leisure may be impacted by some of the changes.
- (d) Anyone who contacts the council – Invest in digital technologies to transform processes will change the way people contact the council. Those who are not digitally aware or are digitally excluded may require specialised support and guidance.
- (e) Partners and Service Providers – Changes in information sharing and integration between council departments and partners.
- (f) Businesses owners – The plan could change how a business operates and the customers who visit.
- (g) Community Organisations within Cheshire East Council boundaries – The plan could change how an organisation operates and the customers who visit.
- (h) Members/Councillors – May get increased queries from residents about the changes adding to their workload.

53 Whilst at this stage, the full detail of all the changes is not fully known, it is expected that Equality Impact Assessments will be completed at key stages of the transformation programme, in particular for each specific project / workstream where significant change to is occurring. This will ensure that the impacts of change, on both internal and external stakeholders, will form an essential part of decision making.

Human Resources

54 It is important to recognise when an organisation embarks on transformation of this scale, it can either have a positive or negative impact on culture depending on the approaches taken therefore, it is critical that the transformation programme builds on the culture and behaviour work which has already been embedded into the organisation.

55 The work on the decision-making accountability work, will help to stabilise the organisation ensuring that there is buy-in from all levels of the organisation to contribute to the success of the overall programme.

56 The transformation programme will establish a target operating model for the council, which will be fundamentally different to the one in place now.

Risk Management

- 57 To successfully achieve the objective of the transformation programme, each of the opportunities that have been identified will need to be delivered, and there remains the distinct possibility that further measures will need to be taken. The council will therefore need to consider and define its appetite for risk as part of its transformation programme to support informed decision making, reduce uncertainty, and to ensure focus on priorities.
- 58 A risk appetite defines the amount and type of risk that an organisation is willing to take to meet strategic objectives, and risk thresholds establish the boundaries outside of which an organisation is not prepared to venture in the pursuit of long-term objectives. Table 1 sets out the descriptions of risk appetites in the council's risk management framework.
- 59 Whilst the council is not averse to taking risks, there are individual aspects of risk appetites where a more cautious, or risk averse approach is appropriate. For example, in relation to statutory obligations, legal responsibilities, and fraud.
- 60 In other areas, a minimalist, cautious, and open appetite can be appropriate – particularly where existing operational systems of work can be developed or enhanced.

TABLE 1	
Appetite	Description
Hungry / High Risk Appetite 5	Eager to be innovative and choose activities that focus on maximising opportunities to achieve objectives (with additional benefits and goals) and offering potentially very high reward, even if these activities carry a very high residual risk that may result in reputation damage, financial loss or exposure.
Open / Moderate Risk Appetite 4	Willing to undertake activities seeking to achieve a balance between a high likelihood of successful delivery and a high degree of reward and value for money. Activities themselves may potentially carry, or contribute to, a high degree of residual risk.
Cautious / Modest Risk Appetite 3	Willing to accept / tolerate a degree of risk in certain circumstances when selecting which activities to undertake to achieve key objectives, deliverables, or initiatives, where we have identified scope to achieve significant reward and/or opportunity. Activities undertaken may carry a high degree of inherent risk that is deemed controllable to a large extent.
Minimalist / Low Risk Appetite 2	Preference to undertake activities considered to be very safe in the achievement of key deliverables or initiatives. Activities will only be taken where they have a low degree of inherent risk. The

	associated potential for reward / pursuit of opportunity is not a key driver in selecting activities.
Averse / Zero Risk Appetite 1	Avoidance of risk and uncertainty in achievement of key deliverables or initiatives is paramount. The council is not willing to accept risks under any circumstances and activities undertaken will only be those considered to carry virtually no inherent risk.

- 61 In the context of the objective of the transformation programme, the wider financial position of the organisation, and the decision making required to achieve successful delivery, understanding the risk appetite in relation to an individual decision, and its part in the wider transformation programme will be key information. The specific nature of the risk category relevant to the decision should also be considered, for example, governance risk, financial risk, people risk, reputational risk, and partnership risk.
- 62 Several of the opportunities being considered will be subject to business case development, and approval at the relevant committees will form part of a critical path; members should take due regard to the risk that if a decision is not progressed then equivalent savings will need to be identified.
- 63 The council's Strategic Risk Register includes those risks which materially threaten the organisation's ability to achieve its strategic goals, and the mitigation action for each of those risks will have dependencies on the transformation programme. There are specific risks associated with the organisation's ability to transform, which are currently rated as critical risks.
- (a) **SR07 – Leadership Capacity:** There are a number of vacancies and temporary acting up arrangements in place in Cheshire East council's leadership team, which limits its capacity and prevents the team from operating as effectively as possible. Without the right capacity across the leadership team, the organisation is unable to flex and respond to its challenges.
- (b) **SR08: Ability to Achieve Organisation Change:** The council is unable to achieve organisational change due to a lack of resources and capacity to focus on transformation as people focus on the delivery of business as usual. Recently received advice from government commissioners advised that organisational change capacity is a key ingredient to support the council in delivering transformation to achieve medium to long term change that will support achievement of savings and also, in the event of a section 114 notice being issued, organisational change capacity is also essential to deliver necessary actions arising from interventions.

Rural Communities

- 64 Any impact on rural communities will be considered as part of the transformation programme. *Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)*
- 65 In Children and Families significant work reviewing SEND services has been undertaken in conjunction with the Department of Education to identify what change is required to ensure long-term financial affordability and sustainability of services for the council.
- 66 Also, a broader programme of service transformation under the banner of the Together Strategy – a 4-year programme to excellence is part of the MTFS to ensure we are doing different for less with further integration and practice improvement.
- 67 Adults, Health, and Integration have reviewed social work practice and commissioned care services. Through targeted activities they are supporting more people to stay in their own homes where that is the most cost-effective option, supporting more people to train to work in social care services, and developing business cases to build new accommodation, so that people can have the right home for each stage of their lives. The department is also adopting new tools to support the development of pricing strategies and negotiating approaches for commissioned services.

Public Health

- 68 A key consideration of the transformation programme must be on addressing the large difference in residents' health across the borough, this will involve the council working with partners to improve health outcomes.
- 69 Health improvements will only be made by embedding public health considerations across all local authority functions where appropriate.

Climate Change

- 70 The transformation programme will focus on all aspects of the council's plan, this must include the activities that are required to achieve carbon neutrality by 2027.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Christopher Allman- Director of Transformation

Appendices:	Draft Transformation Plan – Appendix A Equality Impact Assessment – Appendix B
Background Papers:	None.



Cheshire East Transformation Plan

Draft Version 2 | 02.08.2024



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Executive summary

Context

Cheshire East Council faces its most challenging set of circumstances since it was formed. Financial pressures are driving the need to close a £100 million budget gap to ensure financial sustainability and avoid issuing a S114 notice. Recent external review and inspections have identified several areas where the organisation requires significant transformation and improvement. At the same time the Council needs to reset its operating model and define its ambitions to help it capitalise on the borough's strengths as well as being responsive to new developments including a new national government.

The Council is preparing to launch a Transformation Portfolio to shape and deliver the widespread, fundamental changes it anticipates that it needs to make to respond to these challenges.

It has already appointed an external transformation partner, Inner Circle Consulting and collaborated with them to identify a range of opportunities that could help the Council address financial and strategic challenges. It has carried out a readiness assessment of its current capability and capacity to successfully deliver the complex programme of change required. This work has led to the development of this Transformation Plan.

The Programme

This Transformation Portfolio will take multiple years to deliver, given the amount of change involved. The roadmap visual below illustrates how the work will be sequenced and how benefits may be realised over time.

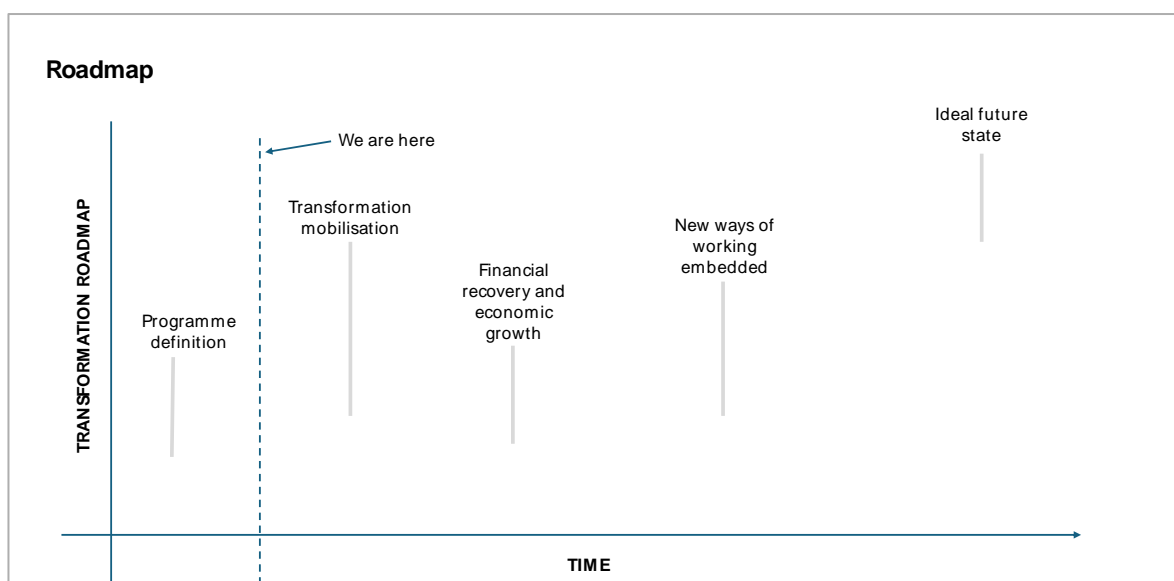


Figure 1. High-level Transformation Portfolio roadmap.

The projects that form part of this Programme are estimated to deliver between £59 – 91 million in savings, income or cost avoidance over the next four financial years. These figures do not include a range of digital projects that have an estimated £14 million benefits, and

some of the other opportunities identified through the work to date¹. The charts below show the benefits profile for both the low and high range of estimates.

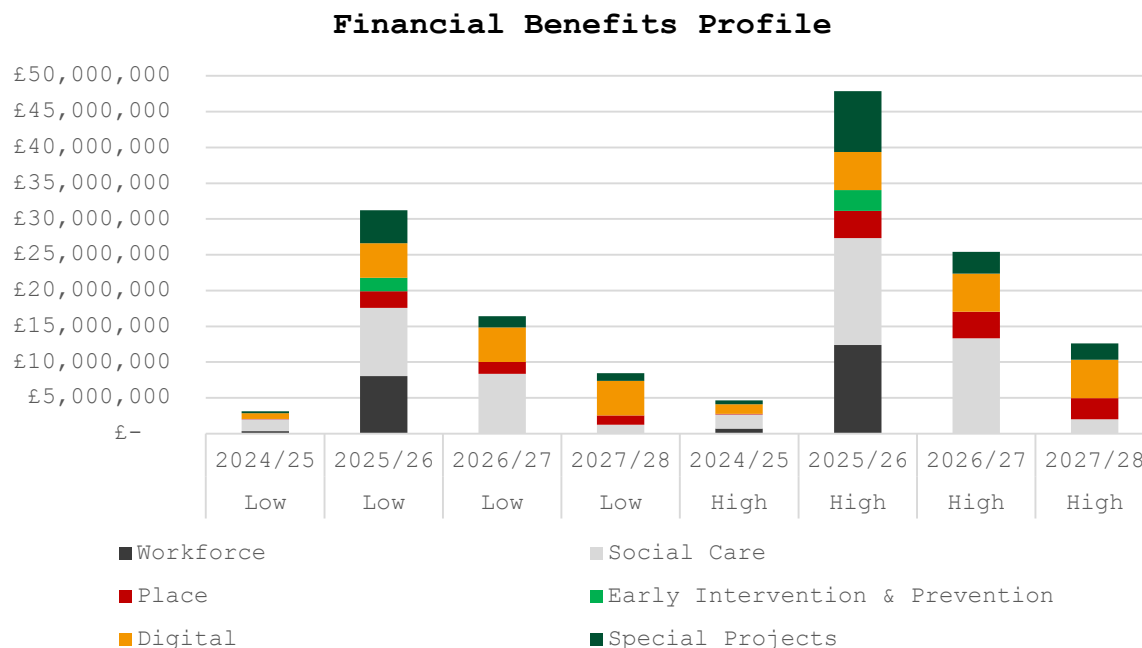


Figure 2. Profile of financial benefits by programme with both low and high estimates included.

There is a range of other projects in the pipeline that are anticipated to realise further financial benefits that will help the council close the budget gap, however these will need to be assessed before including within the Programme.

The Portfolio will comprise six programmes each containing a range of projects and other initiatives. The table below provides a summary explanation of each programme, and a list of projects and initiatives included (or linked to it from other, in-flight programmes).

It should be noted that the table captures those initiatives that form part of the first tranche of work to be delivered by the Programme – new projects will be scoped and considered for inclusion over the life of the Programme.

Programme: Workforce	
Description	Constituent projects and initiatives
Design and delivery of a new target operating model encompassing staffing, ways of working, capabilities and culture.	WF1: Target Operating Model WF2: Agency Staff WF3: Workforce Productivity
Programme: Social Care	
Description	Constituent projects and initiatives
Projects to transform high-needs, high-care / statutory social care services.	SC1: Health & Social Care Partnership Case Review (H&SC PCR) – Adults SC2: H&SC PCR – Children's SC3: Pathways for Adulthood / Transitions

¹ It does not include any benefits from Grant Funding, SEND/Home-to-School Transport, Partnership Health and Wellbeing commissioning, or Reducing Supported Living innovation (building upon the Learning Disabilities support project).

Note: Adult Social Care Cost & demand Modelling, ASC Fees & Charging, Reablement and ASC workforce development will all report in but not form part of the Programme.

SC4: Commissioning & Brokerage
SC5: Learning Disabilities Provision
SC6: Reunification
SC7/8: Children in Care (Under-10 + Step Down)
SC9: Children's (CSC) Cost & Demand modelling

Programme: Place

Description

Projects and ongoing initiatives that will transform the Council's approach to place-based services, shaping the local economy and use of Council assets.

Constituent projects and initiatives

PL1: Advertising
PL2: Corporate Landlord
PL3: Asset strategy refresh
PL4: Automatic Number Plate Recognition enforcement
PL5: Specialist housing
PL6: Libraries
PL7: Tatton Park
PL8: Waste
PL9: Alternative Service Delivery Vehicle review
PL10: Economic strategy

Programme: Early Intervention and Prevention

Description

Develop a whole-council response to supporting residents to become more resilient, self-sufficient and avoid crises requiring intensive support. This also aims to manage long-term demand for services.

Constituent projects and initiatives

EIP1: Early intervention and prevention
EIP2: Customer

Programme: Digital

Description

Digitally enabled projects and programmes that will realise benefits for the Council and residents.

Constituent projects and initiatives

To be agreed as part of a prioritisation exercise, but likely to include a broad range of initiatives.

Programme: Special Projects

Description

Projects that do not fit neatly within any of the above programmes but will deliver important benefits linked to the financial and strategic objectives of the Council.

Constituent projects and initiatives

SP1: Fees & Charges
SP2: Third Party Spend
SP5: Outbound mail
SP3: Grant Funding
SP4: Income recovery & debt
SP6: Council Tax banding



Building transformational capability

The Council has assessed its current ability to deliver a programme of this scale and complexity and recognises that it will take time to build the required capabilities and capacity. It is working with a transformation partner to mobilise the programme and deliver the work, and the plan includes some activities to boost the Council's ability to become self-sufficient in the future.

The main element of this capacity boosting work is the set-up of a new Transformation Programme Management Office (PMO). The PMO will take responsibility for setting up programme infrastructure (including governance, delivery methodology and support for staff) that will be used to deliver the work. The PMO will also champion project management best practice and build capacity through support, challenge, skills transfer and training, so that the Council is able to move towards managing the programme on its own.

Mobilisation

Over the next month the Council has a considerable amount of work to complete to prepare the organisation to deliver the Transformation Portfolio. The main activities it needs to complete by the end of September 2024 are:

- Secure the relevant permissions, funding and delegated decision-making to run the programme.
- Set up the PMO and programme infrastructure so that the Council is ready to deliver and manage the work.
- Rationalise the current portfolio of projects to free up resources for the high priority work that will make the greatest contribution to the Council's strategic objectives.
- Mobilise project teams and develop detailed delivery plans for the work that is due to start with the launch of the programme.
- Develop and launch a communications and engagement plan that supports the transformation agenda and brings staff and partners on the journey so they can adopt and sustain changes required.



Introduction

[Introduction from the Leader and the Chief Executive – TBC]

Context

Strategic context

Political context

Cheshire East Council operates under a committee system. This means that most decisions around how the Council operates and spends money are made by politically proportionate decision-making Service Committees.

There is no overall control, and the Council is led in a joint administration partnership between Labour and Independent Councillors.

The Council also elected a new Leader, Councillor Nick Mannion, at the most recent Full Council meeting in July 2024. This would have had the potential to disrupt the programme however Councillor Mannion has been engaged throughout the development of the Transformation Portfolio in his previous capacity as a Committee Chair, through regular officer briefings.

The democratic structure in Cheshire East can at times present a risk to transformation activities, as the political leadership may change throughout any programme of work and decision-making by committee can take longer than a cabinet leadership structure. These risks should be mitigated through a strong programme of engagement with all committees, committee chairs and the wider members to bring them along on the journey and through delegation of key decision-making to senior officers to enable change at pace.

The Cheshire East Plan

The Cheshire East Plan 2021-25 was recently refreshed for 2024/25 and comprises three broad objectives, under which there are 20 priorities:

- **An open and enabling organisation** - provide strong community leadership and work transparently with our residents, businesses and partners
- **A council which empowers and cares about people** - reduce inequalities, promote fairness and opportunity for all and support the most vulnerable residents
- **A thriving and sustainable place** - lead communities to protect and enhance the environment, tackle the climate emergency and drive sustainable development

The table below sets out these priorities, linked to the three main aims.

Aim	Priorities
An open and enabling organisation	<p>1.1 Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making.</p> <p>1.2 Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation.</p> <p>1.3 Support a sustainable financial future for the council, through service development, improvement and transformation.</p> <p>1.4 Look at opportunities to bring more income into the borough.</p> <p>1.5 Support and develop our workforce to be confident, motivated, innovative, resilient and empowered.</p> <p>1.6 Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents.</p>

A council which empowers and cares about people	<p>2.1 Work together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient.</p> <p>2.2 Reduce health inequalities across the borough.</p> <p>2.3 Protect and support our communities and safeguard children, adults at risk and families from abuse, neglect and exploitation.</p> <p>2.4 Be the best Corporate Parents to our children in care.</p> <p>2.5 Support all children to have the best start in life.</p> <p>2.6 Increase opportunities for all children and young adults with additional needs.</p> <p>2.7 Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential.</p> <p>2.8 Reduce the reliance on long term care by improving services closer to home and providing more extra care facilities, including dementia services.</p>
A thriving and sustainable place	<p>3.1 A great place for people to live, work and visit.</p> <p>3.2 Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods.</p> <p>3.3 Reduce impact on the environment.</p> <p>3.4 A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel.</p> <p>3.5 Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all.</p> <p>3.6 Be a carbon neutral council by 2027.</p>

A new Cheshire East Plan is due to be developed by the end of this financial year for 2025 and beyond. Based upon the work so far, the future priorities are likely to be similar to those in the current plan but will also be informed by the council's improvement and transformation activity, overall ambitions for its communities and growth, and aligned to the MTFS.

The Transformation Portfolio should not consider financial impact alone; it should also aim to support the delivery of these priorities in the Council Plan. Consequently the Programme will incorporate these into assessment and prioritisation frameworks to ensure the work aligns with the Plan.

External reviews

The Council has recently either commissioned, or been subject of, external reviews.

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge – a peer challenge was carried out in March 2024 and the report published in June 2024 with a set of 18 recommendations for the Council. A detailed action plan has been produced.

Decision-making accountability (DMA) review – the Council has also commissioned the LGA to carry out a review of its senior management structure, with a view to establishing a model which promotes clear responsibilities and accountabilities and efficient decision-making.

Ofsted Inspection – the national body carried out a 2-week inspection of the Council's Children's Services, giving it an overall rating of Inadequate with particular emphasis on experience of care leavers, whilst noting that there had been some areas of improvement since the last review. An improvement plan has been agreed.



Where relevant, the findings and recommendations of these reviews will need to be incorporated into the projects delivered through a Transformation Portfolio.

Appointment of transformation partner

The Council has chosen to commission an external body to provide support in shaping, mobilising and delivering a Transformation Portfolio, having understood that it doesn't yet have capacity to deliver the fundamental transformation to address the financial challenges it faces.

It went out to procure a transformation partner through the Bloom framework during April 2024 and selected Inner Circle Consulting, initially to help it identify, prioritise and plan delivery of a portfolio of initiatives that would help close the budget gap. This work is set out in the 'Work to date' section later in this document.

Internal capacity

The Council faces an unprecedented set of challenges that require a huge amount of change, and exceptional transformation capacity. It is framing this work in terms of four main priorities:

- **Ofsted improvement activity** – addressing the shortcomings identified in the recent inspection of Children's Services.
- **MTFS** – delivering the planned savings as part of the balanced budget and making robust plans for reductions as part of this year's budget setting process.
- **Peer Challenge** – implementing the recommendations from the LGA that are intended to improve the ability of the organisation to perform effectively as a council.
- **Transformation** – delivering a programme of more ambitious, cross-cutting transformational changes that aim to re-shape the organisation and constituent services so that the Council is able to support better outcomes within a reduced set of resources in future.

The organisation is aware that these four priorities represent a higher volume of work, and therefore capacity, than it has previously experienced. It does not have an established corporate project and programme delivery framework that will help it manage this change effectively. Therefore, it will invest in developing a robust delivery methodology, governance framework and capacity to equip it for delivery of this programme.

It understands that it may need to invest in additional capacity to support the delivery. The resourcing of external capacity will form part of the mobilisation of the Transformation Portfolio.

Key corporate risks

The Council maintains Risk Management Framework and regularly reviews the biggest strategic risks to the organisation at Corporate Policy Committee. The biggest risks have strong links with the drivers of need for the Transformation Portfolio. They include the following:

- Failure to Achieve the MTFS – as set out in the Financial context section.
- Dedicated School Grant Deficit – driven by demand for SEND services and being addressed through the Delivering Better Value programme.
- Increased Demand for Adult's Services – anticipated increases in demand for support by an ageing demographic.
- Complexity and Demand for Children's Services – increases in the demand for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) support.
- Leadership Capacity – the capacity of senior officers to manage the organisation given the level of vacancies.
- Ability to Achieve Organisation Change – ability to change including potential barriers linked to culture, capabilities, etc. (covered in the Organisational readiness assessment section).

- Failure to Manage the Consequences of Policy Uncertainty and National Policy Frameworks – the ability of the council to effectively horizon scan and influence national and regional developments.
- Stakeholder Expectation & Communication – the ability of the Council to bring residents along on the journey for the changes it anticipates that it will need to make to address the main challenges.
- Information Security and Cyber Threat – being mitigated through delivery of the IT-led Information Assurance and Data Management programme.

Financial context

Cheshire East Council must close a £100 million budget gap over the next four years. Failure to do so will mean that the Council will need to issue a S114 Notice, effectively declaring itself bankrupt. The consequences of this are likely that MHCLG will intervene, appointing commissioners with the sole objective of rebalancing the budget regardless of long-term local consequences for residents and the borough. It is likely that proposed budget cuts will not align with the strategic or political ambitions of leaders in Cheshire East, therefore, it is imperative that financial recovery is achieved in a timely manner.

As part of this, it must also build its reserves back up, having used a large portion of them recently to cover cost pressures. There is a target of increasing reserves by £18.5 million by 2027/28, included in the £100 million target.

There is also a £79 million gap in the Council's DSG budget that the Delivering Better Value programme is aiming to address.

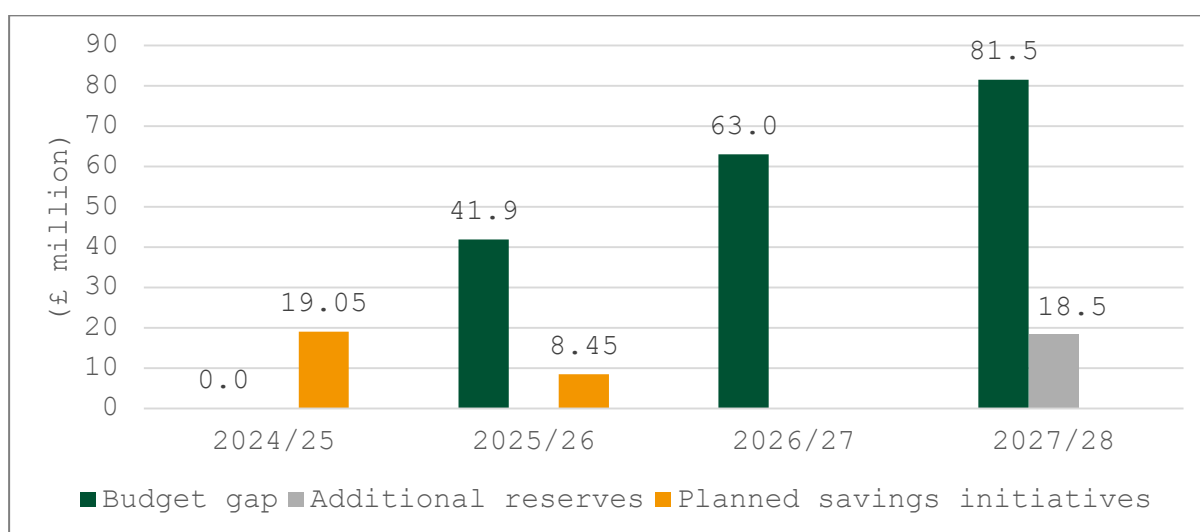


Figure 3. The projected profile of the budget gap over the next four financial years.

The main drivers of the budget gap are the projected growth in both adult and children's social care. This is due to increased demand and inflationary pressures (e.g. pay increases, supplier costs, etc.).

The Council has identified a portfolio of savings that, if delivered, will address the financial pressures within this current year. However, there are few that are projected to close the budget gap in future years.

The Council's track record of delivering the planned savings in previous financial years is relatively good, with over 90% achieved in the previous financial year. However, this does mean

that there is a need to identify some additional savings, income or cost avoidance as a contingency should existing initiatives be delayed or fail to deliver the expected financial benefits.

Work to date

Opportunity identification and definition

The work to develop this transformation plan has followed a three-phase approach, conducted over the past three months (May – July 2024). The aim of this work was to quickly identify where the greatest opportunities to support the Council in closing its £100 million budget gap.

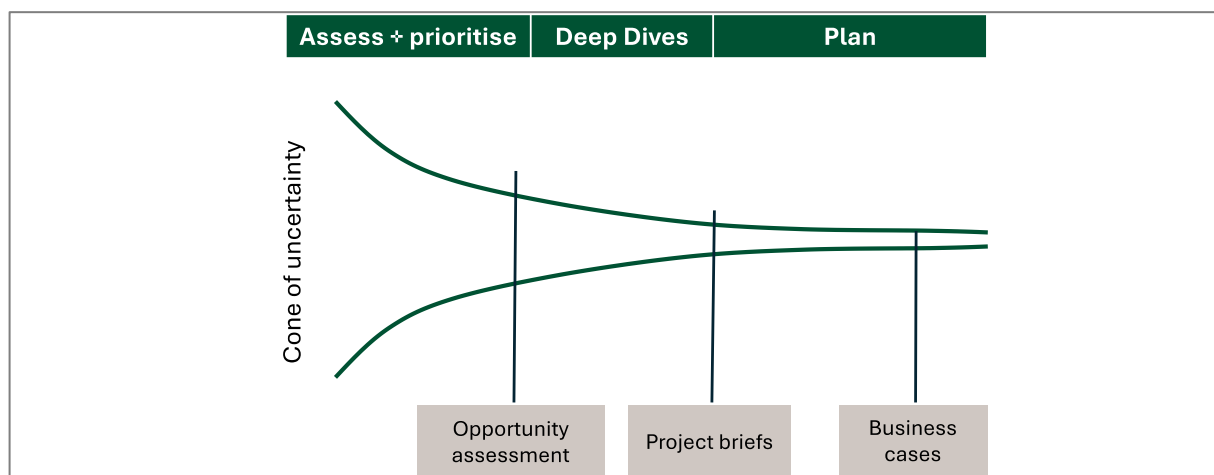


Figure 4. Cone of uncertainty and how it applies to the initial work to shape this programme.

Using a 'cone of uncertainty' principle, the approach initially focused on crude estimates to identify, quantify and prioritise opportunities that looked likely to provide the greatest financial benefit to the Council. It then invested further time in conducting 'deep dives' to assess prioritised opportunities and get greater confidence in the size of benefits. It should be noted that these 'deep dives' do not constitute a business case, which may be the logical next step for several of the opportunities that have been included in the Transformation Portfolio.

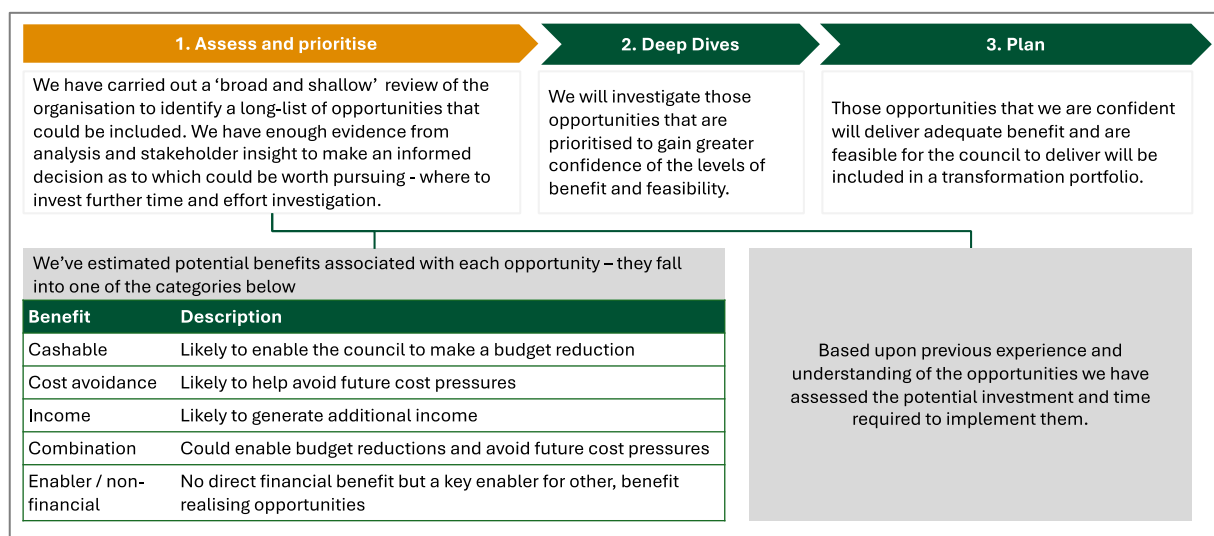


Figure 5. The three-phase approach adopted to develop this Transformation Portfolio.

The following Deep Dives were conducted during July 2024:



- Third Party Spend
- Digital First
- Early Intervention and Prevention
- Health & Social Care Partnership Case Review (in both Adults and Children's Services)
- Preparing for Adulthood / Transitions
- Adult Social Care – Learning Disability Support, Commissioning & Brokerage
- Children's Services – reunification of looked after children to the family
- Assets
- Economic Development and Growth

Depending upon the opportunities explored in the deep dive, they may require a business case before they can be delivered.

The remaining opportunities identified during the first stage fall into one of two categories:

- **Business-as-usual (BAU)** – there is broad agreement that the opportunity exists and the work to implement changes to realise it is clear (some additional resource may be required to support). They require a plan for delivery
- **Further investigation** – the opportunity requires either a deep dive or business case to determine whether it will deliver adequate financial benefits

There will be further opportunities that will require assessment as the programme matures. They will need to be investigated, and business cases developed to allow the Council to prioritise new projects for delivery.

Organisational readiness assessment

At the same time the organisation recognised that it did not have experience of delivering the level of change likely required by their situation and challenges. The Council commissioned an organisational readiness assessment to help them understand their strengths and areas for development in relation to capacity and capability of delivering such a large, complex Transformation Portfolio. This work built upon the recent self-assessment using the LGA's framework.

The review focused on three areas:

- **Effective environment, culture and behaviours** – how effective is the organisation at cultivating an environment and ways of working that actively encourages the innovation and creativity required to effectively drive change across the whole organisation.
- **Effective PMO capability and capacity** – which supports the Council to achieve pace, precision, accountability and delivery assurance. This area looks at the current practices in the context of what will be required for the coming transformation across governance approaches, delivery methodology, supporting tools, progress reporting.
- **Effective delivery capability and capacity** – to deliver the programmes and projects within the transformation portfolio, the Council will need dedicated delivery capability and capacity, and the skills and roles required for leading the transformation such as portfolio, programme and project sponsorship.

The assessment found that although there was a low readiness for change, the leadership was aware of this and had started to take actions to improve maturity of the organisation. It detailed a set of specific recommendations that the Council could implement to boost maturity levels and readiness for transformation. These recommendations are set out in the Appendix.

These recommendations have been incorporated within either the mobilisation of the Transformation Portfolio, supporting communication and engagement, or specific projects (primarily the Workforce programme).

Transformation plan

The Council has developed a Transformation Portfolio to address the challenges it faces. The successful delivery of this plan will result in a radically different organisation that not only achieves financial recovery but also workforce stability, economic growth and improved outcomes for residents.

Scope

The Transformation Portfolio will comprise six programmes, described in the table below.

Programme: Workforce	
Description	Constituent projects and initiatives
Design and delivery of a new target operating model encompassing staffing, ways of working, capabilities and culture.	WF1: Target Operating Model WF2: Agency Staff WF3: Workforce Productivity
Programme: Social Care	
Description	Constituent projects and initiatives
Projects to transform high-needs, high-care / statutory social care services. Note: Adult Social Care Cost & demand Modelling, ASC Fees & Charging, Reablement and ASC workforce development will all report in but not form part of the Programme.	SC1: Health & Social Care Partnership Case Review (H&SC PCR) – Adults SC2: H&SC PCR – Children's SC3: Pathways for Adulthood / Transitions SC4: Commissioning & Brokerage SC5: Learning Disabilities Provision SC6: Reunification SC7/8: Children in Care (Under-10 + Step Down) SC9: Children's (CSC) Cost & Demand modelling
Programme: Place	
Description	Constituent projects and initiatives
Projects and ongoing initiatives that will transform the Council's approach to place-based services, shaping the local economy and use of Council assets.	PL1: Advertising PL2: Corporate Landlord PL3: Asset strategy refresh PL4: Automatic Number Plate Recognition enforcement PL5: Specialist housing PL6: Libraries PL7: Tatton Park PL8: Waste PL9: Alternative Service Delivery Vehicle review PL10: Economic strategy
Programme: Early Intervention and Prevention	
Description	Constituent projects and initiatives
Develop a whole-council response to supporting residents to become more resilient, self-sufficient and	EIP1: Early intervention and prevention EIP2: Customer

avoid crises requiring intensive support. This also aims to manage long-term demand for services.

Programme: Digital

Description

Digitally enabled projects and programmes that will realise benefits for the Council and residents.

Constituent projects and initiatives

To be agreed as part of a prioritisation exercise, but likely to include a broad range of initiatives.

Programme: Special Projects

Description

Projects that do not fit neatly within any of the above programmes but will deliver important benefits linked to the financial and strategic objectives of the Council.

Constituent projects and initiatives

SP1: Fees & Charges
SP2: Third Party Spend
SP5: Outbound mail
SP3: Grant Funding
SP4: Income recovery & debt
SP6: Council Tax banding

The projects and initiatives that have been identified for delivery during the first tranche of work within each of these programmes are set out in the Programmes section. As the programme matures, new projects will be identified and prioritised for inclusion / delivery.

The programme will not include any of the following programmes or initiatives, however some may provide progress reports into the governance mechanisms set up as there are major dependencies with in-scope work, or they deliver significant financial benefits.

- Children's Services Improvement Plan
- LGA Peer Challenge action plan
- ASC Transformation Programme
- In-year MTFS budget initiatives
- Delivering Better Value
- Existing capital investment programmes

Transformation Roadmap / timeline

This Transformation Portfolio will take multiple years to deliver, given the amount of change involved and the size of the projects prioritised for the first stage. New projects are likely to be designed and included in the programme as the Transformation Portfolio matures.

The roadmap visual below illustrates the journey of transformation, and how the benefits will be realised over time.

Roadmap

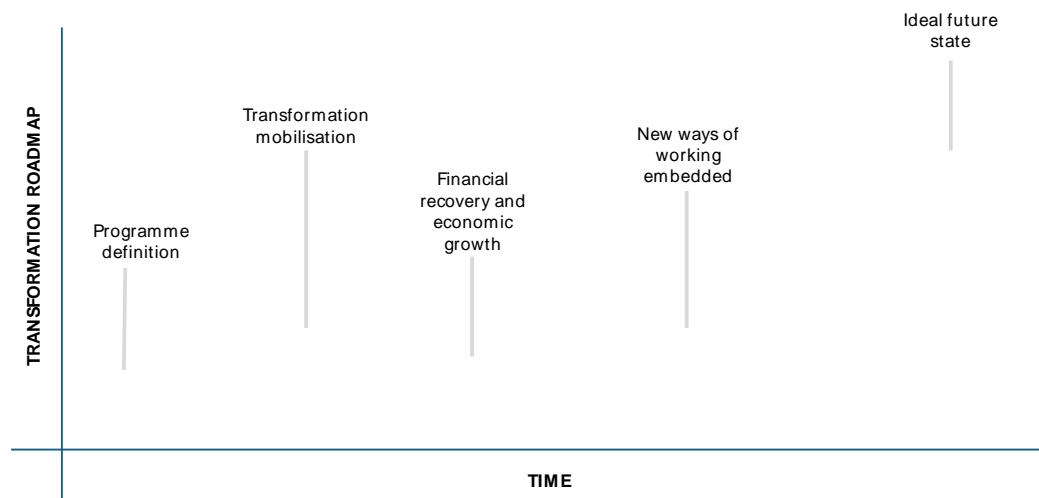


Figure 6. Roadmap showing key stages of the Transformation Portfolio.

The 'work to date' on transformation has been solely focused on programme definition, understanding the skills, capabilities and requirements of the Transformation Portfolio and the programmes of activity that it needs to include.

The next phase is transformation mobilisation, this refers not only to the set-up of the transformation PMO but also preparing the organisation for a change in cultures and practices and agreeing what the 'ideal future state' looks like in Cheshire East.

The Transformation Portfolio will not immediately realise significant financial benefits in 2024/25, but the activities included in the programme will begin to contribute toward the Council's financial recovery within 18 months.

Cheshire East has been intentional around the focus of the Transformation Portfolio not only being on financial recovery but also preparing the ground for future economic growth. As a result of the work in the mobilisation phase of work, the green shoots of recovery will be seen, and the focus of the Transformation Portfolio will be on sustaining this change by embedding the new ways of working.

The end result will be a wholly transformed organisation, that has reached its ideal future state. In this state the local authority will have developed into an organisation that is responsive to changes in demand and need across its population, has strong leadership and positive staff cultures and is resilient and able to respond to future challenges.

Benefits

Financial benefits

The primary driver of the Transformation Portfolio is the delivery of savings, additional income and cost mitigations to close the £100 million budget gap over the next four years. Consequently the delivery of financial benefits will be the key measure of success for the programme.

Based upon the work done to date, the initiatives that are included within the scope of the programme have indicative financial benefits of approximately £59 - 91 million over the next four years. This does not include the following:

- Any of the in-flight savings initiatives that are being delivered as part of this year's budget.
- A portion of the projects that would form part of the Digital Programme such as the ICS and Digital Customer Enablement programme (but does include some Triple value Impact proposals that are likely to be prioritised) – accounting for a further £14million in benefits.
- Several opportunities identified as part of the work done to date. This includes Grant Funding, SEND/Home-to-School Transport, Partnership Health and Wellbeing commissioning, and Reducing Supported Living innovation (building upon the Learning Disabilities support project).

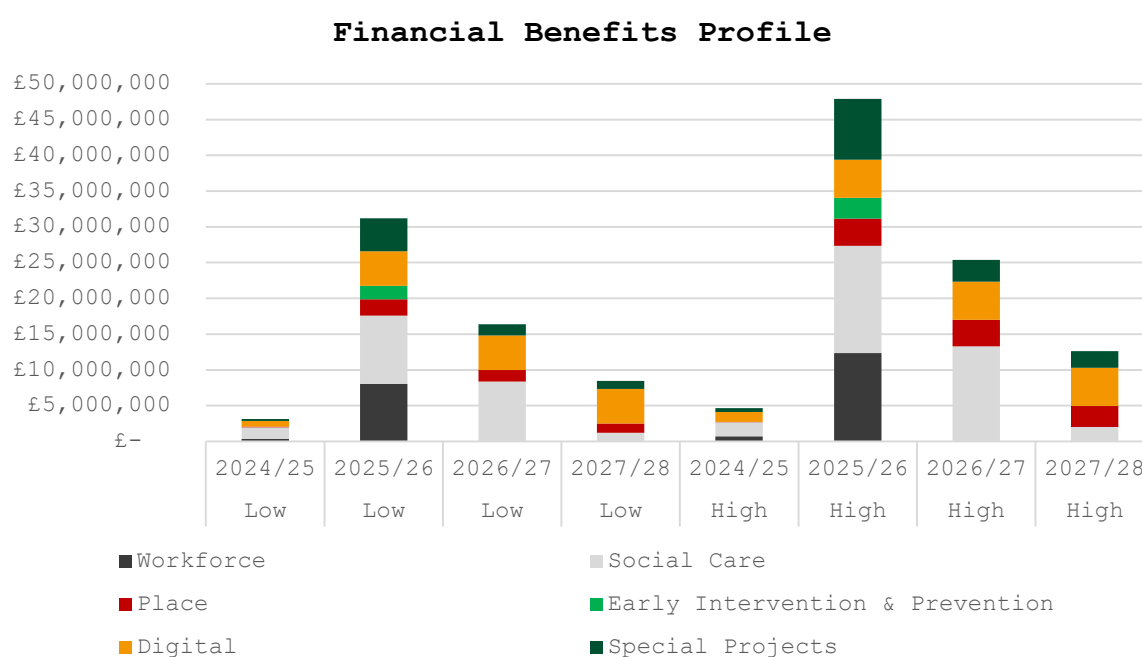


Figure 7. A profile of the financial benefits of the programme as defined through the work to date.

These financial benefits are subject to change – as business cases are developed and projects become more clearly defined. In addition, the Council anticipates that new ideas will be investigated and included in the Transformation Portfolio as it develops, and these will realise further financial benefits.

Non-financial benefits

Although the primary driver is ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of the Council, the programme will also aim to deliver non-financial benefits, linked to the strategic priorities, wherever possible. The table below summarises some of the key non-financial benefits that have been identified within the projects scoped for delivery.

Benefit	Description	Project
Outcomes for young people with complex needs	Improved experience of children and young people transitioning to adult social care support – promoting greater independence and wellbeing through better support.	Preparing for Adulthood / Transitions
Outcomes for adults with LD	Improved experience and independence for individuals through most suitable, cost-effective packages of care.	Learning Disabilities Support
Improved outcomes for residents	Improved self-sufficiency and reductions in events triggering support from statutory services.	Early Intervention and Prevention
Accommodation	Develop suitable housing for residents with specific needs, learning from experience and good practice elsewhere.	Specialist Housing
Economic growth	Improvements in inwards investment and job creation through a shared growth strategy and action plan.	Economic development

Transformation Governance Framework

Incremental improvement is typically managed on a business-as-usual basis, with departmental and service level management oversight. Larger programmes and portfolios of transformation require a more formal and dedicated oversight approach. This reflects the scope and scale, increased levels of risk and reward, and the complexities involved in delivering a series of interconnected activities.

As part of the delivery capability review the Council has developed a new Governance Framework to manage this Transformation Portfolio. This framework applies to all levels of the programme.

The Governance Framework sets out the required structure and controls for the successful delivery of the Council's Transformation Portfolio. It should sit alongside two other key documents – a Transformation Delivery Framework, a PMO Charter and a Tools and Templates Library.

To ensure clarity, we have provided a definition for Portfolios, Programmes and Projects, applied throughout this document in the diagram below.



Figure 8. How the portfolio, programmes and projects relate to each other in the framework.

Governance roles

There are some key designated roles for the Transformation Portfolio.

- **Transformation Portfolio Sponsor** - owns and champions the Transformation Portfolio and is accountable for its success.
- **Transformation Director** - runs the Transformation Portfolio and is responsible for its success.
- **Programme Sponsor** - owns and champions their respective Programme and is accountable for its success.
- **Programme Director** - runs their respective Programme and is responsible for its success.
- **Project Sponsor** - owns and champions their Project and is accountable for its success.
- **Project Manager** - runs their Project and is responsible for its success.
- **Programme Management Office** – owns programme methodology, provides support, challenge and assurance for all constituent Programmes and Projects.

The diagram below sets out where these roles sit within the governance forums in the Transformation Portfolio.

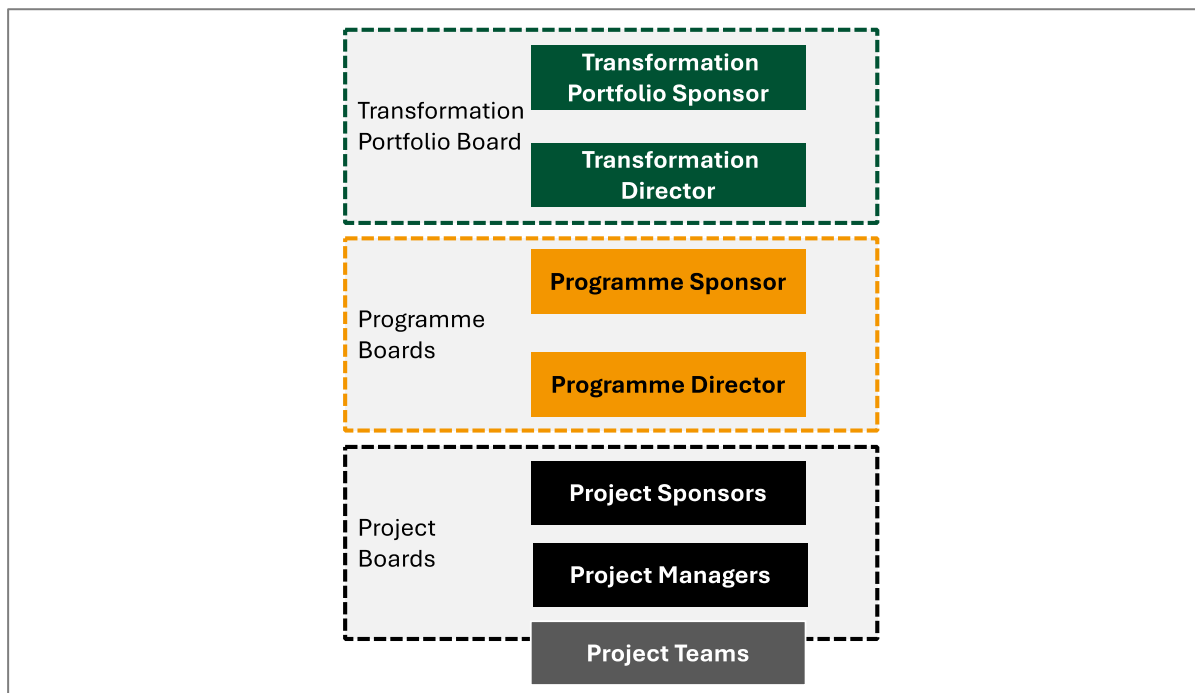


Figure 9. Where each of the key roles sits within the Transformation Portfolio structure.

These roles are described in greater detail in the appendix.

Governance forums / decision-making bodies

The following decision-making bodies will be used to oversee and control the Transformation Portfolio.

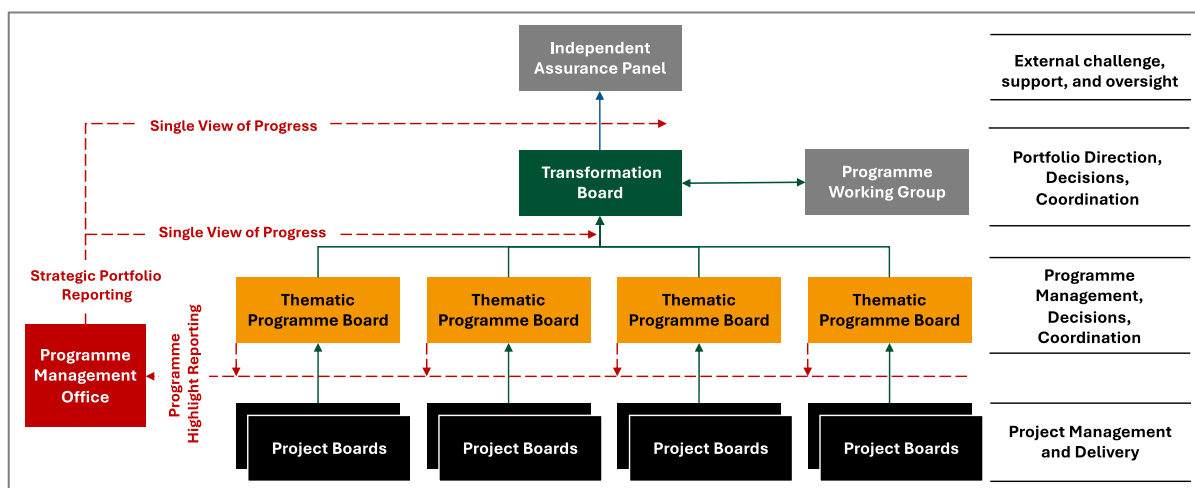


Figure 10. The governance structure for the Transformation Portfolio.

Governance forum	Description
Independent Assurance Panel	Recommended following the Corporate Peer Challenge, this is an integral part of the Council's Transformation Portfolio and associated Programme Governance Framework. It brings together external peers and internal representatives to work together to assure itself of progress and impact and provide leadership support.
Transformation Board	The Transformation Board is the main decision-making body for the Council's Transformation Portfolio, bringing together the CEO (Programme Sponsor), Director of Finance (S151 Officer), Thematic Programme Sponsors (CLT), Transformation Director and PMO, to direct the Programmes that underpin delivery of the Programme.
Thematic Programme Boards	Each Thematic Programme will have its own Board. The Board brings together the Programme Sponsor, Programme Manager, PMO representatives and representatives from the areas of the organisation most affected by the Programme (as appropriate).
Project Boards	The role of the Project Board is to agree the project deliverables and objectives and monitor the work of the Project Team. In support of the Project Sponsor the board owns the benefits of the project and ensures that the project is on track to achieve them.

Decision making

The Full Council has already provided agreement in principle to run the Transformation Portfolio, and to secure the budget to run the initial phases of the work, pending review of the Plan at Corporate Policy Committee on the 21st of August 2024.

However, the programme is anticipated to deliver work that could include new or amended policies, workforce changes, further budgetary implications (reductions, additional requests for investment, virements between codes). Some of these projects will require a Significant Decision (have budgetary implications of over £500,000, will affect more than two wards, or have a substantial impact on service delivery).

This Programme will need to work within the Council's Constitutional framework and have the flexibility and agility to avoid causing unnecessary delays. The Council will need to agree

which Committees will review and approve key decisions and other changes, and what level of decision making will be delegated. This will form part of the preparation to mobilise the Programme.

Transformation Delivery Framework

Historically the Council has had a corporate project delivery methodology, but with the change of administrations and officer leadership it is no longer in use consistently. As part of mobilisation of the Transformation Portfolio the PMO will lead on the rapid development of a new methodology, based upon best practice, that is tailored to a Cheshire East context. An example of the project lifecycle that may be adopted is illustrated below.

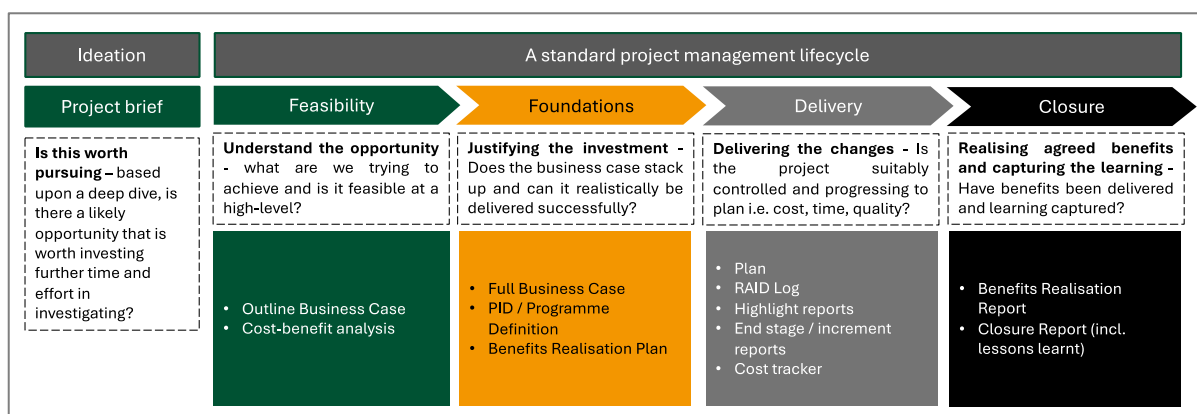


Figure 11. A standard project delivery lifecycle that could be tailored to meet Council requirements.

The methodology will cover the following:

- Project lifecycle and stages
- Approach to business case development, planning, benefits realisation, risk, issue and dependency management, etc.
- Key project documentation
- Tools and templates to support delivery
- Assessment and prioritisation of projects based upon size, complexity, value, risk, etc.

Currently, the Projects that form part of the scope of the Programmes are at different stages in this lifecycle. The Delivery Framework and Governance Framework will be used to ensure that each project passes through these stages, in a way that is proportionate to their associated value, complexity and risk.

Resourcing

As part of the opportunity analysis and the deep dive work, the Council has prepared estimates of the resources required to deliver Projects within the Transformation Portfolio.

The table below details the resourcing requirements for all those projects that have been investigated as part of a Deep Dive, and wider opportunities that have been agreed for delivery by respective Directorates.

Role	Description	Estimated FTE
Transformation Director	Management of the Transformation Portfolio.	1

Programme Director	Day-to-day management of one of the six Programmes within the Transformation Portfolio.	5.5
Project Manager	Management of one or more of the projects within the Transformation Portfolio.	See individual project resourcing
Business Analyst	In some cases the PM/BA may be a hybrid role whereby the individual is expected to both project manage and deliver a portion of the work.	See individual project resourcing
Subject Matter Expert	Individuals with in-depth knowledge of relevant services or sectors to provide input and challenge of project outputs.	See individual project resourcing
Finance	Expertise to support and challenge calculations and assumptions in business cases. Support with tracking benefits and changes to budgets.	1.0 (plus engagement from Finance Business Partners on each project)
HR / OD	Expertise to support and challenge project proposals, approach and assumptions. Support with specific workforce initiatives including consultation, job evaluation and grading, redeployment, recruitment and training.	1.0 (plus engagement from Business Partners on relevant projects)
Legal	Expertise to advise on contractual matters and policy changes.	Engagement
Procurement	Advice on procurement and contract management approaches, assumptions and plan in projects. Support with procurement of new contracts and decommissioning. Leading the Third Party Spend project.	Engagement for Third Party Spend Other projects to define in planning
Communications Officer	Owning the communications and engagement plan. Developing communications, managing delivery and monitoring impact of messaging.	1.0 (plus engagement from Corp Comms)

Other roles, such as Service Designers, Intelligence/Data Analysts and ICT may also be required for specific projects.

It should be noted that unless an opportunity is already in-flight, it may require a business case to prepare a more robust estimate of the resources required to deliver it. Where size of benefits, complexity and risk are sufficiently high, the project may require a business case before the Council approves it for delivery.

The resources above will be required past the end of this financial year; the Council will need to review this resourcing on an ongoing basis, using detailed delivery plans for current and new prioritised projects that form part of the Transformation Portfolio.

Programme Management Office (PMO)

Context

The Council faces an unprecedented set of challenges that require a huge amount of change. This change is likely to be complex and interlinked. The Council needs a function that can support it to effectively deliver and coordinate the multiple initiatives that it aims to deliver, including the MTFs, Children's Services Improvement, Transformation and Corporate Peer Challenge. The Programme Management Office (PMO) will be set up to perform this function.

Purpose

A mature PMO is a vital component for the successful delivery of the Council's emerging Transformation Portfolio.

The Council has developed a PMO Charter that provides the foundations upon which to build and deliver this function. It sets out its purpose, what it will do (and what it won't do), how it will do it, and what needs to be true for it to succeed. In doing so, it promotes a common understanding of the function and helps the organisation understand how to get the best from working it.

The PMO Charter is not all encompassing, but it does set out the key parameters in which the PMO will operate. In summary the PMO will be responsible for the following:

- **Portfolio, programme and project standards** – setting and upholding delivery standards (e.g. project plans), ensuring they are consistently applied.
- **Governance** – setting and upholding governance standards across the portfolio, programme and projects, managing and facilitating programme level governance.
- **Status tracking** - standardising the way portfolio information is compiled and provides robust independent assurance.
- **Reporting** – setting up and coordinating reporting of progress and performance across the programme.
- **Programme overview** – providing a total view of programmes and their deliverables, milestones, resources, risks, issues, assumptions and interdependencies.
- **Portfolio design and programme and project selection** – supporting leadership to continually review the programme to ensure activity remains aligned to strategic priorities.

The PMO will implement the Governance Framework and Delivery Framework that are being developed as part of preparation to mobilise the Transformation Portfolio.

This role extends to promoting and embedding a consistent, best practice approach to project delivery across the organisation, outside of the Transformation Portfolio – other projects will still be expected to adopt the Council's new project delivery methodology including the lifecycle, tools, artefacts and reporting.

The PMO also plays a key role in supporting the organisation develop the capabilities and capacity to deliver and sustain change. It will support the actioning of many of the recommendations from the Council's organisational readiness assessment, as summarised in the table below.

Theme	PMO contribution
-------	------------------

Vision	Advise leadership on setting robust programme vision and objectives. Adopt the vision and ensure alignment of programmes and projects to this vision. Support coordination of communication of vision to wider stakeholders.
Design	Assess programme and project aims, objectives, deliverables and benefits against the new operating model to ensure alignment and optimum mix of projects.
Plan	Support teams to develop and maintain robust plans at all levels of the Transformation Portfolio, through advice, challenge and assurance. Coordinate timely, consistent and accurate reporting of progress.
Leadership	Support the adoption of key leadership roles within the Transformation Portfolio.
Collaboration	Foster cross-programme collaboration through core PMO activities. Set up and run transformation networks that will promote pan-organisation collaboration and communication, including the Programme Working Group and Transformation Community of Practice.
Accountability	Maintain the Governance framework and support key transformation governance bodies and roles in effectively carrying out their duties. Hold individuals and teams to account.
People	Support the coordination of the Communication and Engagement plan to provide effective and consistent messaging to members, wider staff and other stakeholders.
PMO Capability and Capacity	The new PMO will address this by putting in place the PMO Charter , Governance Framework and Delivery Framework to support the Transformation Portfolio.

PMO structure and roles

The Council has developed a structure for the PMO that will support the Transformation Portfolio, shown in the diagram below.

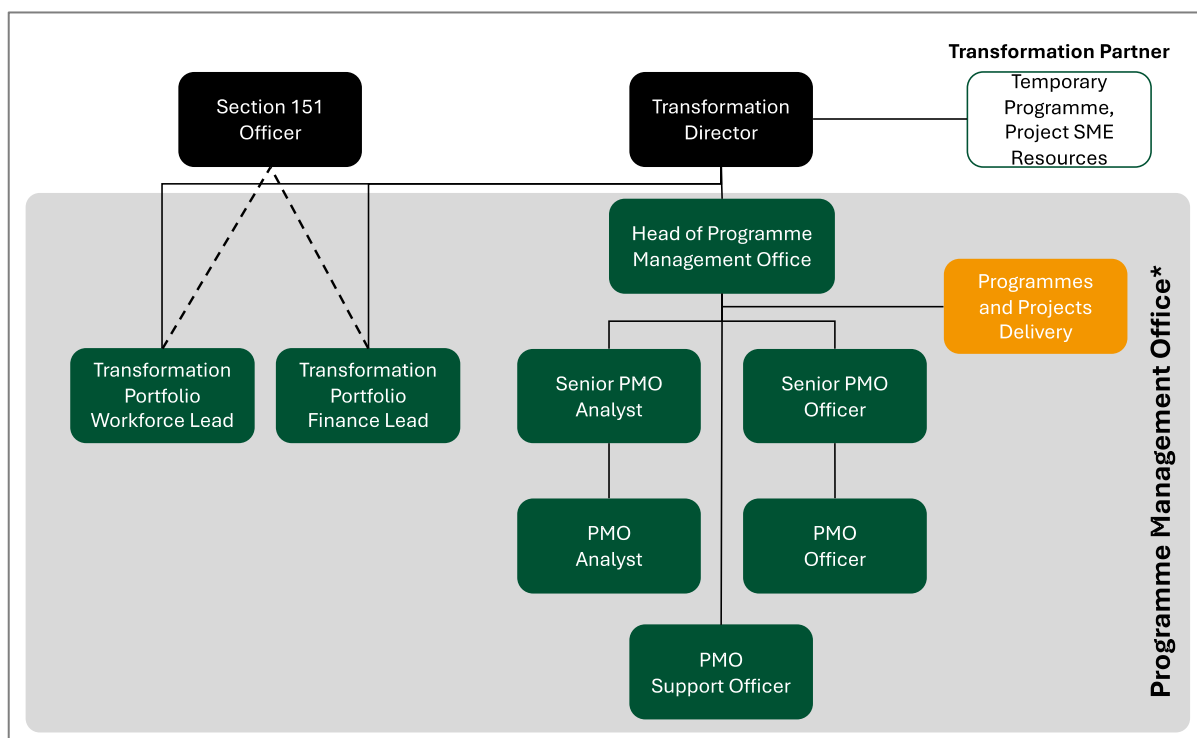


Figure 12. The proposed structure, reporting lines and governance for the new PMO.

The posts within this new structure are summarised within the table below.

Post	FTE	Description
Transformation Director	1	Champion of the PMO and point of escalation for any issues the function faces.
Head of PMO	1	Provides oversight the Transformation Portfolio, sets governance and delivery standards, provides a single source of truth on progress, provides robust challenge and assurance, manages the transformation pipeline, leads the PMO.
Senior PMO Analyst	1	Manages the programme reporting cycle, maintains strategic level portfolio reporting tools, oversight and management of an integrated approach to portfolio risks, issues, assumptions, dependencies, benefits.
Senior PMO Officer	1	Provides extensive experience and expertise in portfolio, programme and project design, assures programme planning and management is robust and consistent with the required to standards.
PMO Analyst	1	Maintains the programme-level RAID and Benefits logs, preparing summaries for inclusion in strategic level reporting, maintains the benefits planning toolkit, and supports programme managers in its use.
PMO Officer	1	Provides strong programme (and projects by exception) planning and delivery disciplines, supports the programme planning and management process and the completion of key programme documentation.

PMO Support Officer	1	Provides administrative and logistical support, supports programme governance, maintains information on the scheduling of PMO resources, assists in the production of communication materials, maintains tools and templates.
Transformation Portfolio Workforce Lead	1	Develops, maintains and owns the overarching workforce picture across the transformation portfolio, and the programmes and projects within it, including management and coordination of staff related changes / impacts.
Transformation Portfolio Finance Lead	1	Develops, maintains and owns the overarching financial picture (cost tracking, financial benefits tracking, financial risk and issues management) across the transformation portfolio, and the programmes and projects within it.

In addition the Council will appoint a temporary PMO Officer to provide dedicated support to Children's Services on their project. This is also referenced in the Social Care Portfolio Delivery Structure and Resourcing section.

PMO roadmap

Setting up and embedding an effective Transformation PMO will require time. The establishment can be summarised as taking place over three stages:

- Set-up – this involves recruiting the staff to run the PMO and developing all the key programme machinery as set out in the PMO Charter, Governance Framework and Delivery Framework.
- Capability development – this involves training of PMO staff, collaboration and support with individuals and teams that form part of the Transformation Portfolio to adopt ways of work required to deliver the change effectively.
- Transition to BAU – ongoing PMO staff development and engagement with the wider organisation to embed project delivery capabilities so that the organisation becomes self-sufficient in running transformation activity.

The detail is set out in 'Mobilising the Transformation' section of this document.

Programmes

As part of the programme the Council is dividing the initiatives into thematic groups of linked projects under several programmes. These programmes are described in the table below.

Programme	Description
Workforce	Projects and ongoing initiatives that will cut across the whole organisation and affect changes to wider staffing structure, ways of working, capabilities and culture.
Social Care	Projects and ongoing initiatives that will transform high-needs, high-care / statutory social care services.
EIP	Projects that will transform the Council's approach to interacting with residents and businesses, and how it aims to manage demand.
Place	Projects and ongoing initiatives that will transform the Council's approach to place-based services and shaping place.
Digital	Digitally enabled projects and programmes that will realise benefits for the Council and residents, as well as those that are required to maintain business continuity and mitigate key risks.
Special Projects	Projects that do not fit neatly within any of the above programmes but will deliver important benefits linked to the financial and strategic objectives of the Council.

It should be noted that the Council will be delivering other programmes of work outside of Transformation – specifically the Ofsted Improvement Plan, the ASC Transformation Programme, and Delivering Better Value. These programmes (and any other projects) will still be expected to adopt the Council's new project delivery methodology including the lifecycle, tools, artefacts and reporting.

A more detailed description of each programme within the Transformation Portfolio is provided in the sections below.

Workforce

Key projects and initiatives

The following projects and initiatives will form part of the workforce programme:

- **WF1: Target Operating Model (TOM)** - design and implementation of a new target operating model for the Council, linking up the existing work carried out the LGA Peer Challenge and the DMA
- **WF2: Agency staffing** – concerted efforts by the organisation to reduce use of high-cost agency staff, replacing with permanent recruits where appropriate
- **WF3: Workforce productivity** - concerted efforts to reduce the current high staff absence rates and increase overall productivity of the workforce

Financial benefits

Initiative (ref)	Type	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
WF1: TOM	Cashable	-	£6,700k – 10,000k	-	-
WF2: Agency	Cashable	£352k – 703k	£352k – 703k	-	-
WF3: Productivity	Combination	-	£1,000k – 1,600k	-	-
Total		£352k – 703k	£8,059k – 12,365k	-	-

Timelines

The main project within this programme will be design and implementation of a new target operating model.

	24/25 Q2		24/25 Q3			24/25 Q4			25/26 Q1			25/26 Q2		
Phase / activity	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S
Target Operating Model design														
TOM implementation														
Agency spend														
Productivity														

The Agency and Workforce Productivity workstreams will be ongoing initiatives that aim to apply a systemic approach to addressing these two challenges. The TOM design work may feed into them, however.

Delivery structure and resourcing

The programme will be overseen by a Programme Director who will be responsible for overall delivery of the programme. The table below sets out the delivery structure and resourcing for each project.

Programme sponsor: Chief Executive			
Project	Sponsor	Project Manager	Delivery team
WF1: TOM	Interim Director of Policy and Change	Project Manager / Business Analyst	LGA inputs ICC Team (Senior Consultant and Consultant) Business Analyst HR, OD, Finance, Comms
WF2: Agency	Head of Human Resources	Transformation Portfolio Workforce Lead	HR, OD
WF3: Productivity			Strategic Finance Management Team

Key interdependencies

The following in-flight and planned initiatives will have interdependencies with the projects within this programme:



- **Peer Challenge** – the recommendations from the LGA Peer Challenge will need to be factored into the design of the TOM.
- **DMA Review** – the review of the senior leadership structure has already developed a proposed staffing structure, based upon the current view of the organisation.
- **ASC Restructure** – the Director of Adults, Health and Integration is already conducting a review of the Directorate that will need to be considered within the wider TOM design and implementation.
- **ASC Transformation** – the programme includes the ASC Workforce Development initiative that will link with TOM design and delivery work, and potentially the Productivity workstream.
- **Projects and Change Team review** – there is a planned piece of work to review the current function to better align roles and responsibilities to support the transformation portfolio, which will need to be considered in light of the outputs of the TOM design and review.

Social Care

Key projects and initiatives

The following projects will form part of the workforce programme:

- **SC1/2: Health & Social Care Partnership Case Review (H&SC PCR) – Adults and Children's** – aiming to secure an equitable contribution from the Council's NHS partner for care packages where the primary need is health-related.
- **SC3: Preparing for Adulthood / Transitions** – developing a robust function to manage transition of young people that will require social care support to adulthood to improve their experience, promote independence and secure financially sustainable packages of care.
- **SC4: Commissioning & Brokerage** – overhaul of current arrangements to improve processes and practices so that the Council gets best value for money from all care providers.
- **SC5: LD Provision** – review and redesign of the LD support offer, linked to recommissioning of linked services aiming to drive better value out of the provision. This includes work around Shared Lives.
- **SC6: Reunification** – reunification of children with their families to improve outcomes and reduce the costs of care.

There are some further initiatives that have been identified through the first phase of the work as opportunities, that Children's Services will deliver as part of the work:

- SC7: Children in Care (CiC) – U10 residential
- SC8: CiC – Step-down
- SC9: Children's Social Care Cost and demand modelling

There are some projects that are already in flight and form part of other programmes that will be expected to report into Transformation because they either have strong interdependencies with other projects or will deliver financial benefits that are critical to closing the budget gap. They primarily sit within the existing ASC Transformation programme. These are:

- ASC Cost and demand modelling
- ASC Fees & Charging
- Reablement
- ASC workforce development

Financial benefits

Initiative	Type	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
SC1: H&SC PCR – Adults	Income	£625k	£2,500k	£2,500k	-
SC2: H&SC PCR – Children's	Income	-	£500k – 1,000k	-	-
SC3: PfA / Transitions	Combination	£210k	£868k	£868k	-
SC4: Commissioning & Brokerage	Combination	-	£865k – 1,730k	£865k – 1,730k	-
SC5: LD Provision	Combination	£40k	£3,011 – 5,711k	£2,904 – 6,204k	-
SC6: Reunification	Cashable	£47k – 70k	£595k – 1,048k	-	-
SC7: CiC – U10	Cost avoidance	£290k	-	-	-
SC8: CiC – Step-down²	Combination	£725k – 1,015k	£725k – 1,015k	£725k – 1,015k	£725k – 1,015k
SC9: Cost & Demand modelling	Enabler	-	-	-	-
Total		£1,937k – 2,250k	£9,525k – 14,967k	£7,862k – 12,317k	£725k – 1,015k

² Given that this opportunity was not covered by the Deep Dives and represents a significant financial benefit, further work to validate the savings may be required.

Timelines

	24/25 Q2		24/25 Q3			24/25 Q4			25/26 Q1			25/26 Q2		
Phase / activity	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S
H&SC PCR (ASC ÷ CSC)														
Preparing for Adulthood / Transitions														
Review, visioning and PfA mandate														
Pathway redesign														
Implementation														
Commissioning & brokerage														
Service procurement														
Brokerage Review														
Commissioning Transformation														
LD Provision														
Data gathering / baseline analysis														
Shared Lives														
Supported Living / Community / Res care														
Reunification - Phase 1 (24/25) & 2 (26/27)														

NOTE: For Commissioning and Brokerage data-gathering and baseline analysis exercise should be complete by end of August 2024.

Delivery structure and resources

The programme will be managed by a Programme Director. In addition the Council will allocate a temporary PMO resource to support Children's Services with their projects.

The table below sets out the estimated resources for the individual projects within the programme.

Programme sponsor: Executive Director of Adults, Health & Integration			
Project	Sponsor	Project Manager	Delivery team
SC1: H&SC PCR – Adults	Director of Adult Social Care and Operations	Project Manager / BA (ICC)	External SME (ICC) Service Team – Heads of Service / Advanced Practitioners Finance Data Team – Reporting System Team – Liquid Logic Legal
SC2: H&SC PCR – Children's	Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration		
SC3: PfA / Transitions	Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration	Project Manager / BA (ICC)	Adults, Children's and SEND SMEs Parent/Carers and Young People focus (potentially supported by a 3rd sector or community group) Business Intelligence lead (to carry out data analysis)
SC4: Commissioning & Brokerage	Interim Director of Commissioning	Part-time Project Manager (ICC)	Consultant (ICC) Commissioning Team

SC5: LD Provision	Interim Director of Commissioning	Project Manager / BA (ICC)	Business Analyst Commissioning Team Procurement Finance
SC6: Reunification	Interim Director of Family Help and Children's Social Care	Project Manager / BA (ICC)	Service Managers Business Intelligence Team
SC7/8: Children in Care (U10 and Step Down)	Interim Director of Family Help and Children's Social Care	TBC	Resourcing to be confirmed during mobilisation
SC9: CSC Cost & Demand modelling	Interim Director of Commissioning	TBC	Resourcing to be confirmed during mobilisation

The ASC Transformation projects are not included as they should have already been resourced.

Key interdependencies

There are some key interdependencies with ongoing and planned work. These are as follows:

- **Ofsted Improvement Plan** – the Children's Directorate is standing up a programme of work to address the findings and recommendations from the recent inspection. This plan has been agreed and will have overlaps with this work.
- **ASC Transformation Programme** – the Adults, Health and Integration Directorate is already running a Transformation Programme aimed at delivering savings to support the MTFS. Although these will be treated as separate initiatives there may be some dependencies upon existing projects (e.g. ASC Workforce Development) to enable realisation of savings.
- **Delivering Better Value** – this programme aims to reduce overspend, primarily in Dedicated Schools Grants (DSG), and is in-flight. It primarily focuses on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision but includes home-to-school transport where there are opportunities to realise financial benefits relating to the Council's budget.
- **Capital programmes** – investment in new children's homes that will address future demand on social care services and mitigate future cost pressures.

Place

Key projects and initiatives

The following projects will form part of the Place Programme:

- **PL1: Advertising income** – maximise opportunities to sell targeted advertising through use of council assets, targeting high value markets.
- **PL2: Corporate Landlord model refresh** – a review and update of the corporate landlord model to address known pain points and unlock efficiencies.
- **PL3: Asset strategy refresh** – a rapid review of assets to identify priority opportunities to drive greater value out of specific properties within the Council's portfolio.

- **PL4: ANPR-enabled Enforcement** - use automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) technology to enforce traffic contraventions and generate income.
- **PL5: Specialist Housing** – invest in building specialist housing provision (LD, care leavers, potentially frail elderly) to reduce long-term demand and cost pressures.
- **PL6: Libraries** – remodel library provision across the borough (in line with the proposal shared with members), including use of community asset transfer and adoption of a trust model.
- **PL7: Tatton Park** – develop a solution to generate net revenue for Tatton Park or an alternative model that minimises net cost to the Council.
- **PL8: Waste** – implement changes to waste collection and disposal (e.g. three-weekly collections, increased recycling rates, food waste, etc.).
- **PL9: ASDV review** – seek to bring in remaining alternative service delivery vehicles and transform them to drive efficiencies.
- **PL10: Economic growth** - refresh the economic strategy for the Council, incorporating wider partnerships to address current and future challenges and drive further growth

Financial benefits

Initiative	Type	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
PL1: Advertising	Income	-	£50k – 100k	£50k – 100k	£50k – 100k
PL2: Corporate Landlord	Combination	£56k	£167k	-	-
PL3: Asset strategy refresh	Combination	-	-	£500k	£500k
PL4: ANPR enforcement	Income	To be defined in Deep Dive / Business Case			
PL5: Specialist housing	Cost avoidance	-	-	£0 – 358k	£0 – 358k
PL6: Libraries	Cashable	-	£192k – 497k	£192k – 497k	-
PL7: Tatton Park³	Cashable	-	£500k - £1,300k	-	-
PL8: Waste	Cashable	-	£1,000k	-	-
PL9: ASDV review	Cashable	-	£150k – 250k	£150k – 250k	-
PL10: Economic growth	Enabler	-	-	-	-
Total		£56k	£2,310k – 3,815k	£1,642k – 3,704k	£1,300k – 2,958k

³ This was the benefits range included in the original opportunities assessment, however given the work is yet to start it is assumed any savings or additional income would not be realised until next financial year. It is recommended that the council conducts a deep dive / business case to develop a more detailed proposal and savings.

Timelines

The Corporate Landlord, Asset Review, Specialist Housing and Economic Development opportunities were explored as part of the deep dives. Further work will be required to plan out the remaining initiatives where they are not already in delivery.

	24/25 Q2		24/25 Q3			24/25 Q4			25/26 Q1			25/26 Q2		
Phase / activity	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S
Corporate Landlord														
Review														
Service engagement and design														
Implementation														
Asset strategy refresh														
Engagement and prioritisation														
Opportunity assessment + playback														
Refresh														
Specialist Housing Provision														
Review / lessons learned														
Approach and bus case development														
Economic growth														
Mobilisation and definition														
Design														
Refine														

Detailed plans and resourcing will be developed for the other workstreams by following the delivery methodology that will be set out in the Delivery Framework.

Delivery structure and resources

The Place programme will be led by a Programme Director. The table below sets out the agreed resourcing for each of the projects.

Programme sponsor: Acting Executive Director of Place			
Project	Sponsor	Project Manager	Delivery team
PL1: Advertising	Director of Highways and Infrastructure		Highways Team
PL2: Corporate Landlord	Acting Head of Estates	Project Manager ⁴	ICC Team (BAs / SMEs) Assets and FM Team HR, Finance, Procurement
PL3: Asset strategy refresh	Acting Head of Estates	Project Manager ⁴	ICC Team (BAs / SMEs) Assets / Property Team Legal
PL4: ANPR enforcement	To be defined through deep dive / business case development		

⁴ The Project Manager could be the same individual for all three projects – providing coordination and support for the three teams.

PL5: Specialist housing	Head of Housing	Project Manager ⁴	ICC Team (BAs / SMEs)
PL6: Libraries	TBC	To be defined through deep dive / business case development	
PL7: Tatton Park	Director of Transformation		
PL8: Waste	Head of Environmental Services	Project team already in place	
PL9: ASDV review	Head of Neighbourhood Services	PM in post	Business Analyst
PL10: Economic strategy	Head of Economic Development	Project Manager	ICC Team (BAs / SMEs) Economic Development team Corporate Communications

The resourcing for ANPR and Tatton Park will require defining as part of further definition of these opportunities through a deep dive or business case. Waste, ASDV and Libraries are all in-flight initiatives (although at different stages in the project lifecycle), and have some named resources allocated to support delivery.

Key interdependencies

The following interdependencies have been identified:

- **TOM design and implementation** – the Corporate Landlord work will need to align with the work to design the wider organisation operating model.
- **Council Plan refresh** – the refresh of the Council Plan may include new priorities that will need to be considered as part of the operating model design work.
- **Digital** – there are several projects (either in-flight or in the pipeline) that could support realisation of financial benefits within Place-based services (e.g. Electric Vehicle charging points, Remote scanning of highways defects, etc.).
- **Devolution** – the Council is in discussions with neighbouring authorities around securing a devolution deal with central government. The Economic Development work would contribute to providing a robust business case supporting this deal.

Early Intervention, Prevention & Customer

Key projects and initiatives

The main project to be delivered within this programme will be the design of an Early Intervention & Prevention model. This project will encompass a very broad range of council (and potentially partner) functions and is very complex.

There is already a Digital Customer Enablement Programme that is focused on implementing the Netcall CRM/Case management system, AI Contact Centre Agents and several other changes. This programme will need to be reviewed as part of the Digital First next steps before it is included within this programme (see the Digital programme for further details).

Financial benefits

Initiative	Type	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
EIP1: Early intervention and prevention		-	£1,087k – 2,904k	-	-
EIP2: Customer					
Total		-	£1,087k – 2,904k	-	-

There may be some further financial benefits in the form of cost avoidance due to reducing demand for statutory services and costly interventions, however these have not been modelled. This would be considered as part of the design and business case development work.

There is a Digital Customer Enablement programme which includes various initiatives and has estimates of around £13.1 million in financial benefits. However, a substantial portion of this needs further validation.

Timelines

The timelines for Digital Customer Enablement Programme are not included here but will be incorporated if it is prioritised for delivery within the Transformation Portfolio.

	24/25 Q2		24/25 Q3			24/25 Q4			25/26 Q1			25/26 Q2		
Phase / activity	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S
Early Intervention & Prevention														
Outline Business Case														
Design & FBC														
Implementation														
Customer Services														

Delivery structure and resourcing

The focus of the work will be to develop a model that is tailored to Cheshire East's local context, and a business case that justifies council investment in implementation.

Programme sponsor: Interim Director of Finance and Customer Services (Section 151 Officer)			
Project	Sponsor	Project Manager	Delivery team
EIP1: Early intervention and prevention	Director of Public Health	Programme Director	ICC Team (BAs and SME support) Subject Matter Experts from across organisation (e.g. Housing, Employment & Skills, Public Health, etc.) HR, OD and Finance
EIP2: Customer	Interim Head of Customer Services	To be agreed	

Key dependencies

The main interdependencies are as follows:

- **TOM design and implementation** – will have strong links with any future EI&P delivery model (and for Customer Services).
- **Social Care programme** – it is likely that any future design of an early intervention and prevention service will include strong links to social care services, and there is also a risk of double counting financial benefits in both programmes.
- **Digital** – implementation of CRM/Case management systems and AI to improve customer experience will have strong links with any approach developed to support residents through an early Intervention and prevention approach. The portfolio reset will also determine priority of the Customer Programme.
- **Corporate Landlord** – an early intervention and prevention model will have specific needs for locations across the borough from which staff can support residents at risk of a crisis.

Digital

Key projects and initiatives

There is a huge amount of digital and ICT projects that are being run across the organisation. This includes a number of large, multi-year investment programmes. The first activity that will take place during the mobilisation of the Transformation Portfolio is a review and prioritisation exercise to maximise the return on investment, and re-balance the portfolio so that it reflects the need to address urgent financial challenges that the Council faces.

It is anticipated the prioritisation exercise will categorise projects as follows:

- **Accelerate / initiate** – high priority in-flight projects, or new projects that will make a substantial contribution to strategic aims (in particular closing the budget gap). Note, that new project will require some form of business case if they are sufficiently complex or require significant investment.
- **Continue** – priority in-flight projects that should be continued as they will make contributions to strategic objects or mitigate a major risk for the Council (e.g. ensuring business continuity, replacement of legacy systems, cyber-security, etc.).
- **Pause** – a worthwhile project but must be paused to allow the Council to focus resources on other projects. These may be continued once resources are freed up.
- **Terminate** – unlikely to make substantial contribution to strategic aims, a 'nice to have'.

There are nearly 270 projects in the log. Some of the major in-flight and pipeline projects within the current portfolio are as follows:

- **Infrastructure Investment Programme (IIP)** – refresh of core IT architecture that will enable all other digital projects.
- **Information Assurance and Data Management (IADM)** – projects to implement robust information management practices and join up data.
- **Digital Programme** – primarily the Digital Customer Enablement programme but also includes garden waste and others.
- **Adults, Children's and Public Health / Care Act 2 (ACPH)** – focusing on enabling key business areas to move towards a digital approach.
- **Project Gemini** – separating out the shared IT service with Cheshire West.

- **Core Financials** – projects linked to the Unit4 ERP system.
- **ICS AI** – intelligent automation initiatives that have been explored. There is a potential for over 50 instances where AI could be implemented. There is an estimated £11.1m associated with implementations of AI in Customer Services and Social Care.
- **Triple Value Impact (TVI)** – a longlist of 43 proposals that could be taken forward to implementation. Collectively there is an estimated £13.9m in benefits associated with these. Several of these have been identified as priorities to develop business cases so that they can be considered for prioritisation and delivery in the programme.

Financial benefits

A review of the current portfolio business cases and project documentation suggests that there could be a total of £30+ million in financial benefits from in-flight and proposed projects. The table below summarises the indicative benefits associated with each of the main programmes.

Programme	Projects	Benefits*
Investing in Infrastructure Programme	Essential replacement Security & Compliance	Business continuity / risk mitigation / enabler
Information Assurance and Data Management		Risk mitigation / cost avoidance / productivity savings £2.1m cost avoidance
Adults, Children's and Public Health Programme		Business continuity / risk mitigation / enabler
Project Gemini	17 projects	£1.42m – already in MTFS
Digital / Customer Access* (Including ICS)	AI assistants Service Improvement & Case Management Process automation / 2 nd phase avoidable contact Back Office Process automation Adults & Children's automation	£356k-£1m – already in the MTFS £1.5 million by 26/27 £2 million by 26/27 £2 million by 27/28 £8.5 million by 26/27
Triple Value Impact	43 proposals	£13.92m

The immediate benefit to the Council will be from re-balancing resources towards projects that will make the greatest contribution to closing the budget gap or enable further transformation.

Timelines

The first activity as part of this portfolio is a 'reset' whereby quick 'business cases' will be developed (where they don't currently exist) and a prioritisation exercise carried out. This is anticipated to take a total of six weeks.

This work needs to be carried out involving both the Transformation and Digital governance boards to ensure alignment.

	AUG			SEP				24/25 Q3		
Phase / activity	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	O	N	D
Assessment and prioritisation										
Rapid review / focus of effort										
Summary business cases										
Prioritisation										
Reset										

Delivery structure and resources

The programme will be managed by a Programme Director – likely to be the Chief Information Officer, provided they are freed up to effectively do this role. This may require an interim whilst the relevant officer transitions to this role.

The table below sets out the resources required to carry out the portfolio reset exercise. This will determine the projects and resources required for this portfolio.

Programme sponsor: Director of Governance and Compliance			
Project	Sponsor	Project Manager	Delivery team
Portfolio reset	Head of ICT (Chief Information Officer)	Project Manager	PMO support 2 Business Analysts Existing PMs on Digital projects TVI for business cases

Key dependencies

This programme has the following key dependencies:

- **Transformation Governance and Delivery framework** – a new, consistent approach to delivery will have an impact on new and existing Digital and IT projects.
- **The ASDV review** – may require additional ICT projects to return the services to the Council.
- **TOM design and implementation** – may have implications for future IT and Digital capabilities and ways of working.
- **Project Gemini** – the ICT function is undergoing major changes which will limit its capacity to deliver other work.

Special Projects

Key projects and initiatives

There are several projects that may form part of this programme. These are summarised below.

- **SP1: Fees and charges** – a systematic review of the prices that the Council charges for all services with the intention of maximising income whilst mitigating against inequality.
- **SP2: Third party spend** – a programme of work aimed at reducing spend on third party suppliers to drive greater value and make budget reductions. This will involve

preparation to re-procure key, high value contracts, and an organisation-wide systematic review of all spend, likely overseen by the Expenditure Review Panel / Strategic Finance Management Group.

- **SP3: Grant funding** – a review of the Council's approach to identifying, bidding for, and overseeing external funds/grants with the view of improving income generation and maximising value returned from the funds secured.
- **SP4: Income recovery and debt** – a review of charging and income recovery processes across the Council, with the aim of reducing outstanding debt and ultimately, debt write-offs.
- **SP5: Outbound mail** – an initiative to improve efficiency and reduce overall outbound mail and printing generated by the organisation, targeting those types of communications that are responsible for highest proportions.
- **SP6: Council Tax bandings** – introduce a routine procedure to review properties that have been renovated or extended to uplift council tax bands.

Financial benefits

This programme will aim to deliver the following financial benefits.

Initiative	Type	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
SP1: Fees & Charges	Income	£250k – 500k	£750k – 1,500k	£40k – 70k	£40k – 70k
SP2: Third Party Spend	Cashable	-	£3,000k - £5,000k	£690k – £1,150k	£324k - £540k
SP3: Grant Funding	TBC	Benefits to be defined in Business Case			
SP4: Income Recovery & Debt	Income ⁵		£660k – 1,650k	£660k – 1,650k	£660k – 1,650k
SP5: Outbound Mail	Cashable				
SP6: C'tax banding	Income	£12k – 23k	£47k – 94k	£47k – 94k	£47k – 94k
Total		£262k – 523k	£4,606k – 8,493k	£1,567k – 3,034k	£1,101k – 2,324k

The Grant Funding, Income Recovery & Debt, Education and Council Tax Banding initiatives will require further work to determine financial benefits in detail. These may merit a business case before the Council decides whether to include them within the programme for delivery.

Timelines

The table below sets out timelines for those initiatives covered as part of the deep dives.

⁵ This will not be additional income to the council as the revenue has already been recognised, therefore will not directly contribute to closing the budget gap. However it may increase the efficiency of collecting this income, reduce the amount of debt ultimately written off, and improve the overall cashflow of the organisation.

	24/25 Q2		24/25 Q3			24/25 Q4			25/26 Q1			25/26 Q2		
Phase / activity	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S
Fees & Charges														
Third Party Spend														
Preparation														
Light-touch engagement														
Focused support on priority contracts														
Grant Funding														
Income Recovery & Debt														
Outbound Mail														
C'tax														

The Outbound Mail initiative will be treated as an ongoing workstream, where the organisation will target high volume activities for reduction in mail and printing. Income Recovery & Debt, Grant Funding and Education will require further planning.

Delivery structure and resources

The table below sets out the resourcing that is required to deliver those initiatives that have been defined as part of the work to date. A part-time Programme Director will oversee the collection of projects.

Programme sponsor: Interim Director of Policy and Change			
Project	Sponsor	Project Manager	Delivery team
SP1: Fees & Charges	Head of Finance	Ken Lyon (Independent SME)	Service Managers Finance
SP2: Third Party Spend⁶	Head of Procurement	Project Manager / BA	Procurement Officers Contract Managers Finance, Legal Expenditure Review Panel
SP5: Outbound mail	Director of Transformation	Part-time Project Manager / BA	Facilities Management
SP3: Grant Funding	Head of Finance	Deep Dives / Project Briefs / Business cases required to understand opportunity and resourcing ⁷ - likely to require part-time PM/BA for initial work	
SP4: Income recovery & debt	Head of Finance		
SP6: C'tax banding	Head of Revenues & Benefits		

Key dependencies

This programme has the following key dependencies:

⁶ NOTE: the service has two vacancies in key roles that needs to recruit to. A PM/BA would mitigate against the impact of changes in workforce might have on progress with this workstream.

⁷ NOTE: Chief Finance Officer has started Task and Finish Groups that are looking at some of these areas.



- **TOM design and implementation** – will have implications for most areas in scope (primarily organisation, working practices and culture).
- **Social Care** – the highest value contracts that require re-procurement in the short term are for adult social care. It is critical that the work within the Social Care programme and the Third Party Spend project align to realise substantial financial benefits.

Communication and engagement

Change Management

The Transformation Portfolio will affect fundamental, widespread changes to the Council, and potentially its partnerships. The programme will need a workforce that is capable of delivering and sustaining the changes required. Staff, members and partners will need to embrace these changes and embed them in their working. Therefore it is essential that people are supported through a journey of change, and this is threaded through the whole Transformation Portfolio.

The benefits of getting this right are:

- **Improved communication** – when stakeholders are properly informed about changes, it promotes better communication throughout the organisation and understanding from those we serve.
- **Enhanced productivity** - increase improved outcomes and return on investment by driving up adoption of change through considered change management approach.
- **Workforce wellbeing** - uncertainty about the future can be a cause for concern for staff. Change management and effective communication helps to minimise this by providing clarity and structure.
- **Improved morale** - when staff feel like they are part of the change process and that their concerns are being heard, it can boost morale and help to create a more positive work environment.

The Organisational Readiness Assessment

The Council has already carried out substantial work that will inform a communication and engagement plan. The organisational readiness assessment identified that although the organisation had a relatively low level of maturity, leaders were aware and had already taken some steps to address it. The assessment set out a comprehensive list of recommendations to boost readiness for, and ability to deliver, change. The recommendations from have been included within the appendix.

These will be incorporated into the work to mobilise the programme, specific projects and the communication an engagement plan.

In summary, the recommendations from the assessment will be incorporated into the communication and engagement work as follows:

Theme	Transformation work
Vision	To be implemented through the mobilisation of the Transformation Portfolio and the project to design of the new TOM. The communications and engagement plan will need to communicate the vision as soon as it is ready and use it as a 'north star'.
Design	To be actioned through the project to design and implement the new TOM. The key features of the new organisation such as values, culture and behaviours will need to be consistently and thoroughly communicated through the plan.
Plan	The development of this Transformation Plan addresses the majority of the recommendations, however there will be ongoing work to maintain a robust plan as the programme evolves.

Leadership	The Transformation Plan and new TOM will address these, however embedding the changes across the organisation will take much longer and will need to be built into the communication and engagement plan.
Collaboration	<p>The work to mobilise the Transformation Portfolio, and the establishment of the Transformation PMO (and associated communities of practice / networks) will implement these recommendations.</p> <p>However the communications and engagement programme will need to include messaging to promote collaboration and the removal of silos.</p>
Accountability	<p>The work to mobilise the Transformation Portfolio will address these through establishment of a clear governance framework, and the set-up of projects and programmes. It will be supported through the new PMO.</p> <p>The Council will need to secure the budget and delegated decision-making for the Transformation Portfolio.</p> <p>The communications and engagement plan will need to explain these arrangements as one of its earliest activities.</p>
People	The mobilisation, TOM and the Workforce Strategy will make key contributions to defining and shaping the messaging for staff. The communications and engagement plan will need to clearly and consistently disseminate the messages for these (i.e. vision, values and behaviours, etc.).

How communication and engagement will be managed

The approach for developing the communication and engagement plan is set out in the 'Mobilising the Transformation' section of this document. However, the Council anticipates that the plan will be managed through:

- A distinct workstream for delivering programme and portfolio communications.
- A dedicated, full-time Communications Officer with responsibility for working across programmes and with the PMO to coordinate, produce and track communications.
- PMO support to link up key programme objectives, milestones and activities to the messaging required.
- The governance framework and forums set up to manage the programme – communication and engagement would form part of standing agendas for the Transformation and Programme Boards.
- Drawing on the support of existing communications channels, forums and resources – to avoid re-inventing the wheel and duplication of efforts.

Mobilising the Transformation Portfolio

The delivery roadmap for the set-up and mobilisation of the Transformation Portfolio is detailed below. It is broken down into the following sections:

- Securing of permissions – secure the permissions to run and resource the Transformation Portfolio and appropriate delegated decision making.
- Set-up the PMO – establish the new PMO that will drive improvements in capability and capacity.
- Setting up programme infrastructure – setting up governance, delivery methodology and other support.
- Organisation-wide portfolio reset – re-evaluate the existing portfolio of projects to understand whether any capacity can be freed from pausing or terminating projects.
- Securing programme resources – secure the teams and resources required to deliver the programme, and on-board them.
- Project definition and planning – prepare detailed plans for the next stage of delivery in the project lifecycle.
- Communications and engagement plan – develop a robust communications and engagement plan.

The timeline below illustrates when these activities will take place.

Phase / activity	AUG				SEP				24/25 Q3		
	5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	O	N	D
Permissions											
Transformation Board											
Policy & Finance Committee / Full Council											
Dept of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities											
PMO + Programme Infrastructure											
Appoint to PMO posts											
Run team launch event and briefing day											
Set-up of governance mechanisms											
Appoint to key programme posts											
Tailor and approve delivery framework											
Training / learning on frameworks											
Embedding practice and processes											
Transition to council											
Portfolio reset											
Issue of project register											
Directorate validation and prioritisation											
Transformation Board prioritisation											
Programme-specific resources											
Review of organisational capacity											
Selection of internal staff for roles											
Recruitment of external resource											
On-boarding of staff to programme											
Project definition and planning											
Planning for immediate delivery											
Sign-off of plans											
Communications & Engagement Plan											
Development of Programme ambition											
Development of draft plan											
Preparation to deliver											
Target Operating Model											
Design											
Delivery											

Figure 13. Mobilisation timeline detailing the key preparations planned for launch of the programme.

Permissions

Before it can embark on the programme it needs to secure the relevant permissions and resources. This Transformation Plan will have secured, or will require the following, approvals:

- (Shadow) Transformation Board (7 August 2024).
- Assurance Panel (9 August 2024).
- Corporate Policy Committee (21 August 2024).
- The submission (and approval) of transformation plan to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) – planned for late August 2024.

The resources to run the first stage of the Programme have already been secured and approved by Full Council in July 2024.

Set-up the PMO and programme infrastructure

As part of the delivery capability and capacity assessment the Council has already developed a model for the PMO that will support the Transformation Portfolio. The PMO will be implemented and embedded in three phases (as summarised in the 'PMO roadmap' section of this report).

The first two phases will run as part of the mobilisation of the Transformation Portfolio:

- Set-up – standing up the new function prior to the launch of the programme.
 - Recruitment of key roles to run the PMO.
 - Running a PMO launch and briefing day for staff.
 - Development and set-up of programme infrastructure (see below).
- Capability development – this will run past the mobilisation stage, for a minimum of six months.
 - Blended team of experts and council staff working together to implement programme infrastructure to enable skills transfer and promote ownership.
 - Briefing sessions for Transformation Portfolio individuals and teams on the governance and delivery frameworks.
 - Dissemination of the library of tools, templates and key documents to apply.
 - Ongoing collaboration, guidance, challenge and coaching of staff by the PMO on delivery of projects and programmes.

The plan (the Governance Framework and Roadmap) sets out the infrastructure requires to support and manage the Transformation portfolio. This includes governance, delivery methodology and tools and templates to be used.

The Governance Framework has already been circulated for feedback and approval to the (Shadow) Transformation Board, and the Delivery Framework is ready to be tested, refined and adopted by the Council.

Organisation-wide portfolio reset

Although the Council runs a PMO and Project Delivery function, there is no corporate oversight of the projects and programmes being run by the organisation. This presents a number of challenges:

- There is increased risk of low visibility or awareness of projects outside their immediate department – meaning there is a risk that other areas of the organisation may launch a project that duplicates or conflicts.
- There is no guarantee that a project represents the most prudent value-for-money investment by the Council because projects aren't compared and prioritised (outside of that department or team with an overview).
- The Council does not have a clear picture of its capacity to deliver project and programmes, or where it could shift resources to accelerate or start high priority initiatives.

Officers within the Core Transformation Team carried out a data gathering exercise of planned and in-flight projects being run across the organisation. They compiled a log of approximately 570 projects.

As part of the initial stages of work the Council developed a project prioritisation scheme. This scheme will be revisited and applied to prioritisation of all existing projects and programmes. This exercise will be rapidly undertaken with Executive Directors for Directorate-specific projects, and with the Transformation Board for cross-cutting projects, and any projects that need to be escalated for decision.

Securing programme resources

The Council needs to secure the resources that will deliver the Transformation Portfolio. The reset activity will help identify officers and resources that might be freed up from pausing or terminating low priority projects, who could then be assigned to transformation work.

It is likely that at least in the short- to medium-term the Council will not have adequate internal resources to deliver all the work (unless it prioritises a much smaller pipeline that matches internal capacity). Therefore, the Transformation Board will need to assess and secure budget that will allow it to fund external support.

Over time the Council anticipates that its capability and capacity to deliver transformation will increase – through some of the activities identified as part of the PMO capacity development. The result of this is that the Council will gradually be able to take on a greater portion of the work, reducing its reliance on external support.

Project definition and planning

Several of the initiatives included within the programme are in the early stage of development and require further investigation, either in the form of:

- **A deep dive** - where they require further definition of the opportunity.
- **A business case** - where the Council should get assurance that it will deliver adequate benefits and is feasible.
- **A delivery plan** - this could range from just a designated lead, agreed timescales and commitment to report into the Transformation Portfolio to a full, detailed plan, depending upon complexity.

The table below lists some the initiatives that fall within each of these categories.

Deep Dive / Project Brief	Business Case	Delivery Plan
Education	Prioritised TVI initiatives	Fees & Charges
Tatton Park	Early Intervention & Prevention	Outbound Mail
ANPR	Specialist housing	Children in Care C U10 and Step Down
Grant funding	Income recovery & debt	
Supported living innovation	Asset opportunities	
	Reablement	

Communications and engagement plan

The Council has already completed work that will act as the foundation for a future communications and engagement plan, through the Organisational Readiness Assessment. It will need to invest some time during mobilisation to agree some fundamentals relating to the Transformation Portfolio such as an articulation of ambition and clear aims and objectives, aside from the need to close the budget gap.

The Council will develop the communications and engagement plan through the following activities:



- Development of a Transformation Portfolio ambition that articulates a much broader picture of where the Council wants to be in future, aside from financial sustainability.
- Drafting of a Communications and Engagement Plan to cover the recommendations from the organisational readiness assessment, the vision, the objectives, the programmes in scope, and anticipating key milestones that may drive messaging. This will include:
 - Key stakeholder groups as part of a mapping exercise
 - Core messaging (as can be reasonably defined prior to launch)
 - Comms channels to be used
 - Cadence of communications to ensure a regular 'drum beat'
 - Roles and responsibilities for management, monitoring, delivery and changes
- Socialisation with Corporate Comms (or the designated officer for the programme) and the Transformation Board for input and sign-off.
- Preparation to deliver and manage the communication and engagement plan.

It should be noted that there are some key projects that will drive communications and engagement messaging that haven't started yet (i.e. TOM development and implementation, Workforce) and so the plan will require review and updating to reflect these developments.

Conclusion

The Transformation Plan will be discussed and approved at the shadow Transformation Board before being submitted for review at the newly established Assurance Panel.

Following feedback from senior leaders and members (via Corporate Policy Committee) the final version of the Transformation Plan will be submitted to MHCLG in August 2024. During this time, the programme will mobilise, including the allocation of internal resources and the confirmation of external support required. The success of the plan will be monitored through the Transformation Board.



Appendix

Glossary

Term	Description
ASC	Adult Social Care
Business as usual	Work that wouldn't be considered a project as it implements incremental change or represents continuous improvement and should largely fall within the day-to-day activities.
Business Case	The key document that provides the justification for the Council in investing time, effort and resources into delivering a proposed project. The business case must be approved before the Council will allocate resources and give permission to deliver a project.
CSC	Children's Social Care
Health & Social Care Partnership Cases – "Continuing Healthcare"	A national NHS scheme for supporting individuals whose primary needs are health related.
Deep Dives / Project Briefs	The initial piece of work to investigate and define an opportunity, proposed as the first step in the Delivery Framework.
Delivery Framework	The proposed arrangements for establishing a common, consistent way of managing projects. It includes a project lifecycle, key minimum outputs and documentation, and a suite of tools and templates.
Pathways for Adulthood	The journey of children and young people into adulthood, focusing on the outcomes of education, training and employment, independent living, friends, relationships and community, and good health.
Portfolio	A collection of project, programmes and other activity – in this case all the work that sits within the council's efforts to deliver transformational change.
Programme	A collection of projects and other activities that are delivered together to achieve a specific set of long-term aims.
Projects	A piece of work that will deliver change, and benefits for the council, with a defined start and finish.

Organisational Readiness Assessment recommendations

The table below sets out the recommendations from the Organisational Readiness Assessment, by each 'lens' through which maturity was assessed.

Lens (maturity)	Recommendations
Effective environment, culture and behaviours	
Vision (2/5)	<p>Develop, communicate and reinforce an organisational vision, describing the type of organisation Cheshire East Council could and should be. The need to address financial challenges is clear, but to what end, beyond survival, is not. The Council needs a vision for what a transformed organisation could and should look like, one that supports positive outcomes within a sustained and significantly reduced finances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation aspirations – develop a single articulation of organisational aspirations, linked to the Council's broader commitments to the people and place it serves. • Organisational principles – develop a set of design and operational principles that will underpin and enable the organisational aspiration. • Organisational features – articulate the key features of the future organisation, things it will need to prioritise and excel at if it is to achieve its aspirations. • Organisational red lines – determine if there are any political red lines the Council will not cross, things that are not part of the future for Cheshire East Council.
Design (1/5)	<p>Develop and implement a new operating model for the Council, one that promotes the best possible outcomes for the people and place of Cheshire East, whilst capable of living within its means. Beyond addressing in year saving requirements, the level of transformation required, just to meet ongoing financial challenges alone, is profound, and means that the Council will require a new model of operation. This should form a key part of the Council's transformation portfolio and should also address cultural, and process concerns about current ways of working raised in the LGA Peer Challenge. This work is dependent of the completion of the recommendations related to Lens 1 – Vision.</p> <p>Core components of the operating model should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Structure • Organisational Structure • Values, Culture, Behaviours • New Business Planning and Performance Cycle • New Governance and Assurance Model
Plan (2/5)	<p>Develop, communicate and reinforce a single overarching Transformation Plan. True success should be judged not only on the ability of the organisation to deliver change but sustain and build upon that change. Central to this definition of success, is people, therefore the plan should include both programme management and change management initiatives.</p> <p>Core components of the operating model should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overarching high level transformation phases and timescales

Lens (maturity)	Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio structure and the key programmes that make up the transformation • Key leadership and management roles and responsibilities at portfolio and programme level • Key investment requirements and associated resourcing strategy and approach for rapid deployment • A clear view of mobilisation activity and timelines, with clear set of initial programme level outputs • A timeline for the development of validated investment requirements and benefits across all programmes and projects
Leadership (2/5)	<p>CLT, WLT, and WLC need to coalesce around (then live and breathe) a set of clear and consistent messages around the case for change, the transformation agenda, vision for the organisation, and support for the workforce. There is commitment at CLT to transformation, but no explicit articulation and agreement of the requirements and expectations of CLT, WLT, and WLC. The leadership of the organisation preside over a deeply siloed organisation and must act as one to challenge this, if it is to successfully delivery major change and transformation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformational leadership skills development and support, starting with support for fulfilling key leadership roles. • Develop, agree and visibly demonstrate day to day, a set of transformation leadership behaviours. • Ensure transformation governance is based on an environment or transparency and ability to speak freely.
Collaboration (1/5)	<p>Launch, communicate and embed the transformation governance framework, which promotes joint working and coordination across the transformation portfolio, in pursuit of shared outcomes. The Corporate Peer Challenge perhaps says it best. It points to the 'siloed nature of the Council with poor joint working across (and within) departments' and 'poor working relationships across services'. The scope, scale and pace of transformation at the Council cannot be driven down departmental lines, it must be coordinated and delivered cohesively across the organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise the launch the Programme Managers Working Group as part of the transformation governance framework. The group will meet to effectively; coordinate efforts, activity and resources; support each other in the delivery of respective programmes; monitor and manage interdependencies, assumptions risks and issues. • Development of a transformation community of practice, considering both internal and external participants, sharing knowledge and experience; championing change and transformation; working together on specific areas of challenge and/or opportunity.
Accountability (2/5)	<p>Document, communicate and embed individual and group leadership and management accountabilities and responsibilities for transformation at portfolio, programme and project level. The CEO's accountability for what will become the Council's Transformation Portfolio is clear, and the</p>

Lens (maturity)	Recommendations
	<p>introduction of a Transformation Board made up of the Council's leadership, and the recent appointment of a transformation Director is a very good start. Explicit accountabilities, roles and responsibilities for transformation now need defining and communicating, with some training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Document and agree terms of reference, with clear accountabilities and responsibilities, for key forums within the transformation governance framework, including – Independent Assurance Panel, Transformation Portfolio Board, Thematic Programme Boards, Project Boards and Programme Managers Working Group.Secure delegated authority from Members to the Transformation Portfolio Board for management and allocation of the transformation budget and management and decision making in regard to the Transformation Portfolio.
People (1/5)	<p>Develop a Transformation Communication and Engagement Strategy and underpinning Communication and Engagement Plan. Whilst acknowledging that some organisational communication is taking place, and more around transformation is being prepared, the narrative is dominated by the financial challenge and needs balancing with the opportunities transformation brings. There isn't yet a common narrative or understanding about the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop a new Workforce Development Strategy and underpinning Workforce Development Plan. This should consider; supporting the workforce through change and transformation; developing the workforce of the future, with the required skills and experience to not only sustain the change but build upon it.Revisit organisation values and behaviours Ensuring they are reflective of what is desired and required of the future organisation and commonly understood, bought into, and influencing day to day ways of working.
Effective PMO Capability and Capacity	
Design (1.4/5)	<p>The recommendations are captured in the documents developed by the Council to develop effective PMO Capability and Capacity. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The PMO CharterProgramme Governance FrameworkProgramme Delivery Framework
Support (1.6/5)	
Delivery (2/5)	
Governance (2/5)	
Tools (2/5)	
Influence (2.4/5)	
Effective Delivery Capability and Capacity	
Sponsorship - portfolio sponsorship remains with the CEO, and programme sponsorship is all allocated to members of CLT. Project sponsorship should be allocated to directors.	

Lens (maturity)	Recommendations
	<p>heads of service and managers as appropriate to the scope, scale, risk and reward of the project. Clear definitions and expectations will need setting out and support for people to undertake these roles should be put in place.</p> <p>Leadership - portfolio management is the preserve of the Transformation Director, supported by a mature and highly effective PMO. We recommend highly experienced, tried and tested full time Programme Managers are brought into the organisation, once programmes are identified. Projects will require solid management that you would expect to provide through the Project and Change Team.</p> <p>Delivery - in the immediate term the Council will identify where internal provision can be made, and where external support will be needed.</p> <p>Enabling - develop a clearer view for key capability and capacity from enabling services as the design of the Council's transformation portfolio, and identification of the programmes and projects within it. In the immediate term, the Council should ensure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A full time named transformation finance lead, senior individual overseeing costs and financial benefits across the portfolio. • A named transformation workforce lead, senior individual overseeing HR and Org Development across the portfolio. • A named transformation communications lead, dedicated to driving and coordinating communications across the portfolio. • A named finance, ICT, HR, Data/Insight business partners to be allocated to each thematic programme once identified.

Transformation roles

Role	Key responsibilities
Transformation Sponsor	<p>Sets and maintains the vision and objectives, ensuring alignment with the Council's strategic priorities and medium-term financial plan.</p> <p>Ensures conditions for success are met by providing direction and leadership, funding and resources, mandate and support for change.</p> <p>Oversees the portfolio from start to finish, ensuring it meets its objectives and realises the associated financial and non-financial benefits.</p> <p>Ensures the required governance structure is in place and running effectively – chairs the Transformation Portfolio Board.</p> <p>Most senior decision maker on all transformation matters, with the exception of those decisions that require Member involvement.</p> <p>Ensures transformation is delivered in line with agreed best practices, maximising impact (benefits) and minimising risk.</p> <p>Owns Member engagement and manages the relationship between the Transformation Portfolio Board and the Independent Assurance Panel.</p> <p>Champions transformation within and outside of the organisation, ensuring effective stakeholder engagement and communication.</p>
Transformation Director	<p>Maintains an integrated Portfolio Plan, proactively monitoring collective progress of the programmes and projects against the plan.</p> <p>Manages the portfolio from start to finish, ensuring it is delivered in line with agreed best practices, and delivers the associated benefits.</p> <p>Effective co-ordination of the programmes, management of their interdependencies, oversight of any risks and issues, resolving as required.</p> <p>Defines transformation governance arrangements, ensuring quality assurance and overall portfolio integrity. Attends the Transformation Portfolio Board and Thematic Programme Boards.</p> <p>Oversees the Portfolio Budget, monitoring costs across the programme, against progress, deliverables and benefits.</p> <p>Ensures programmes are appropriately resourced, and common resources and skills (e.g. core support services) are coordinated effectively.</p> <p>Works with the Transformation Sponsor and Portfolio Management Office to facilitate effective governance and assurance.</p> <p>Chairs the Programme Working Group, bringing Programmes Managers together to focus on the day-to-day management (i.e. benefits, risk, etc.)</p>
Portfolio Sponsor	<p>Sets and maintains the programme objectives, ensuring alignment with the broader portfolio, Council's priorities and MTFS.</p> <p>Oversees the programme from start to finish, ensuring the programme maintains the required funding and resources to meet its objectives and realises the associated benefits.</p>

Role	Key responsibilities
	<p>Provides clear direction and leadership to all projects within the programme, in consideration of the broader portfolio and organisational context.</p> <p>Drives and oversees the effective delivery of the programme, dealing with escalations from projects and programme level, risks, issues and interdependencies as required.</p> <p>Ensures the required programme governance structure is in place and running effectively – chairs the Programme Board and attends / reports to the Transformation Portfolio Board.</p> <p>Most senior decision maker on the programme, with the exception of those decisions that require Transformation Portfolio Board or Member involvement.</p> <p>Owns the relationship between the Programme Board and Portfolio Board, and engagement and communication with key stakeholders.</p> <p>Champions the programme and broader portfolio within and outside of the organisation, supporting effective stakeholder engagement and communication.</p>
Portfolio Director	<p>The Portfolio Director is a leadership role, whereby they provide direction, support and assurance for the constituent projects and initiatives.</p> <p>Effective co-ordination of the projects, management of their interdependencies, monitoring of costs, oversight of any risks and issues, resolving and initiating corrective action as required.</p> <p>Works closely with the Programme Sponsor and Portfolio Management Office to facilitate effective programme governance and assure quality of outputs and delivery standards.</p> <p>Attends the Programme Board, is the key point of contact for the project managers and coordinates their attendance and input.</p> <p>Attends the Programme Working Group, bringing Programme Managers together to focus on the day-to-day management of resources, interdependencies, risks and issues.</p> <p>Develops and maintains an integrated Programme Plan, proactively monitoring collective progress of the projects against the plan.</p> <p>Develops and maintains programme level Benefits Tracker, Cost Tracker and RAID Log, and produces monthly Programme Highlight Reports for the Transformation Portfolio Board.</p> <p>Ensures projects have key foundations in place (e.g. Project Initiation Documents and Business Cases) and key controls (e.g. Highlight Reporting, RAID Logs, Change Control).</p> <p>Ensures projects have the required funding and resourcing to deliver to agreed plans and deliver associated deliverables and benefits.</p>
Project Sponsor	<p>Accountable for setting out the business case, defining the project's success criteria and get stakeholder buy-in, oversight of project delivery, and realisation of the associated benefits.</p>

Role	Key responsibilities
	<p>Ensures the project is funded and resourced; managed / governed appropriately; managing risks, issues, and escalations; removing blockers; ensuring the quality of outputs.</p> <p>Chairs their Project Board and attends and owns the relationship with the Programme Board. Oversees engagement and communication with key stakeholders.</p>
Project Manager	<p>Responsible for the planning and day-to-day delivery of the project, coordinating activity and the effective management of risks, issues, assumptions and interdependencies.</p> <p>Responsible for managing the Project Team, the delivery of the key project outputs and associated benefits, and reporting progress against agreed plans.</p> <p>Developing and maintaining key project documents / controls including Business Case, Project Initiation Document, Project Plan, RAID Log, and Benefit Realisation Plan.</p>

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Engagement and our equality duty

Whilst [the Gunning Principles](#) set out the rules for consulting ‘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 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.

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.

Contacting the [Equality and Diversity mailbox](#) will help you to understand how you can gain insight as to 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 the service, strategy, function or procedure

Proposal Title	CEC Transformation.
Date of Assessment	August 2024
Assessment Lead Officer Name	Chris Allman
Directorate/Service	Corporate
Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure.	<p>Transformation Plan Introduction:</p> <p>Cheshire East Council faces its most challenging set of circumstances since it was formed. Financial pressures are driving the need to close at least a £100 million budget gap to ensure financial sustainability and avoid issuing a Section 114 notice. Recent external review and inspections have identified several areas where the organisation requires significant transformation and improvement. At the same time the Council needs to reset its operating model and define its ambitions to help it capitalise on the borough's strengths as well as being responsive to new developments including a new national government.</p> <p>The Council is preparing to launch a Transformation Portfolio to shape and deliver the widespread, fundamental changes it anticipates that it needs to make to respond to these challenges. It has already appointed an external transformation partner, Inner Circle Consulting and collaborated with them to identify a range of opportunities that could help the Council address financial and strategic challenges. It has carried out a readiness assessment of its current capability and capacity to successfully deliver the complex programme of change required. This work has led to the development of a Transformation Plan which is being shared with Corporate Policy Committee on 21st August 2024 and needs to be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government by 27th August.</p> <p>The Transformation Portfolio:</p> <p>The Council has developed a Transformation Portfolio to address the challenges it faces. The successful delivery of this plan will result in a radically different organisation that not only achieves financial recovery but also workforce stability, economic growth and improved outcomes for residents. The Transformation</p>

	<p>Portfolio will take multiple years to deliver, given the amount of change involved. The Portfolio will initially comprise six programmes each containing a range of projects and other initiatives. It should be noted that the programmes and projects listed form the first part of the work to be delivered. New projects will be scoped and considered for inclusion over the life of the Programme.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Workforce – Design and delivery of a new target operating model encompassing staffing, ways of working, capabilities and culture. Projects and initiatives include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Target Operating Model b. Agency Staff c. Workforce Productivity 2. Social Care – Projects to transform high-needs, high-care / statutory social care services. Note: Adult Social Care Cost & demand Modelling, ASC Fees & Charging, Reablement and ASC workforce development will all report in but not form part of the Programme. Projects and initiatives include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continuing Healthcare – Adults b. Continuing Healthcare – Children’s c. Pathways for Adulthood / Transitions d. Commissioning & Brokerage e. Learning Disabilities Provision f. Reunification g. Children in Care (Under-10 + Step Down) h. Children’s (CSC) Cost & Demand modelling 3. Place - Projects and ongoing initiatives that will transform the Council’s approach to place-based services, shaping the local economy and use of Council assets. Projects and initiatives include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Advertising b. Corporate Landlord c. Asset strategy refresh d. PL4: Automatic Number Plate Recognition enforcement e. Specialist housing
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. Libraries g. Tatton Park h. Waste i. Alternative Service Delivery Vehicle review j. Economic strategy <p>4. Early Intervention and Prevention - Develop a whole-council response to supporting residents to become more resilient, self-sufficient and avoid crises requiring intensive support. This also aims to manage long-term demand for services. Projects and initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Early intervention and prevention b. Customer <p>5. Digital - Digitally enabled projects and programmes that will realise benefits for the Council and residents. Projects and initiatives are to be agreed as part of a prioritisation exercise, but likely to include a broad range of initiatives.</p> <p>6. Special Projects - Projects that do not fit neatly within any of the above programmes but will deliver important benefits linked to the financial and strategic objectives of the Council. Projects and initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Fees & Charges b. Third Party Spend c. Outbound mail d. Grant Funding e. Income recovery & debt f. Council Tax banding <p>At this time, due the external deadline faced for the Transformation Plan and the pace at which the work has needed to move, the transformation activity has looked at the overall approach rather than the impacts of proposed programmes and projects. Therefore, no engagement has yet taken place with those groups who share one or more protected characteristic to determine if the projects within the programme</p>
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are feasible based upon the needs of those groups. It is acknowledged that this can be done using staff network groups and Equality Impact Assessments will be produced for projects to determine any specific impact on those with protected characteristics. It should also be noted that the programmes and projects listed above form the first part of the work to be delivered. New projects will be scoped and considered for inclusion over the life of the Programme.

Work to date in phase 1 - Opportunity identification and definition:

In March 2024, the transformation approach for the council was approved by Corporate Policy Committee. As part of that report the appointment of a delivery partner to help the council with its transformation journey was approved. Inner Circle, were appointed as the council's transformation partner on the 29th April 2024.

Since May, a blended team consisting of colleagues from Inner Circle and the council have been working together to undertake a full review across all services of the council. The first stage of the transformation process has been to identify those opportunities that offer the greatest value as well as the initial quantification of the resource that will be required to implement those changes. A significant amount of work has been undertaken to identify opportunities for change.

Several deep dives into service areas have also been undertaken to explore the opportunities in more detail, these include:

- Third Party Spend (no non-financial benefits listed)
- Digital First – Potential Benefits include:
 - An improved customer experience, acknowledging that those who are not digitally aware or are digitally excluded may require specialised support and guidance.
- Continuing Healthcare (in both Adults and Children's Services). Potential benefits include:
 - The Council discharging its responsibilities in line with CHC National Framework guidance (adults).
 - People who require services are managed by the appropriate organisation based on their needs.
 - The Council will not funding cases unlawfully
- Preparing for Adulthood / Transitions. Potential benefits include:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early identification of young people to reduce need and support successful transition ▪ Improved experience for young people and their families through consistent experiences & expectation managements and improved and aligned practice between teams ▪ Maximised independence for young people • Adult Social Care – Learning Disability Support, Commissioning & Brokerage. Potential benefits include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Embedding independence and outcomes improvement for adults with learning disabilities ▪ Improved market management and engagement ▪ Improved provider choice for residents ▪ Improved timeliness of placement finding • Children’s Services – reunification of looked after children to the family <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in the number of children returning to live with family or Kinship Carers – as per Stable Homes Build on Love (2023) ▪ Increase life-long relationships for cared for children. ▪ Cultural shift within workforce and improved practice – 'Families First' • Assets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Longer-term benefits will come from unlocking housing delivery by reducing homelessness and ensuring people are living in the right accommodation for their needs. The financial benefit will be seen in housing, ASC, and children. Given the timescale for the development of new homes, these benefits won’t be realised in the four years. • Economic Development and Growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A single articulation of Cheshire East’s vision for the economy, enabling coordinated partnership work and an ability to measure progress towards this. • Early Intervention and Prevention. Potential Benefits include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduction in fulfilment times and high complexity demand ▪ Addressing a multitude of complex needs through a single point of contact ▪ Reducing pressure and demand for statutory services ▪ Improved relationships between services, 3rd Sector and the public.
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	<p>It should be noted that these ‘deep dives’ do not include a business case, and were done to assess prioritised opportunities to get confidence in the size of benefits. Therefore, although financial and none financial benefits have been identified which may impact on some protected characteristics (none financial benefits listed above), there have been no specific learnings about the impact upon those who share one or more protected characteristic as they did not go into this level of research. Individual EIA’s will be completed for each new project that goes ahead that will identify this.</p> <p>Although the primary driver is ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of the Council, the portfolio will also aim to deliver non-financial benefits, linked to the strategic priorities, wherever possible. Further non-financial benefits that have been identified within the projects scoped for delivery are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes for young people with complex needs – Improved experience of children and young people transitioning to adult social care support – promoting greater independence and wellbeing through better support; • Outcomes for adults with learning disabilities – Improved experience and independence for individuals through most suitable, cost-effective packages of care; • Improved outcomes for residents – Improved self-sufficiency and reductions in events triggering support from statutory services; • Accommodation – Develop suitable housing for residents with specific needs, learning from experience and good practice elsewhere; and, • Economic growth – Improvements in inwards investment and job creation through a shared growth strategy and action plan. <p>The Council, working with Inner Circle, has developed a Transformation Portfolio to address the challenges it faces. The successful delivery of this plan will result in a radically different organisation that not only achieves financial recovery but also workforce stability, economic growth and improved outcomes for residents. has been established. This information is contained within the Transformation Plan which must be provided to government prior to the 27th August 2024.</p> <p>At the same time the organisation recognised that it did not have experience of delivering the level of change likely required by their situation and challenges. The Council commissioned an organisational</p>
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	<p>readiness assessment which found that although there was a low readiness for change, the leadership was aware of this and had started to take actions to improve maturity of the organisation. It detailed a set of specific recommendations which have been incorporated within either the mobilisation of the Transformation Portfolio, supporting communication and engagement, or specific projects.</p> <p>The main aims of the transformation programme are to:</p> <p>a) Support the council to address the 4-year funding gap of £100m as outlined in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. This will be done through the development and implementation of a Transformation Portfolio comprising of programmes, projects and other initiatives, to shape and deliver the widespread, fundamental changes it anticipates that it needs to make to respond to these challenges. The primary driver being the delivery of savings, additional income and cost mitigations. to close the £100 million budget gap over the next four years. Consequently the delivery of financial benefits will be the key measure of success for the programme.</p> <p>b) Invest in digital technologies to enable services to adopt technology for various activities and processes, using digital capabilities to transform processes, whilst ensuring specialised support and guidance is given to those that need it. This will be done though a prioritisation exercise on the huge range of projects already underway to identify the optimum blend of initiatives that will deliver maximum benefits for the council and residents. This will provide enabling support to move to new ways of working and a new operating model and be feasible to deliver given the capacity of IT and enabling services. This would allow the council to potentially accelerate new high-value projects to close the budget gap.</p> <p>c) Develop an organisational workforce that is flexible, ensuring all staff have the necessary skills to work effectively within a transformed council. This will be done through the design and delivery of a new target operating model encompassing staffing, ways of working, capabilities and culture.</p>
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	<p>Why is a Transformation Programme needed?</p> <p>The current financial situation of the council means it has no option but to transform the way it delivers services. The council faces a significant four-year funding gap of £100 million that needs to be addressed to maintain appropriate reserves and balance the budget. Failure to do so will mean that the council will need to issue a S114 Notice.</p> <p>The Council must ensure that it fulfils its statutory duties in relation to the approved budget set by council on the 27th February 2024, the only way to do this is by changing systems and process to achieve the stated savings published within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.</p> <p>The requirement for a transformation programme has been established through the approval of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy in February 2024, the Section 151 Officer's Section 25 report, and through the conditions that need to be met as part of the Exceptional Financial Support from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government where providing a transformation programme is a key requirement by 27th August 2024.</p> <p>The transformation programme will include service redesign, supported (where appropriate) by improved digital capabilities and will be contribute to the savings for the next 5 years as set out in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.</p>
<p>Who is Affected?</p>	<p>The individual projects and programmes, within the Council-wide transformation portfolio, will affect the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheshire East Council staff – The transformation programme will establish a target operating model for the council, which will be fundamentally different to the one in place now. When an organisation embarks on transformation of this scale, it can either have a positive or negative impact on culture depending on the approaches taken therefore, it is critical that the transformation programme builds on the culture and behaviour work which has already been embedded into the organisation, and is key to forming cross directorate relationships, ensuring in collaboration, Transformation is integral to the way the Council conducts its business.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents of Cheshire East Council – this includes people of all characteristics who live within Cheshire East and will be affected by changes to the services. • Non-residents who use council services that will change as a part of the transformation plan – People who travel through the area or into the area for work/leisure may be impacted by some of the changes. • Anyone who contacts the council – Invest in digital technologies to transform processes will change the way people contact the council. Those who are not digitally aware or are digitally excluded may require specialised support and guidance. • Partners and Service Providers – Changes in information sharing and integration between council departments and partners. • Businesses owners – The plan could change how a business operates and the customers who visit. • Community Organisations within Cheshire East Council – The plan could change how an organisation operates and the customers who visit. • Members/Councillors – May get increased queries from residents about the changes adding to their workload. <p><i>At this stage, the full detail of all the changes are not fully known. An individual Equality Impact Assessment will be completed for each project / workstream where change is occurring including which protected characteristics may be impacted and how.</i></p> <p>The transformation programme has an aim to improve the experience of all customers when interacting with the council and will seek to ensure that the council recognises and addresses individual needs and/or barriers to accessing services now and in the future.</p>
<p>Links and impact on other services, strategies, functions or procedures.</p>	<p>The transformation programme is one of several elements that need to be progressed in parallel to deliver stability in the council's financial position, the others being:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Sound day-to-day budget management. b) Monitoring delivery of savings, growth, and income in Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-28. c) Developing robust proposals (business cases) for Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-29. d) Recommendations from Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge e) Establishment of the independent assurance panel.

The transformation programme also has links to the following areas of work in the council:

Finance:

- Exceptional Financial Support – Transformation Plan to be provided to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) by 27th August 2024 to secure the requested Exceptional Financial Support of up to £17.6m.
- Medium Term Financial Strategy - support the budget savings of £100m over the next 4 years.
- High-Level Business Cases - HLBC must be an integral part of the transformation programme to ensure that the activities already identified as part of the MTFS are achieved.
- Local Government Association grant - The council received a grant award from the Local Government Association for £105,000 to support the transformation programme which is being used to offset the Phase 1 costs.
- Phase 2 funding – Council, at its meeting on 17th July, approved up to £3m to fund Phase 2 of the transformation programme. This will be funded through existing reserves of the council in the first instance. This funding will need to be replaced either through any initial delivery of in-year savings or through identifying any additional flexible capital receipts that can be used to fund transformation work.
- Section 151 officers' section 25 report - the Council must transform to create sustainable services.

Note: The transformation programme is in addition to the already established in year spend controls such as Strategic Financial Management Board (SFMB). SFMB provides strategic oversight and challenge for procurement activity, strategic assets, workforce (including recruitment watch and agency contracts) and financial management (including financial reporting and planning).

Policy/Plans

- Cheshire East Council Plan – The principle and themes of the transformation programme are aligned with the council's vision, priorities and values as outlined in the Corporate Plan 2021-2025 and refreshed Cheshire East Plan 2024/25. The transformation programme seeks to directly support the aims of being an open and enabling organisation, a council which empowers and cares about people, working together with residents and partners, and a thriving and sustainable place.

- Policy and Strategy Framework, with an emphasis on Digital Assurance and Performance Management
- Decision-Making Accountability – The Local Government Association have undertaken a ‘Decision-Making Accountability’ (DMA) review of senior leadership capacity which will provide valuable insight to guide the organisation’s plans for transformation and improvement.
- Corporate Peer Challenge review/report - The Local Government Authority recently assessed the council’s organisational leadership, capacity and structure. The peer challenge report provides valuable insight to guide the organisation’s plans for transformation and improvement.
- Asset Management Plan – Developing the plan to align it to service requirements and dispose of surplus assets. Which in turn can be used to fund transformational activities.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

- Public Sector Equality Duty – At all stages of transformation, consideration is given to the Public Sector Equality Duty under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010 and it is recognised that we must remove or minimise disadvantage and take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing all protected characteristics such as a disability or age.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy – The transformation programme will be aligned to the Cheshire East Council commitments to within the Strategy.
- The council’s approach to equality and diversity is to put it at the centre of everything we do. It looks to do this by:
 - Working with staff [further details in the [link](#)]:
 - Equality champions – their role is to:
 - *assist their team and service with anything related to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)*
 - *support the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion officer*
 - *share and get involved in opportunities to raise awareness of EDI*
 - *start the conversation with colleagues about EDI*
 - *share best practice and celebrate diversity across the Council and community in Cheshire East*
 - Equality and Diversity staff network groups – including:
 - Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff network

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differently Abled • Early Careers Network • VibranCE • The Circle • Women's Staff Network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Working with the community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Age UK Cheshire East ▪ Body Positive ▪ Cheshire & Merseyside Adult Gender Identity Collaborative (CMAGIC) ▪ Cheshire Race & Equality Centre ▪ Disability Information Bureau ▪ Disability Positive ▪ EASS ▪ Flutterbys ▪ Healthy Baby & You – One You Cheshire East ▪ Maternity Services – East Cheshire NHS Trust ▪ Pride of Romani ○ Adopting best practise such as from the LGA Transformation Network <p>Adults, Children and Young People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEND work – In Children and Families significant work reviewing SEND services has been undertaken in conjunction with the Department of Education to identify what change is required to ensure long-term financial affordability and sustainability of services for the council. • Together Strategy – A broader programme of service transformation under the banner of the Together Strategy – a 4-year programme to excellence is part of the MTFS to ensure we are doing different for less with further integration and practice improvement. • Children's Services Improvement Plan – Although having separate actions, the transformation plan will support the achievement of the Improvement plan to address the findings from the Ofsted inspection of children's services which took place in February and March 2024.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social work practice and commissioned care services – Adults, Health, and Integration have reviewed social work practice and commissioned care services and have their own targeted activities which is separate to the transformation plan.
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<p>How does the service, service change, strategy, function or procedure help the Council meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty?</p>	<p>At all stages of transformation, consideration will be given to the Public Sector Equality Duty under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010 and it is recognised that we must remove or minimise disadvantage and take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing all protected characteristics such as a disability or age. Equality, diversity, and inclusion will be at the heart of all plans for change with an Equality Impact Assessment completed alongside a Business Case for all change projects.</p> <p>As part of the development phase, the change will be assessed against the potential impact upon groups / individuals that share one or more protected characteristic including undertaking desktop research along with engaging with groups that represent / support individuals that share one or more protected characteristics to understand their needs and how the proposals could best support these potentially affected individuals.</p> <p>The following examples demonstrate how the council is meeting the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty:</p> <p>Decision-making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality Impact Assessments will be completed at key stages of the transformation programme as well as for individual projects / workstreams and will ensure that the impacts of change, on both internal and external stakeholders, will form an essential part of decision making. • The Local Government Association have undertaken a 'Decision-Making Accountability' (DMA) review of senior leadership capacity which will provide valuable insight to guide the organisation's plans for transformation and improvement. This will help to stabilise the organisation ensuring that there is buy-in from all levels of the organisation to contribute to the success of the overall programme. <p>Internal and external policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will have an external assurance review on its financial management policies. • The principle and themes of the transformation programme are aligned with the council's vision, priorities and values as outlined in the Corporate Plan • The Policy and Strategy Framework, with an emphasis on Digital Assurance and Performance Management will be implemented.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The transformation programme will be aligned to the Cheshire East Council commitments to within the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. <p>Procuring goods and services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the first phase of the transformation programme, a full review of procurement, commissioning and contract management has taken place with a variety of actions having been agreed – both with existing contracts as well as supplies and services to be procured and contracts that are due to end. <p>The services they provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The financial situation of the council means that it has no option but to transform the way it delivers its services. Reviews across Social Care, Place, Corporate Services and Cross-cutting areas such as workforce and procurement have taken place, including benchmarking services against comparator authorities, to identify opportunities for the next four years. The transformation programme will facilitate deeper and broader service redesign, supported where appropriate by the investment in enhanced digital capabilities (whilst ensuring specialised support and guidance is given to those that need it). • The transformation programme has an aim to improve the experience of all customers when interacting with the council and will seek to ensure that the council recognises and addresses individual needs and/or barriers to accessing services now and in the future. The council will do this by implementing as part of the Financial Strategy Management Board control and review panels to ensure best value and accessibility for all Cheshire East residents. <p>Recruitment, promotion and performance management of employees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational structures and operating models will be reviewed to establish a new target operating model, which will be fundamentally different to the one in place now. The council will develop an organisational workforce that is flexible, ensuring all staff have the necessary skills to work effectively within a transformed council. • The Policy and Strategy Framework will be implemented, with an emphasis on Performance Management, linked directly to the Cheshire East Plan 2025-29 and the MTFs, that includes a list of
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	key deliverable actions for the year 2024/25 and clarification of the strategy structure of vision, aims and priorities.
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Section 2- Information – What do you know?

What do you know?	What information (qualitative and quantitative) and/or research have you used to commission/change/decommission the service, strategy, function, or procedure?
Information you used	<p>Research from a joint Charter Institute of Management Accounts and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy study identified that transformational change and medium to long term financial sustainability are inseparable, stating:</p> <p><i>“Transformation involves a significant change in approach to an organisation’s operating model, technology, process and/or service delivery, in order to deliver better outcomes and improve efficiency.”</i></p> <p>It is therefore important that the future transformation plan is done with this in mind. This will result in effective change management whilst building and maintaining relationships with external partners and developing new financial and staffing structures. Additional capacity and capability will be needed in order for the required savings to be achieved in a timely manner, assessment is under way by Inner Circle as to the likely level of the resource that will be needed to deliver required changes.</p> <p>The first step in the transformation programme was to assess and priorities opportunities. This involved benchmarking performance, interviewing leaders and budget holders, analysing specific service data, current programmes of work and spend. This resulted in a list of key opportunities by service and cross-cutting themes. Following on from this, more in depth reviews of top opportunities identified by the Transformation Board, (a decision-making Board who meet weekly), took place to test feasibility, impact and outcomes. This resulted in providing key opportunities with evidence-based assumptions on costs, scope, key deliverables and timings.</p> <p>Alongside this work, organisational readiness was looked at. This involved a review of capabilities and existing capacity for transformation, designing a baseline and reporting metrics to support Programme Management Office function and interview key stakeholders on transformation requirements. This resulted in a co-designed organisation readiness assessment and mobilisation of Programme Management Office functions.</p>

	<p>Based on all the research, a transformation plan is being developed which includes short, medium and long-term programmes of activity to deliver the financial recovery, the anticipated resources, capabilities and investment required to achieve them and the key risks and issues relating to delivery. The transformation plan will be submitted to can be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government by 27th August 2024.</p> <p>The Transformation plan is being developed alongside a new Cheshire East Corporate Plan for 2025 and beyond which recognises that that promoting equality, diversity and inclusion will improve public services for everyone, with the aim of reducing inequalities, promoting fairness and opportunity for all and supporting our most vulnerable residents.</p>
Gaps in your Information	<p>At this stage, the list of programmes and initial list of projects, has been established. However, the various changes, that are to be made as a result of these hasn't been fully established. Whilst some of the changes will be business as usual, many will be change activity and will undertake a full Business Case including an Equality Impact Assessment.</p> <p>In developing the respective Business Cases and Equality Impact Assessments, desktop research will be undertaken along with engagement with groups that represent individuals with protected characteristics where it has been identified that they may be impacted by the proposed change.</p> <p>By doing so, at each stage of development, the Council can demonstrate that it is monitoring and measuring the improvements made in the context of the obligations under the Equality Act (2010) and our Public Sector Equality Duty.</p>

3. What did people tell you?

What did people tell you	What consultation and engagement activities have you already undertaken and what did people tell you? Is there any feedback from other local and/or external regional/national consultations that could be included in your assessment?
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Details and dates of the consultation/s and/or engagement activities	<p>The critical financial position currently facing Cheshire East Council and the urgent need to transform the organisation has meant there the Council has had to move quickly. Inner Circle (the transformation delivery partner) have conducted a thorough review of the organisation, including our services, financial positioning and processes. They have spoken to senior leaders and asked challenging questions alongside making numerous information requests, so they can better understand the current position of the council and its ability to meet the challenges of any transformation programme. Inner Circle are now using that information to develop a plan to shape our transformation and improvement journey that must be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government by the 27th August as part of the criteria for exceptional financial support. Engagement to date includes:</p> <p>To date, the following internal engagement has taken place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monthly – Trade Union Briefings [Virtual] <i>To update and allow feedback from the respective Trade Unions on the proposals as they are developed.</i> ▪ June 2024 – Deep Dive sessions with key stakeholders [Face to Face and Virtual] <i>These included sessions led by Transformation Partner Inner Circle with stakeholders from early intervention and prevention, strategic asset management and economic growth, becoming a digital first organisation, adult social care commissioning and brokerage and children services placement optimisation.</i> ▪ 11/07/2024 – People Managers [Virtual] <i>To communicate the roles and responsibilities as well as outlining the pace of change required to support financial stability whilst providing the opportunity for members to have visibility and engagement regarding the proposals, including Q&A.</i> • Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 09/07/2024 & 10/07/2024 – All Member Briefing [Face to Face and Virtual] <i>To connect, inform and update the workforce on the transformation programme and potential changes ahead, including Q&A.</i> <p>In addition, regular, transparent communications have been sent to all staff to outline the challenges along with progress as well as what is expected to happen and when.</p> <p>As yet, wider consultation hasn't taken place with various stakeholders who share one or more protected characteristic.</p>
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	<p>Furthermore, in September 2024, a series of 'All staff transformation briefing events' are planned both in-person and online. This will include outlining the high-level plan whilst allowing discussions and feedback from colleagues.</p>
Gaps in consultation and engagement feedback	<p>Due to how quickly the transformation programme needs to progress, there has not been an all staff or public consultation on the programme.</p> <p>The communications that have been sent to all staff to bring them on the journey may not have reached those currently off work, i.e., maternity, long term sick.</p> <p>During the implementation phase, when potential changes are to be designed and ultimately implemented, specific engagement with various stakeholders that represent groups or stakeholders who share one or more protected characteristic will be undertaken. This will potentially include representatives from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internally – within Cheshire East Council including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Equality champions ○ Equality and Diversity staff network groups - including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff network ▪ Differently Abled ▪ Early Careers Network ▪ VibranCE ▪ The Circle ▪ Women's Staff Network • Externally – working with the community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Age UK Cheshire East ○ Body Positive ○ Cheshire & Merseyside Adult Gender Identity Collaborative (CMAGIC) ○ Cheshire Race & Equality Centre ○ Disability Information Bureau ○ Disability Positive ○ EASS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Flutterbys ○ Healthy Baby & You – One You Cheshire East ○ Maternity Services – East Cheshire NHS Trust ○ Pride of Romani
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4. Review of information, consultation feedback and equality analysis

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of information used to inform the proposal	What did people tell you? Summary of customer and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts identified from the information and feedback (actual and potential). These can be either positive, negative or have no impact.
Age	To be determined once engagement has taken place on individual projects/programmes. EIAs to be produced for all individual business cases and service changes covered by the Transformation Programme.	Specific engagement has yet to take place with the specific characteristic. <i>For changes anticipated to impact this characteristic, specific engagement may be undertaken with:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age UK Cheshire East • Early Career Staff Network Group 	No impact anticipated for the delivery of the new Target Operating Model. Impact of any service redesigns is not yet known.
Disability	To be determined once engagement has taken place on individual projects/programmes. EIAs to be produced for all individual business cases and service changes covered by the Transformation Programme.	Specific engagement has yet to take place with the specific characteristic. <i>For changes anticipated to impact this characteristic, specific engagement may be undertaken with:</i>	Impact anticipated for the delivery of the new Target Operating Model is not yet known. Impact of any service redesigns is not yet known.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Disability Information Bureau</i> • <i>Disability Positive</i> • <i>Differently Abled Staff Network Group</i> 	
Gender reassignment	To be determined once engagement has taken place on individual projects/programmes. EIAs to be produced for all individual business cases and service changes covered by the Transformation Programme.	<p>Specific engagement has yet to take place with the specific characteristic.</p> <p><i>For changes anticipated to impact this characteristic, specific engagement may be undertaken with:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cheshire & Merseyside Adult Gender Identity Collaborative (CMAGIC)</i> • <i>Flutterbys</i> • <i>VibranCE Staff Network Group</i> 	<p>No impact anticipated for the delivery of the new Target Operating Model.</p> <p>Impact of any service redesigns is not yet known.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>Specific engagement to be take place for TOM for those who are pregnant/on maternity leave.</p> <p>To be determined once engagement has taken place on individual projects/programmes. EIAs to be produced for all individual business cases and service changes covered by the Transformation Programme</p>	<p>Specific engagement has yet to take place with the specific characteristic.</p> <p><i>For changes anticipated to impact this characteristic, specific engagement may be undertaken with:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Healthy Baby & You – One You Cheshire East</i> • <i>Maternity Services – East Cheshire NHS Trust</i> 	<p>Impact anticipated for the delivery of the new Target Operating Model is not yet known.</p> <p>Impact of any service redesigns is not yet known.</p>
Race/ethnicity	To be determined once engagement has taken place on individual projects/programmes. EIAs to be produced for all individual business	Specific engagement has yet to take place with the specific characteristic.	No impact anticipated for the delivery of the new Target Operating Model – EIAs to be produced for all individual business cases and service

	cases and service changes covered by the Transformation Programme.	<p><i>For changes anticipated to impact this characteristic, specific engagement may be undertaken with:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheshire Race & Equality Centre Pride of Romani 	changes covered by the Transformation Programme
Religion or belief	To be determined once engagement has taken place on individual projects/programmes. EIAs to be produced for all individual business cases and service changes covered by the Transformation Programme.	<p>Specific engagement has yet to take place with the specific characteristic.</p> <p><i>For changes anticipated to impact this characteristic, specific engagement may be undertaken with:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EASS 	No impact anticipated for the delivery of the new Target Operating Model – EIAs to be produced for all individual business cases and service changes covered by the Transformation Programme
Sex	To be determined once engagement has taken place on individual projects/programmes. EIAs to be produced for all individual business cases and service changes covered by the Transformation Programme.	<p>Specific engagement has yet to take place with the specific characteristic.</p> <p><i>For changes anticipated to impact this characteristic, specific engagement may be undertaken with:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Womens Staff Network Group The Circle Staff Network Group 	No impact anticipated for the delivery of the new Target Operating Model – EIAs to be produced for all individual business cases and service changes covered by the Transformation Programme
Sexual orientation	To be determined once engagement has taken place on individual projects/programmes. EIAs to be produced for all individual business cases and service changes covered by the Transformation Programme.	<p>Specific engagement has yet to take place with the specific characteristic.</p> <p><i>For changes anticipated to impact this characteristic, specific engagement may be undertaken with:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Body Positive VibranCE Staff Network Group 	No impact anticipated for the delivery of the new Target Operating Model – EIAs to be produced for all individual business cases and service changes covered by the Transformation Programme

Marriage and civil partnership	To be determined once engagement has taken place on individual projects/programmes. EIAs to be produced for all individual business cases and service changes covered by the Transformation Programme.	Specific engagement has yet to take place with the specific characteristic.	No impact anticipated for the delivery of the new Target Operating Model – EIAs to be produced for all individual business cases and service changes covered by the Transformation Programme

5. Justification, Mitigation and Actions

Mitigation	What can you do? Actions to mitigate any negative impacts or further enhance positive impacts
<p>Please provide justification for the proposal if negative impacts have been identified?</p> <p>Are there any actions that could be undertaken to mitigate, reduce or remove negative impacts?</p> <p>Have all available options been explored? Please include details of alternative options and why they couldn't be considered?</p> <p>Please include details of how positive impacts could be further enhanced, if possible?</p>	<p>The council, to achieve the required savings identified within the MTFs, must transform how it currently delivers its services. It is not a viable option to do nothing. The only option, to potentially avoid the need to issue a section 114 notice, is to do the transformation programme as quickly and efficiently as possible and bring in additional capacity and expertise to support it.</p> <p>The transformation programme will include a new target operating model, which will be fundamentally different to the one in place now. A new operating model will articulate how the organisation will run at a future point in time when the transformation from the 'As-Is' state to the 'To-Be' has been achieved. This will likely impact on clients, customers, residents and staff in various ways – including lots in a positive way.</p>

	<p>The programme has an aim to improve the experience of all customers when interacting with the council – this will involve customers self-serving via the website and reduce staff time spent dealing with some queries.</p> <p>Government commissioners advised that organisational change capacity is a key ingredient to support the council in delivering transformation to achieve medium to long term change that will support achievement of savings and also, in the event of a section 114 notice being issued, organisational change capacity is also essential to deliver necessary actions arising from interventions.</p> <p>In implementing the Transformation Portfolio, the following options were considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do nothing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The impact of this is: Without the change required to create sustainable finances the council may be unable to fulfil its statutory obligations. ▪ The associated risk is that the Council would enter s114 and have its powers taken away. • Transformation, resourced in house <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The impact of this is: Reduced costs associated with procurement of a delivery partner, development, and ownership within existing resource. ▪ The associated risk is that existing capacity and/or capability is insufficient to deliver the transformation programme resulting in the required level of savings not being achieved. • Transformation resourced completely externally <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The impact of this is: Rapid deployment of resources to achieve savings, up-front cost required and ongoing costs. ▪ The associated risk is that this option is not financially sustainable in the long term.
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	In developing the individual projects and programmes that will make up the Transformation Portfolio, a suite of options will be considered. Some of this work is already underway.
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6. Monitoring and Review -

Monitoring and review	How will the impact of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure be monitored? How will actions to mitigate negative impacts be monitored? Date for review of the EIA
Details of monitoring activities	<p>Key risks, including those that impact upon individuals that share one or more protected characteristic, will be managed initially at a project level. These will be identified, analysed and monitored through the development of the Business Case along with the completion of an Equality Impact Assessment. These will be completed by the Project Teams.</p> <p>Through the life of the project, all risks and issues will be monitored regularly via Project Boards with escalation to the respective Programme Board via the Project Manager and/or Project Sponsor to the respective Programme Director to provide guidance and/or make decisions.</p> <p>The Council welcomes feedback from the general public because their comments can contain valuable information to help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve the standard of services delivered • put things right when they have gone wrong • learn from mistakes <p>The Council is committed to equal opportunities and our aim is to make our Corporate Compliments, Suggestions and Complaints policy easy to use and accessible to all customers. It will be widely publicised, available in a variety of formats on request, and customer leaflets containing a feedback form will be available in the Council's Customer Service Centres.</p>

	<p>Staff will provide information on the complaints procedure for customers wishing to make a complaint and provide any assistance they may require, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assist with the completion of a customer feedback form; assist in making the appropriate arrangements for customers who may have specific requirements, e.g. British sign language interpreter, wheelchair access, etc; • assist in arranging for the services of an interpreter where appropriate. <p>This Equality Impact Assessment will be presented, along with the transformation plan, to the Corporate Policy Committee on 21st August 2024.</p> <p>The transformation plan will be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government by 27th August.</p> <p>Further detail will be included within this Equality Impact Assessment at key stages of the transformation programme and will be produced for all individual business cases and service changes.</p>
Date and responsible officer for the review of the EIA	The Equality Impact Assessment will be reviewed by the Director of Transformation once feedback on the transformation plan has been received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and next steps are known.

7. Sign Off

When you have completed your EIA, it should be sent to the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Mailbox](#) 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).

Once the EIA has been signed off, please forward a copy to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer to be published on the website. For Transparency, we are committed to publishing all Equality Impact Assessments relating to public engagement.

Name	
Signature	

Date	
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8. Help and Support

For support and advice please contact EqualityandInclusion@cheshireeast.gov.uk

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OPEN

Corporate Policy Committee

21 August 2024

Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan

Report of: Karen Wheeler – Interim Director of Policy and Change

Report Reference No: CP/30/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

- 1 To provide Corporate Policy Committee with the latest draft Corporate Peer Challenge action plan for comment in response to the Local Government Association's (LGA) report and recommendations.
- 2 To note and comment on the feedback from the Assurance Panel on 9 August which will be fully considered in order for the Chief Executive to finalise the action plan and arrange for its publication by 28 August 2024, as required by the LGA.

Executive Summary

- 3 Cheshire East Council invited the LGA to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge in March 2024. Following a Corporate Peer Challenge, a report outlining the key findings and recommendations is shared with the council and is required to be published. [Cheshire East's report](#) was published on the council and LGA websites on Monday 8 July 2024 and reported to Full Council on 17 July.
- 4 Councils are required to develop and publish an action plan addressing the recommendations in the report within five months of the peer team being onsite so no later than 28 August 2024. The action plan in response to the 18 recommendations within the report is at Appendix 1.
- 5 The draft action plan was presented to Full Council on 17 July 2024. The draft plan was agreed in principle with delegated authority to the Chief Executive to finalise the plan.

- 6 The plan has been updated to reflect feedback from Members through the briefings held prior to Council in July as well as from officers. The action plan was also considered by the newly established independent Assurance Panel on 9 August.
- 7 Delivery of the Corporate Peer Challenge action plan is one of four critical improvement and transformation priorities requiring a council-wide response at this time, the others being ensuring financial sustainability, organisation wide transformation and Children's Services improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Note and comment on the draft Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan and feedback from the Assurance Panel.
2. Note that the Chief Executive will finalise the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan taking account of the Assurance Panel's feedback and publish the plan by 28 August 2024 as required by the LGA and in line with the delegated authority from Full Council in July 2024.

Background

- 8 Cheshire East Council invited the LGA to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge in March 2024. The peer team, made up of cross-party Members and officers from other councils and representatives of the LGA, were onsite from 25-28 March 2024.
- 9 The peer team considered the following five themes which form the core components of all Corporate Peer Challenges, and are key to councils' performance and improvement:
 - Local priorities and outcomes
 - Organisational and place leadership
 - Governance and culture
 - Financial planning and management
 - Capacity for improvement
- 10 Following a Corporate Peer Challenge, a report outlining the key findings and recommendations from the peer team is shared with the

council and is required to be published. Cheshire East's report was published on the council and LGA websites on Monday 8 July 2024.

- 11 The peer team heard examples of good services that are appreciated by residents and that there is a willingness for improvement which is seen as a priority across the organisation. However, they also recognised that the council urgently needs to focus on significant challenges, including the financial position and longer-term transformation.
- 12 The report includes 18 recommendations which have been prioritised by the peer team on the grounds of urgency, sequencing, and importance.
- 13 Councils are required to develop and publish an action plan addressing the recommendations in the report within five months of the peer team being onsite so no later than 28 August 2024. The action plan is at Appendix 1 and progress is being made at pace in many areas.
- 14 The action plan also includes two additional actions relating to Children's Services improvement while not specific recommendations are significant issues referenced within the report and which the council is taking action to address closely linked to the overall transformation programme.
- 15 The draft action plan was presented to Full Council on 17 July 2024. The draft plan was agreed in principle with delegated authority to the Chief Executive to finalise the plan and arrange for its publication by 28 August 2024, as required by the LGA.
- 16 The plan has been updated to reflect feedback from Members through the briefings held prior to Council in July as well as from officers through the Wider Leadership Community. The Committee is invited to make any further comments on the draft plan. Updates since Council include:
 - Recommendation 2 - Updates to the actions related to the senior management structure to align with the report to Full Council on the timeline for decisions and recruitment
 - Recommendation 4 - Inclusion of the programme and change management action
 - Recommendation 5 – Updates to actions related to officer values and behaviours, competency framework and staff survey action plan to provide additional detail
 - Recommendation 6 – Addition of an action to refresh the council's Customer Experience Strategy

- Recommendation 11 – Addition of an action to ensure Member briefings on key topics ahead of Committee/Council meetings where appropriate
 - Recommendation 14 – Addition of Members/officers working together/roles and responsibilities, risk and assurance, safeguarding and equality, diversity and inclusion to the training programme
 - Recommendation 14 – Addition of engagement in internal cross-council opportunities for officers to support breakdown of silos
 - Recommendation 14 – Addition of separate action for leadership and management development programme
 - Recommendation 16 – Addition of an action to refresh the internal communication and engagement strategy
- 17 While many of the actions in the plan have responsible officers identified from Corporate Services, Corporate Leadership Team, the wider organisation and Members, have a critical role to play in its delivery.
- 18 Delivery of the Corporate Peer Challenge action plan is one of four critical improvement and transformation priorities requiring a council-wide response at this time, the others being ensuring financial sustainability, organisation wide transformation and Children's Services improvement.
- 19 The action plan was considered by the newly established independent Assurance Panel on 9 August. Key points and development areas identified by the Panel were to:
- Create a narrative that sits around the plan and articulates the outcomes that will be delivered by implementing it e.g. what will good look like
 - Consider clustering the actions around shared themes and packages of activity e.g. governance, culture
 - Avoid 'ongoing' as a timescale for completed actions
 - Review completion dates against capacity to deliver and priorities e.g. target operating model expected October but many actions have September timescales
 - Consider additional interim support requirements for the Chief Executive to be assured of delivery at pace
 - Actively seek additional support from the LGA for Members and officers.

- 20 As far as is practical these will be included in the final plan.
- 21 Progress against delivery of the action plan will be reported to the Assurance Panel and will be central to the LGA and peer team's Progress Review expected to be completed in winter 2024.

Consultation and Engagement

- 22 The peer team spoke to approximately 165 people including a mixture of Councillors, officers, partners and residents during the peer challenge process to inform the report and recommendations.
- 23 The draft action plan was agreed in principle at Full Council in July. The plan has since been updated following further engagement with Corporate Leadership Team and the Wider Leadership Community, feedback from the two Member briefing sessions held in July and also considered by the Assurance Panel. The Committee is invited to make any further comments on the draft plan.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 24 To provide Corporate Policy Committee with the draft Corporate Peer Challenge action plan for any further feedback.
- 25 For the Committee to note and comment on the feedback from the Assurance Panel on 9 August which will be fully considered in order for the Chief Executive to finalise the action plan and arrange for its publication by 28 August 2024, as required by the LGA.

Other Options Considered

- 26 No other options considered due to the need to meet the LGA's requirements of a Corporate Peer Challenge.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 27 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report and whilst there is no statutory requirement to undertake a peer review the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge is seen as a valuable improvement and assurance tool.
- 28 The action plan contains proposed activity to improve governance and compliance, which will require advice and support from both Legal and Democratic Services as the final plan is confirmed and during implementation.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 29 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The action plan contains activity to address the council's serious financial situation, many of which are already actively in progress. Addressing the Corporate Peer Challenge recommendations through delivery of the action plan will be an important part of demonstrating the council's compliance with Best Value principles.

Policy

- 30 No direct impact. Addressing the recommendations will support the delivery of the council's overall vision and aims within the Cheshire East Plan 2024/25 and support the development of the Corporate Plan 2025 onwards.

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

- 31 No direct impact. The report recognises the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion and need to ensure the council supports and embeds this agenda.

Human Resources

- 32 No direct impact. The report and action plan makes reference to work to ensure capacity and capability for change and improvement.

Risk Management

- 33 No direct impact. The action plan contains proposed activity to further ensure effective risk management.

Rural Communities

- 34 No direct impact.

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

- 35 No direct impact. The action plan includes additional actions relating to Children's Services improvement while not specific recommendations in the Corporate Peer Challenge report are significant issues referenced within the report which the council is taking action to address.

Public Health

36 No direct impact.

Climate Change

37 No direct impact.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Karen Wheeler, Interim Director of Policy and Change karen.wheeler@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan
Background Papers:	Report to Full Council, 17 July 2024: Productivity Plan Report CPC June 2024.docx (cheshireeast.gov.uk)

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Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan

	Recommendation	LGA Narrative	Cheshire East Council Action	Responsible Officer	Action completed by
1	Adopt a crisis management approach in responding to issues raised	Given the pace required to address these issues, the Council should consider moving towards a more 'command and control' approach to provide clear ownership, oversight, and grip through a clear hierarchy and rhythm.	Weekly officer CEBERT (Cheshire East Budget Emergency Recovery Team) replaced by Strategic Finance Management Board with clear hierarchy, membership, roles and responsibilities and sub-group structure including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement Group • Strategic Asset Group • Workforce Oversight Group • Finance Management Group Short term task and finish groups to tackle particular issues are also included in the structure including where any Directorate is more than 5% off target. Weekly financial recovery meetings chaired by the S151 officer will take place to ensure recovery actions are put in place and monitored. Expenditure control panel also in place.	Interim Director of Finance/S151	July 2024
			Recovery element of crisis management response delivered through weekly Transformation Board and emerging plan	Director of Transformation	Ongoing
			Standing items on Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) for Corporate Peer Challenge action plan, Children's Services improvement plan progress, finance updates, providing clear leadership and oversight of issues faced	Chief Executive/CLT	Ongoing
			Children's Services Improvement and Impact Board in place providing additional oversight of improvement	Executive Director Children's Services	July 2024
			Assurance Panel established to bring independent external strategic oversight – to be endorsed at Full Council	Chief Executive	July 2024

	Recommendation	LGA Narrative	Cheshire East Council Action	Responsible Officer	Action completed by
2	Urgently agree and recruit to the Council's Permanent Senior Leadership Officer Structure	The Council needs to consider the corporate capacity, requirements, and stability necessary to support their improvement and transformation, including where statutory officers sit within this structure.	Urgent recruitment to interim senior vacancies to support pace of change is complete (Director of Finance/S151, Director of Policy & Change, Director of Transformation, Director of Commissioning)	Chief Executive	May 2024
			Inner Circle appointed as transformation partner	Chief Executive	April 2024
			Organisational transformation readiness exercise completed by Inner Circle to inform revised transformation PMO and governance framework to ensure capability and capacity to deliver	Director of Transformation	July 2024
			Senior management structure agreed at Corporate Policy Committee for consultation	Chief Executive	August 2024
			Recruitment to permanent Executive Director of Place	Chief Executive	September 2024
			Senior management structure agreed at Corporate Policy Committee and recommended to Full Council, and recruitment partner appointed	Chief Executive	October 2024
			Recruitment campaign and related recruitment activity	Head of HR/recruitment partner	December 2024
			Senior recruitment complete and postholders in place	Chief Executive	March 2025
3	Engage with external challenge, support, and oversight through an externally chaired Improvement/Assurance Panel	The Council should establish an external assurance board, initially for a two-year period to provide additional grip and oversight of the Council's transformation improvement, with representatives from across the sector providing focus on issues of finance, governance, culture, and transformation. The LGA can support this work, including the establishment of	Assurance Panel Terms of Reference and membership endorsed at Full Council	Chief Executive	July 2024
			First Assurance Panel meeting to review Terms of Reference, Transformation Plan and CPC Action Plan for submission	Chief Executive/ Assurance Panel Chair	August 2024
			Twice yearly reports to Full Council	Assurance Panel Chair	TBC

	Recommendation	LGA Narrative	Cheshire East Council Action	Responsible Officer	Action completed by
		the board and consideration of potential members.			
4	Promote increased compliance across the organisation through visible senior leadership for the 'basics'	Establish stronger senior leadership and managerial 'grip' across a range of key corporate processes and systems including budget and performance management and reporting and risk management.	Officer Strategic Finance Management Board in place with clear hierarchy, membership, roles and responsibilities and sub-group structure. New task and finish activity commenced enabling a flex up and down of resources and focus.	Interim Director of Finance/S151	July 2024
			Line by line budget reviews taking place with each Directorate including establishment review	Interim Director of Finance/S151	July 2024
			New cross-council officer boards established for Performance and Improvement, Strategy, Policy and Legislation, Risk and Assurance with Executive Director chairs/sponsors and highlight reports to CLT	Chief Executive/ Executive Directors	From April 2024
			Performance and Improvement Board work programme includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved performance reporting for Cheshire East Plan 2024/25 New performance management framework aligned to new Corporate Plan 2025+ Organisational health, workforce and manager dashboards 	Executive Director Adults, Health and Integration	Ongoing
			Strategy, Policy and Legislation work programme includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy mapping exercise Policy review Updated policy framework 	Executive Director Children's Services	Ongoing
			Risk and Assurance Board work programme includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated Assurance Framework Internal Control Environment review Internal Audit Annual Opinion report and actions 	Executive Director Place	Ongoing

	Recommendation	LGA Narrative	Cheshire East Council Action	Responsible Officer	Action completed by
			Standard council-wide programme and change management framework developed including principles, training and templates to improve delivery with consistent reporting, appropriate escalation and oversight	Director of Transformation/ Interim Director of Policy and Change	September 2024
			SOLACE leadership development programme for Wider Leadership Community (WLC) - Heads of Service and above - following implementation of the DMA recommendations and recruitment	Head of HR	January 2025 onwards
5	Consistently apply principles of people and performance management for the year of 2024-2025	The people management arrangements need to be refreshed and consistently embedded. This includes clarity around expected behaviours of both staff and managers at all levels.	<p>Review existing 'Our Values' and behaviours framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simplify existing framework Develop new values and behaviours framework aligned to Corporate Plan 2025+ and operating model 	Head of HR	September 2024 March 2025
			Monitor manager compliance through KPIs in new manager PowerBI performance dashboards e.g. all staff have annual PDR and 6-month reviews.	Head of HR	September 2024
			Update the conversation toolkit, based on the revised values and behaviours, including use of 360 feedback as part of a new competency framework	Head of HR	April 2025
			Relaunch mentoring/coaching opportunities and reverse mentoring	Head of HR	September 2024
			Review the completed council-wide action plan for the staff survey results 2023 building on new 'you said, we did' approach to include actions identified in the service Workforce Plans and work underway with staff champions and networks	Head of HR	September 2024
			New Workforce Strategy 2025-28 in development including actions under three pillars Capability, Capacity and Culture, for agreement at Corporate Policy Committee	Head of HR	January 2025

	Recommendation	LGA Narrative	Cheshire East Council Action	Responsible Officer	Action completed by
			Review capacity in HR/OD to support people performance management, leadership and organisational change informed by organisational readiness review and senior management structure	Interim Director of Finance/S151	September 2024
6	Develop a customer focussed Transformation Plan to support longer-term improvement	The Council is required to develop this plan in order to access Exceptional Financial Support, and it needs to be completed by August. Whilst the completion of this Plan (and work with a transformation partner) will support the Council in the medium-term, it cannot be at the expense of focusing on the delivery of immediate budget savings and the short-term improvements and cultural changes required.	Appoint external transformation partner (Inner Circle) and Transformation Board established	Director of Transformation	April 2024
			Combined MTFS and transformation timetable showing complementary activity and alignment	Head of Communications	June 2024
			Organisational transformation readiness exercise completed by Inner Circle to inform revised transformation PMO and governance framework to ensure capability and capacity to deliver – recommendations implemented	Director of Transformation	August 2024
			Transformation Plan submitted to Assurance Panel and MHCLG as condition of Exceptional Financial Support	Interim Director of Finance/S151	August 2024
			Begin the co-design of a cultural change programme through conversations with staff to meet current organisational challenges and support transformation	Director of Transformation/ Head of HR	From September 2024
			Develop new Customer Experience Strategy aligned to Corporate Plan 2025+, Transformation Plan and new operating model	Interim Director of Finance/S151	March 2025
7	Develop and agree a new multi-year Council Plan	The current Council Plan is due to expire in 2025, presenting the opportunity to articulate clear priorities and the Council's vision for the future. This should be an outcome focused document supported by an updated performance management framework. There will need to be	Refreshed Cheshire East Plan agreed at Full Council for 2024/25 to better reflect existing pressures and priorities	Chief Executive/ Head of Communications	July 2024
			Refreshed performance reporting 2024/25	Interim Director of Policy and Change	September 2024
			Agree timetable and approach to develop new outcome focussed corporate plan including	Interim Director of Policy and Change	September 2024

	Recommendation	LGA Narrative	Cheshire East Council Action	Responsible Officer	Action completed by
		a clear relationship between the Council Plan, Improvement Plan and Transformation Plan to avoid causing confusion and the necessary read across and alignment with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.	engagement with Members, staff, residents and partners New Corporate Plan 2025+ aligned to MTFS, transformation plan and operating model Agree new performance management framework including strategy mapping/hierarchy and associated governance	Interim Director of Policy and Change Interim Director of Policy and Change	March 2025 March 2025
8	Urgently review the Council's decision-making framework	The Council needs to streamline current decision-making arrangements to avoid siloed working across committees, ensure that Committees are working through effective work programmes, and reduce confusion and lost capacity caused by the current system. This should include consideration of governance structures, schemes of delegation, and report approval arrangements ahead of committee meetings.	Through Constitution Working Group (CWG) agree an updated Scheme of Delegation to be incorporated into the constitution. Review of the financial procedure rule limits – dedicated support lawyer identified to progress at pace – CWG recommendation to Corporate Policy Committee and to Full Council Mandate all significant decisions are made via Committee or where delegated under a committee decision they are clearly recorded. Remove the previous transitional arrangements. Review significant decision threshold. Internal audit of Officer Decision Record (ODR) compliance mechanisms and process, reporting and compliance Strengthen report sign off processes and decision pathways through Heads of Service, Directors and Executive Directors with clear consistent routes and timelines including for implications, involvement of statutory officers where relevant and oversight at CLT	Director of Governance and Compliance Director of Governance and Compliance Head of Audit and Risk Director of Governance and Compliance/CLT	October 2024 October 2024 October 2024 September 2024
9	Empower the Corporate Policy Committee to lead on financial recovery	The Corporate Policy Committee should have ownership for monitoring and recommending the budget to Full Council. The current disaggregation of the	Clarity of governance hierarchy for MTFS and budget framework:	Interim Director of Finance/S151	June 2024

	Recommendation	LGA Narrative	Cheshire East Council Action	Responsible Officer	Action completed by
		budget across Committees creates confusion and a loss of oversight. Empowering the Corporate Policy Committee would be in line with the Council's Constitution, as well as the oversight of the Council's wider transformation programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Policy Committee confirm strategic ownership and oversight role for the MTFS and budget framework Finance Sub-Committee make recommendations to the Corporate Policy Committee on development of MTFS, setting and monitoring of the capital and revenue budgets MTFS working Group established from Finance Sub-Committee 		
			Restructure financial reporting to all service committees. One single financial management report to be used for all committees to improve financial awareness of the complete financial health of the council.	Interim Director of Finance/S151	September 2024
10	Give more time and emphasis to Scrutiny across the Council	The Council would benefit from increased Scrutiny of decisions through their existing governance structures. This should include more consistent approaches to Scrutiny at Committee, and improved forward planning and agenda setting to maximise member input into the decision-making process.	Provide further training including role of scrutiny within a Committee system in policy development and decision making with example scenarios, complexity of scrutiny, internal and external scrutiny. Continue to include Scrutiny as part of Member induction. Promote scrutiny roles in committee.	Director of Governance and Compliance	From September 2024
			Improved forward planning to include scrutiny items on Committee work programmes and clarify Lead Member role and role of Chairs in agenda setting	Director of Governance and Compliance	September 2024
11	Improve the quality and clarity of reports presented to Committees	This should include report writing training for officers and increased compliance with the Council's desired structure and length of reports.	Enforce report sign off processes and decision pathways through Heads of Service, Directors and Executive Directors with clear consistent routes and timelines including for completion of implications, involvement of statutory officers where relevant and oversight at CLT	Director of Governance and Compliance	September 2024

	Recommendation	LGA Narrative	Cheshire East Council Action	Responsible Officer	Action completed by
			Refresh and relaunch report writing training and guidance for officers including style guide	Director of Governance and Compliance	September 2024
			Provide timely briefings for Members on strategic, complex or contentious council-wide and service issues prior to consideration at Committee/Council	Director of Governance and Compliance	Ongoing
12	Improve financial reporting mechanisms and training	Given the Council's financial context there is a need for accurate, timely and regular financial reporting. Financial training should be rolled out to officers and members to support their regular engagement with and scrutiny of this information.	Hold member engagement session on MTFS, structure of council finances, understanding s114 and budget setting process and timetable for 2025/26	Interim Director of Finance/S151	July 2024
			New report format to be discussed with informal MTFS Working Group of Finance Sub Committee alongside discussion on assumptions in the MTFS - agreed at June committee	Interim Director of Finance/S151	September 2024
			Single report format for all service committees relating to finance management reports to ensure whole council not silo view of financial health - new format in place from September	Interim Director of Finance/S151	September 2024
			A finance training programme to be delivered for officers and Members alongside other changes to financial reporting – informed by CIPFA financial governance review starting in July 2024 (requirement of Exceptional Financial Support)	Interim Director of Finance/S151	September 2024
13	Review delivery and issues associated with the Council's new finance system	The challenges associated with the Council's implementation of its new finance system should be reviewed, and an urgent action plan agreed for improvement	Unit 4 improvement plan to be scoped for both finance and HR. This will be informed by the CIPFA financial governance review starting in July 2024, Unit 4 health check feedback in August and reviewed alongside the operation of the shared transactional service team (shared with Cheshire West and Chester). All urgent actions to be resolved as per the timeline agreed.	Interim Director of Finance/S151	From July 2024
14	Launch a programme of training and	Deliver appropriate training for elected Members regarding roles and responsibilities, as well as	Structured training programme for all Members to be delivered. Engage with external providers to include:	Director of Governance and Compliance	From September 2024

	Recommendation	LGA Narrative	Cheshire East Council Action	Responsible Officer	Action completed by
	development for members and officers	leadership and management development training for officers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic decision making for service committees • Strategic financial decision making • Risk and assurance • Chairing skills for Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs • Leadership support for Committee Chairs • Scrutiny within a committee model of governance • Scrutiny support for lead committee members • Tiers and functions of local government • Members/officers working together, roles and responsibilities, overview of all services • Corporate parenting • Safeguarding • Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) • Update the 2023 induction and refresher training • Coaching and mentoring 		
			CLT development programme including facilitated team sessions and individual coaching/mentoring	Chief Executive/CLT	From April 2024
			Updated structured training programme for managers to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Unit 4 (finance/HR system) • Report writing • EDI • Corporate parenting 	Head of HR	From October 2024
			Launch a revised leadership and management development programme for managers, aligned to the new values and behaviours, and competency framework	Head of HR	April 2025
			SOLACE leadership development programme for Wider Leadership Community (WLC) - Heads of	Head of HR	From January 2025

	Recommendation	LGA Narrative	Cheshire East Council Action	Responsible Officer	Action completed by
			Service and above - following implementation of the DMA recommendations and recruitment		
			Encourage wider participation in sector/ professional networks and learning opportunities as well as internal cross-council engagement opportunities to further breakdown silo working	CLT	Ongoing
15	Adopt a corporate approach to programme and project management	Implement a standardised approach towards change management and programme management across the Council. A consistent approach, methodology, documentation, and reporting framework will support the Council to progress	Organisational transformation readiness exercise completed by Inner Circle to inform revised transformation PMO and governance framework to ensure capability and capacity to deliver – recommendations implemented	Director of Transformation	August 2024
			Standard council-wide programme and change management framework developed including principles, training and templates to improve delivery with consistent reporting, appropriate escalation and oversight	Director of Transformation/ Interim Director of Policy and Change	September 2024
16	Develop a clear communication and engagement strategy to support the Council's improvement and transformation proposals	Large sections of the organisation are keen to support this work, and good communication and engagement will be central to galvanising their support. This should include revisiting and refreshing the Council's use of the Brighter Futures Programme. As well as internal communication for staff, the Council should review external communication and engagement to support open dialogue with residents.	Refresh the internal communication and engagement strategy to clearly identify purpose, priorities and channels including cascade and network groups to better support the council's improvement and transformation journey	Head of Communications	September 2024
			Communication and engagement strategy developed to embed an improvement, transformation and financial sustainability narrative and messaging across all audiences especially residents including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims • Key messages • Approach/channels • Stakeholder mapping 	Head of Communications	September 2024
			Visible leadership of the change agenda through Chief Executive, Leader and Deputy Leader at	Chief Executive/ Head of Communications	From July 2024

	Recommendation	LGA Narrative	Cheshire East Council Action	Responsible Officer	Action completed by
			managers' sessions and ongoing through all communication channels		
			Begin the co-design of a cultural change programme through conversations with staff to meet current organisational challenges and support transformation (including review of Brighter Futures programme)	Director of Transformation/ Head of HR	From September 2024
			Better align the relationship between communication, engagement and consultation functions	Interim Director of Policy and Change	September 2024
			Explore options to strengthen resident engagement to inform decision making e.g. citizen/resident panel	Acting Head of Business Change	October 2024
			Develop a consultation and engagement programme	Acting Head of Business Change	October 2024
			Refresh the council's overarching communication strategy aligned to the new Corporate Plan 2025+	Head of Communications	March 2025
17	Act on the issues identified through the LGA's Decision Making and Accountability (DMA) tool	The Council have recently undergone a DMA review of senior structures and responsibilities; the Council should consider how best to incorporate these recommendations into their wider improvement work.	See all actions for Recommendation 2 re interim and permanent recruitment and timeline for senior structure decision making and recruitment.	Chief Executive	March 2025
18	Consider the corporate capacity required to support the Chief Executive	As part of the review of the senior officer structure the Council should consider what additional capacity will be required to specifically support the Chief Executive in Leading what is a significant organisational transformation agenda.	Consider as part of the DMA and development of the senior structure.	Chief Executive	October 2024

	Recommendation	LGA Narrative	Cheshire East Council Action	Responsible Officer	Action completed by
	Additional Actions				
	Children's Services Improvement	A central theme to the Council's updated Council Plan will be the requirement to improve Children's Services following the Inadequate OFSTED rating in the March 2024 inspection. Engaging the whole Council in Children's Service improvement with a focus on corporate parenting will not only support pace in this important area but create a platform from which to start to change behaviours.	Develop an Improvement Plan in response to the OFSTED findings closely linked to the overall transformation programme to be monitored via the independently chaired Improvement and Impact Board	Executive Director Children's Services	July 2024
			Establish an Improvement and Impact Board to monitor delivery of the improvement plan	Executive Director Children's Services	July 2024
			Introduce a Corporate Parenting Working Group chaired by Chief Executive which will work together with care experienced children, young people and young adults to understand what support they need, what is working and what needs to change, ensuring there is a joined up multi-agency and whole-council approach	Executive Director Children's Services	July 2024
			Reflect the priority to improve Children's Services in the new Corporate Plan	Interim Director of Policy and Change	March 2025
	Dedicated Schools Grant	...the Council is also facing a significant deficit relating to its Dedicated School's Grant. This figure has risen from a £26 million deficit in 2022 to £86 million by 2024. The Council has engaged with the national Project Safety Valve and have developed a seven-year sustainability plan regarding these services. However, the national override for this deficit is due to expire in 2026, and based on current assumptions would require the Council to	Continue to deliver the high needs and transformation/sustainability plan which is reducing the deficit (end of year figure was £79.5m in 2024 down from £89m forecast) to support the overall MTFS and financial sustainability	Executive Director Children's Services	Ongoing
			Establish a SEND Executive Oversight Panel chaired by the Chief Executive. The panel will provide support, challenge and scrutiny as appropriate to the SEND Partnership with regard to any risks or issues in achieving agreed improvements and delivery of the DSG High Needs management plan.	Executive Director Children's Services	Ongoing

	Recommendation	LGA Narrative	Cheshire East Council Action	Responsible Officer	Action completed by
		issue a section 114 notice. The Council's delivery of their seven-year plan is essential to their long-term financial viability, and similar to other authorities, they will be concerned by the 2026 deadline for the national override on this account.			

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Appendices 2 and 4 - NOT FOR PUBLICATION

By virtue of paragraph(s) 2 and 4 of Part 1 Schedule 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Corporate Policy Committee**21 August 2024****Proposed New Senior Management Structure**

Report of: Rob Polkinghorne, Chief Executive**Report Reference No: CP/04/24025****Ward(s) Affected: All****Purpose of Report**

- 1 The report sets out the proposals together with timescales to review the senior management structure in light of the recommendations from the Local Government Association (LGA) Decision Making Accountability (DMA) review and the Corporate Peer Challenge. This will help ensure there is sufficient capacity and skills to respond to the recommendations within the peer challenge and meet the requirements to achieve financial stability, deliver the Children's Services Improvement Plan and the Council's transformation programme.
- 2 In addition, the report provides an overview of the interim and temporary arrangements that have been put in place whilst the proposals are finalised and to allow the time for formal consultation to take place. These interim arrangements will need to continue to ensure the Council delivers its responsibilities until the implementation of, and recruitment to, the new senior management structure, subject to formal consultation and final approval.
- 3 The report contributes to the strategic aim of being an open and enabling organisation within the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25 and supports the objectives.
- 4 The confidential Appendices 2 and 4 to this report are within Part 2 and are exempt from publication in accordance with Chapter 3, Part 2.
 - (i) Paragraph 2 as the appendices contain information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual as it relates

to proposed changes to the senior management structure of the Council, and

- (ii) Paragraph 4 as the appendices provide information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or officer-holders under the authority.
- 5 Paragraphs 2 and 4 apply because the structure is for consultation and the information provided as to posts, can be connected to identifiable individuals. Through negotiation and consultation the proposed structure may be subject to potential change before it is finalised. At the point at which the final structure is concluded, this will be included in a public report. The public interest in maintaining the exemptions outweigh the public interest in disclosure, for the reasons stated and that it would not be appropriate to identify those individuals at this stage by way of a committee report and to do so may prejudice the negotiations and consultation.

Executive Summary

- 6 The report provides the context and activity undertaken to inform and develop the proposal for the new senior management structure, including the LGA DMA review and the Corporate Peer Challenge.
- 7 It also outlines the challenges the Council faces in relation to the financial position, the Children's Services Improvement Plan and the required transformation programme.
- 8 It proposes a two phase approach to the senior management restructure to minimise disruption to the organisation particularly in those service areas currently undergoing significant transformational activity.
- 9 Phase 1 will focus on the posts of Executive Directors and Directors (tier 2 and 3) across the organisation to provide stability and capacity at the most senior level.
- 10 Phase 1 will also include the appropriate structure to Head of Service (tier 4) within Corporate Services to ensure an enabling structure is in place to drive the transformation programme, support Children's services improvement, deliver the Corporate Peer Challenge action plan and to achieve financial sustainability over the medium term.

- 11 Phase 2 will focus on the management structure at Head of Service level for the remaining three directorates with professional input from the newly appointed or designate Executive Directors and Directors.
- 12 The report outlines the current interim and temporary arrangements which will continue until the implementation of and appointment to the new structure, subject to formal consultation and final approval by Full Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the proposed senior management structure produced by the Chief Executive subject to consultation and agree that the Chief Executive commences formal consultation with affected employees and recognised trade unions on the proposed changes to the senior management restructure.
2. Note the overall implementation timeline for a new senior management structure.
3. Note that, following formal consultation, the outcome of the senior management structure review will be considered by the Corporate Policy Committee and presented to full Council for approval, including approval of any new positions with salaries in excess of £100,000 per annum and statutory officers, prior to implementation.
4. Note the interim and temporary senior management arrangements across the organisation outlined in paragraphs 45 - 48 and that these will continue until implementation of and appointment to the new structure including any additional interim capacity to support the Chief Executive within the current financial envelope.

Background

- 13 The current operating environment for local government in general, and for Cheshire East Council, in particular requires the Council to adapt to changing and challenging circumstances. The current fiscal pressure requires Cheshire East Council to change and adapt at pace.
- 14 As part of this process, the Local Government Association (LGA) has conducted an independent review of the current organisational

structure at Cheshire East Council. The review explored the senior organisational structure from Chief Executive (tier 1) to Heads of Service (tier 4).

- 15 This identified opportunities to transform services, review acting up arrangements and vacant roles to achieve capacity and capability to provide recommendations for a stable and sustainable organisational structure.
- 16 The review focussed on analysing the appropriate layers and spans of management for the Senior Leadership Team. It examined how increased strategic and operational capacity could be established by identifying synergies, whilst ensuring the effective future strategic leadership of the council and the delivery of good outcomes for residents and communities within Cheshire East.
- 17 The review was undertaken using the DMA methodology which supports effective organisational design to identify efficient and cost-effective organisational structures which are fit for the future.
- 18 The findings and the proposal for a new management structure have been further informed through discussion with the Corporate Leadership Team to recognise our local context.
- 19 The council also invited the LGA to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge in March 2024 with the resultant report setting out recommendations to establish financial stability, organisational capacity, transformation and improvement. The draft action plan alongside the council's draft transformation plan will be finalised by the end of August 2024. These plans will ensure the organisation is fit to tackle the challenges it faces and shape our transformation and improvement journey.
- 20 The Ofsted inspection of children's services in February/March 2024, found support to care leavers was inadequate; this resulted in an overall judgement of inadequate. The Council has agreed an improvement plan to ensure that the necessary improvements are delivered.
- 21 The Council's transformation programme will support the council to address the 4-year funding gap of £100m as outlined in the MTFS. There will be investment in digital technologies to enable services to adopt technology for various activities and processes, thus enabling the council to fully leverage technological opportunities to accelerate its processes. The programme will also develop an

organisational workforce that is flexible, ensuring all staff have the necessary skills to work effectively within a transformed council.

- 22 It is essential that the senior management team has the capacity to deliver transformational change and improvement activity at the same time as continuing to deliver services.

Current Structure

- 23 The DMA review and the Corporate Peer Challenge have identified a need to increase capacity and stability within the senior management team including filling currently vacant roles. Currently, there are a number of senior manager roles which are vacant or have interim/ acting up arrangements in place in the senior management team. This has created both instability and a lack of capacity at senior leadership level.
- 24 The external review identified that the unsustainable level of vacancies and acting-up arrangements are impacting on the ability for the Council to respond to the challenges it faces. It also identified that there appears to be an overlap between Director and Head of Service roles in some areas.
- 25 The current structure does not promote cross functional working which means that there is a significant amount of silo working. These findings and the proposal for a new management structure have been further informed through discussion with the Corporate Leadership Team to identify where it is possible to make changes in the structure to help break down silos.
- 26 The proposed structure therefore needs to ensure there is additional capacity and stability within the senior management structure to meet the challenges in respect of developing financial sustainability, addressing the recommendations from the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge and the transformation plan, as well as the improvement plan for Children's Services.
- 27 The current structure can be found in Appendix 1.

Proposed Structure

- 28 It is essential for the Council to achieve stability within the senior leadership team to provide strategic leadership, strong direction and vision which is required to drive performance and a One Council approach. The top structure will need to be both visible and involved to support the Chief Executive to achieve this.

- 29 The proposed structure will enable Directors and Heads of Service to manage more than one team to reduce silos, integration and improved team-working. By providing greater clarity, depth and strength of roles and job titles, staff will feel part of delivering the overall vision and strategic ambitions and help bring teams together and adopt a One Council approach.
- 30 The proposed structure is designed to support clearer decision-making processes and will enable senior managers to provide clarity of risk tolerance and more strategic 'whole Council' thinking. A clear and strategic Council Plan of work for the next four years with clear and affordable priorities and clear accountabilities help to embed these processes during the transformation programme and beyond. A new Cheshire East Plan for 2025 and beyond will be developed in the coming months as previously agreed by Corporate Policy Committee.
- 31 The new senior leadership structure will be undertaken in two phases.
- 32 The proposed new structure for Phase 1 can be found in (confidential) Appendix 2.
- 33 Phase 1 will focus on establishing:
- a) a new structure for the posts of Executive Directors and Directors (tier 2 and 3) across the organisation to provide stability and capacity at the most senior level and will enable these professional post-holders to inform the management structure at Head of Service level, and
 - b) in Corporate Services, the appropriate structure down to Heads of Service (tier 4) to ensure the enabling structure is in place to drive the transformation programme, Childrens' improvement, the Corporate Peer Challenge action plan and to support the overall achievement of financial savings, working collaboratively and in conjunction with all directorates.
- 34 Within Children's Services, there have been temporary arrangements in place at director level since the Director of Education and 14-19 Skills post became vacant in June 2023. These temporary arrangements were not intended to be in place for a prolonged period. It is vital that this is addressed in Phase 1 of the new senior management structure, including formalising the structure.
- 35 Phase 2 will focus on the Heads of Service structure in Children's Services, Adults, Health and Integration and Place. It will

commence as quickly as possible after Phase 1 as the more senior appointments are made.

- 36 Phase 2 will provide a structure to increase capacity at the frontline and avoid more senior roles being drawn into operational issues. The proposed new structures will empower the Heads of Service roles reporting to the Director roles as well as a broadening spans of control so that each service has the capacity it needs to deliver both priorities, improvement, transformation and business as usual activity.

Executive Director Place

- 37 As there are no changes to the role of Executive Director Place. The Appointments Committee has undertaken a recruitment and selection process (early August 2024) for the permanent recruitment of the Executive Director Place.
- 38 Following formal interviews and assessment centre, an offer of employment has been made to the successful candidate, subject to normal pre-employment checks which are currently underway.

Executive Director Children's Services

- 39 The post of Director of Children's Services was created under Section 18 Children's Act 2004. The purpose was to ensure a coherent provision of services for children, such as education, safeguarding and social care. The obligations of the role can be found in government guidance. [DFE stat guidance template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/guidance/section-18)
- 40 The Appointments Committee on 25 July 2024, agreed to delegate the appointment of an interim Executive Director Children's Services (and DCS) to the Chief Executive. The interim recruitment is underway.
- 41 Permanent recruitment to the post of Executive Director Children's Services is essential to ensure that the service has support in and strategic oversight of the delivery of the improvement plan in response to the recent Ofsted inspection. As there are no changes to the role of Executive Director Children's Service, the permanent recruitment to this post is not subject to the formal consultation outlined for the senior management structure review.
- 42 On 2 August 2024, the Appointments Committee agreed to delegate to the Chief Executive all necessary recruitment steps to ensure that Cheshire East Council has applications from suitably

qualified and experienced candidates for the post of Executive Director Children's Services.

- 43 This recruitment and selection process will commence as soon as the recruitment partner has been appropriately procured and appointed.

Interim and temporary arrangements

- 44 A number of interim senior management arrangements have been introduced to ensure that the Council continued to deliver its responsibilities and to provide time to develop a revised permanent structure for their senior management structures.
- 45 There are also a number of temporary acting up and additional responsibility arrangements in place for directly employed senior managers.
- 46 These arrangements will need to remain in place until the implementation of and recruitment to the posts which will include these areas of responsibility in the new structure.
- 47 In addition, it is proposed that additional interim capacity will be required to provide support for the Chief Executive until the implementation of, and the appointment to, a new senior management structure. This will be managed within existing financial resources and through use of currently vacant posts.

Consultation

- 48 The proposed new senior management structure will require consultation with the affected staff group and the recognised trade unions. This will be for a period of at least 30 days to give all parties the opportunity to provide feedback, seek clarification and to suggest alternatives to the proposed structure.
- 49 Prior to the start of the consultation, work will be undertaken to review and revise job descriptions. Job evaluation will be undertaken utilising the HAY evaluation scheme which is used for senior manager job roles.
- 50 Following the consultation, the Chief Executive will take account of the feedback to finalise the new senior management structure, together with job grades and salaries. The final new senior management structure will be reported back to Corporate Policy Committee for approval. Any new role evaluated where the salary will exceed £100,000, in accordance with the current pay policy

statement, as well as statutory officers, must be recommended by the Corporate Policy Committee to Full Council.

- 51 The procurement process for the appointment of a recruitment partner for any new or vacant posts has already been agreed by the Appointments Committee on 29 April 2024.
- 52 The timeline for the consultation and permanent recruitment is shown in Appendix 3.

Other Options Considered

Recruitment to the current senior management structure

- 53 There is a need to fill vacant posts and address temporary acting up arrangements to provide capacity and stability within the senior management structure.
- 54 The current senior management structure has evolved over time and is no longer considered fit for purpose.
- 55 There was a review of the senior management team in 2019 with further changes being made in 2021. However, since then temporary arrangements have been put in place and a number of posts are vacant. The existing structure no longer meets organisational needs, especially given the transformation work that needs to take place to ensure that the council becomes financially sustainable as well as responding to improvements required in Childrens' Services.
- 56 The option to recruit to the current structure would be a straightforward and time effective solution for the council. However, through the work of the DMA and Corporate Peer Challenge, it is clear that the current structure does not provide the necessary capacity or focus for the transformation programme that is required to identify opportunities to transform services, to address the council's funding gap as well as responding to the recommendations of the Corporate Peer Challenge and requirements of the Children's Services improvement plan.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 57 The proposed new Senior Leadership structure will:
 - provide greater stability and strategic capacity.
 - focus on transforming services improving culture and financial management.

- break-down the silos within the organisation.
- create clarity of job title, role and levels of expectations.
- set clear accountability and responsibility.
- create a clear organisational customer focus, rather than a service focus.
- improve collaboration, reduce overlaps and bring teams closer together.

58 More detailed reasons for the recommendations can be found in the confidential Appendix 2.

Option	Impact	Risk
Option 1 – Proposed New Senior Management Structure	The proposal reflects the needs of the organisation to deliver against its requirements.	The risk of not undertaking a review of the senior management structure is that the Council will not be able to transform.
Option 2 – do nothing and recruit to the current senior management structure	The existing structure does not meet the needs of the organisation to deliver against its requirements.	The risk of recruiting to the current senior management is that the Council will not be able to transform.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 59 The Council will need to follow its normal restructure procedures and ensure full consultation takes place on the proposals with affected staff and recognised trade unions.
- 60 Compliance with the Council's pay policy statement and approval processes under the Constitution will be necessary.

- 61 Any proposed changes to terms and conditions of employment arising out of the new structure will require consultation and agreement.
- 62 Consideration must be given to the effect of any of the final proposals upon those impacted by any changes and any consequential financial implications.
- 63 The Council's recruitment and selection policy must be followed and a transparent, objective and fair selection process should be adhered to for any new or vacant posts.
- 64 Ongoing legal advice and support will be required throughout the process and appointments to statutory officer and executive director roles must be undertaken via the Council's Appointments Committee with the former be formally appointed at Full Council.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 65 The costs associated with the proposals for Phase 1 of the review of the senior management structure are shown in confidential Appendix 4. These are indicative grades subject to any changes in the consultation which will reviewed before the final structure is approved.
- 66 The indicative costing assumes appointment at the salary points shown. However, if any candidate was appointed at a higher salary point, the relevant service would need to identify funding to maintain our financial resources.
- 67 There is a small difference between costs of the current structure versus the proposed structure, reflecting small variances in grading between temporary and permanent arrangement. These costs would need to be managed by the relevant services areas as would normally be case when appointing at a spot salary.

Policy

- 68 The restructure process and consultation with be undertaken in line with the Council's Organisational Change Policy and Procedure.
- 69 The appointments will be made with reference to the pay policy statement to provide transparency to the Council's approach to setting the pay of its senior managers.
- 70 The senior management positions are subject to the Hay job evaluation scheme to allocate them into the Cheshire East Senior Management pay bands.

- 71 The report supports all the priorities in the [Corporate Plan](#) given this is about ensuring that we have a properly resourced leadership to lead on our strategic priorities

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

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

Human Resources

- 74 Actions will be undertaken in accordance with the Constitution and the Employment Procedure Rules as well as appropriate HR policies and Procedures.
- 75 Necessary consultation will take place with staff and the recognised trade unions.

Risk Management

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

Rural Communities

- 77 None

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

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

Public Health

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

Climate Change

80 None

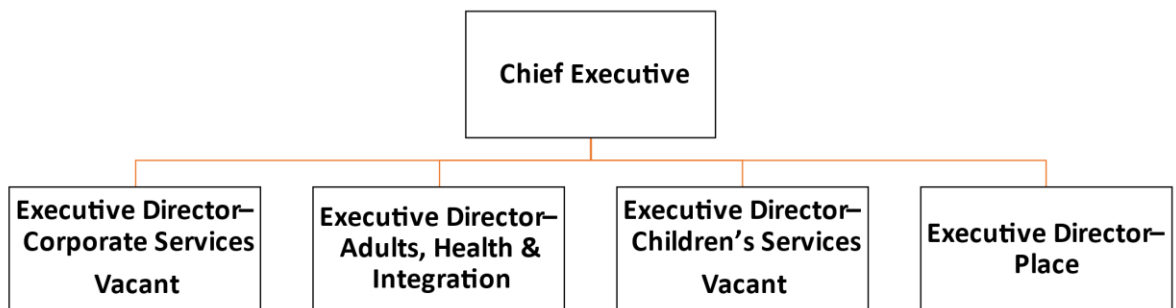
Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Sara Barker, Head of Human Resources Sara.barker@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1: Current senior management structure Appendix 2: Phase 1 - Proposed structure senior management structure with reasons for the recommendations (Confidential) Appendix 3: Timeline for the consultation and permanent recruitment Appendix 4: Phase 1 – Financial cost for Phase1 of the proposed senior management structure (Confidential)
Background Papers:	None

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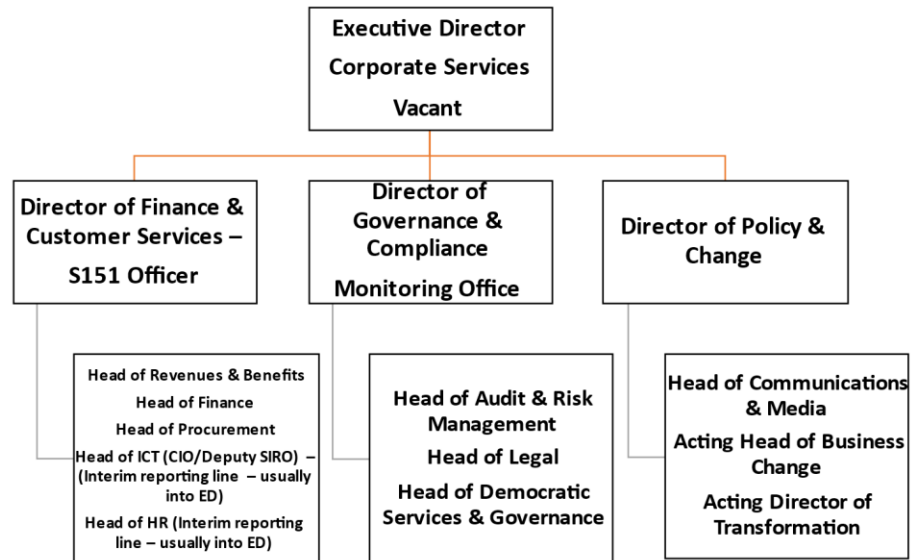
Current Senior Structure for Cheshire East Council

Current Senior Leadership Structure



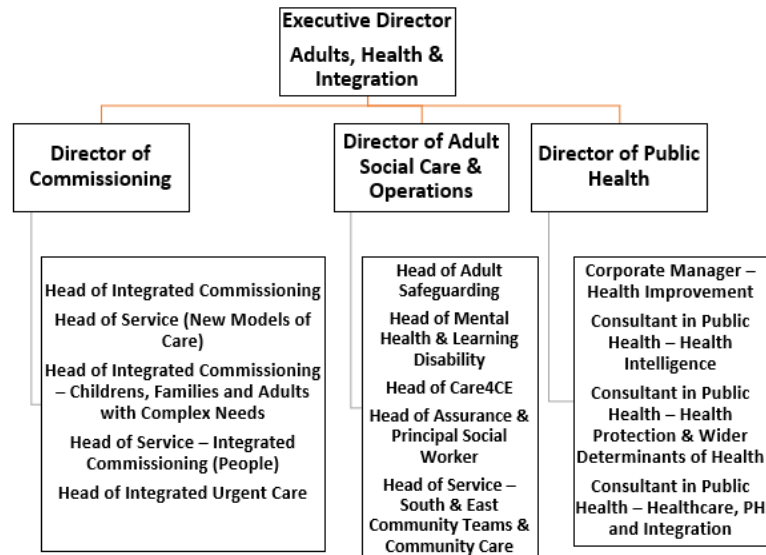
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Current Structure Corporate



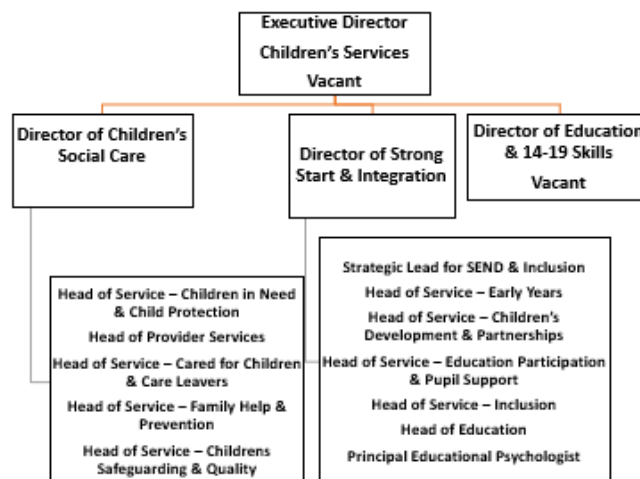
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Current Structure - Adults



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Current (temp) Structure-Childrens

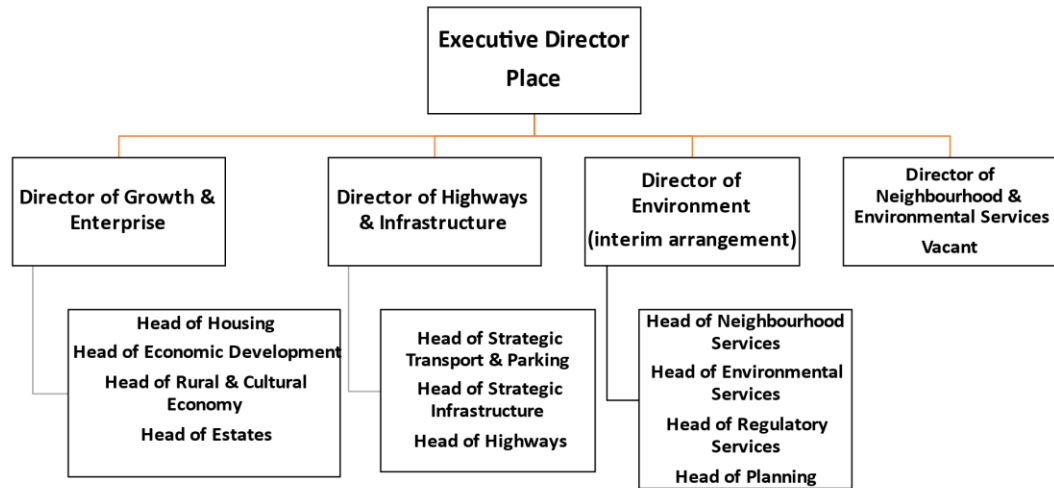


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Note: A temporary structure with two directors has been in place since June 2023, since the post of Director of Education and 14-19 Skills became vacant, with a temporary redistribution of the service functions.

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Current Structure Place



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Appendix 3

Timeline for the consultation and permanent recruitment

Potential Date / Timescales	Activity
21 August 2024	<p>Chief Executive / Corporate Policy Committee</p> <p>Report to CPC to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the proposed senior management structure produced by the Chief Executive subject to consultation and agree that the Chief Executive commences formal consultation with affected employees and recognised trade unions on the proposed changes to the senior management restructure. • Note the overall implementation timeline for a new senior management structure. • Note that, following formal consultation, the outcome of the senior management structure review will be considered by the Corporate Policy Committee and presented to full Council for approval, including approval of any new positions with salaries in excess of £100,000 per annum and statutory officers, prior to implementation. • Note the interim and temporary senior management arrangements across the organisation outlined in paragraphs 45 - 48 and that these will continue until implementation of and appointment to the new structure including any additional interim capacity to support the Chief Executive within the current financial envelope.
22 August – 20 September 2024 (30 days minimum)	<p>Chief Executive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with Directors and their direct reports

September 2024	HR / Chief Executive Procure an executive search partner for Senior Management Restructure
23 – 24 September 2024	Chief Executive / HR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalises new structure and proposed salaries for posts.
25 September 2024	CPC papers need to be published
3 October 2024	Corporate Policy Committee – outcome of consultation and recommendations to Council
16 October 2024	Council – recommendations from CPC
21 October 2024 and w/c 28 October 2024	HR / Chief Executive / Recruitment partner (all jobs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To confirm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project plan, design of campaign and exact timescales for recruitment processes Search strategy Advertising materials and media, microsite content Tailored search to begin after the meeting to produce initial search
November 2024	Executive Search Agency (all jobs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advert to go live in print (online) including Microsite Search reports issued weekly with regular updates Confidential conversations organised with key stakeholders and potential strong candidates that exec search partner have identified Closing date (all jobs) Search concluded
December 2024	Executive Search Agency Chief Executive / HR (and other officers) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sift reports (“A, B, C”) produced for all applicants with comments and recommendations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings organised to finalise candidates being taken forward to next process for each role • Successful candidates made aware and informed of further progress • Assessment Centre and Final Panel Interviews – appointment (dates in diary asap) • Post appointment support, negotiations and candidate care for all candidates.
Post recruitment processes - December 2024	Likely timescale for successful candidates take up posts to be confirmed subject to notice periods

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Corporate Policy Committee

21 August 2024

**Devolution – Update on direction from
Government**

Report of: Peter Skates, Acting Executive Director of Place

Report Reference No: CPC/28/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

- 1 The purpose of the report is to provide members with a further update on the devolution direction from the new government following the outcome of the general election and seek authority to set up a member reference group to provide advice and guidance to inform further discussions with government through the development of a proposal.

Executive Summary

- 2 In February 2022, the Government published the Levelling Up White Paper. This set out a new devolution framework, extending devolution beyond metropolitan areas for the first time.
- 3 Committee considered a report on 13th June 2024 which provided an update on the progress of devolution in other local authority areas across England, and approved the following recommendations;
 - i. Authorise engagement by the Council with Government to discuss and explore the potential options and structure of a proposal that would be achievable under future sub regional working and a devolution platform.

- ii. Note that any final offer of a proposal from Government will be reported back to Committee for consideration, review, and scrutiny.
- 4 The previous update report provided horizon scanning on the views of both Conservative and Labour parties on the likely next stages of devolution that they would pursue within a new government post the general election.
- 5 This paper therefore sets out the updated and latest position from the new Government for sub regional working and devolution, and a likely fast-tracked timetable to engage and develop a proposal.
- 6 The report also seeks Committee's approval to establish a Member Reference Group (MRG) to provide guidance and advice to officers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the new Government's intention to engage with local authorities to develop early devolution proposals.
2. Approve the setting up of a Member Reference Group to assist in providing guidance and advice in the development of proposals, enabling officers to further progress opportunities and discussions with government officials.

Background

Previous legislation and direction

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

devolution framework set out in the white paper and became law on 26 October 2023.

- 8 In terms of the previous focus for local devolution, the last government identified a number of key functions, namely;
 - a) Strategic role in delivering services
 - b) Supporting local businesses
 - c) Local Control of sustainable transport
 - d) Investment spending
 - e) Giving adults the skills for the labour market
 - f) Local control of infrastructure decisions
 - g) Keeping the public safe and healthy
 - h) Financing local initiatives for residents and businesses
- 9 Each Devolution deal was to be structured with a combined authority, and any combined authority would be legally required to establish at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee and an Audit Committee. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee held the power to 'call-in' decisions that have been made but not implemented and could ask for decisions to be reviewed.
- 10 Therefore, the overarching principle of Devolution is to support structured governance to enable the transfer of powers and funds to local functioning economic areas, and to empower sub regional areas to take control and drive forward their local economies.
- 11 Following an agreement of the report at Committee on 13th June 2024, the action taken from the recommendation was to engage collaboratively with colleagues at Cheshire West & Chester and Warrington, and seek further discussions with government officials from Ministry for Communities and Local Government (MHCLG, formerly DLUHC) with a view to shaping the structure of a proposal that will seek to optimise the benefits for Cheshire East, and the wider sub region.
- 12 Committee noted that following receipt of the final proposal from Government, the proposal would then form a report to Corporate Policy Committee for consideration, review, and scrutiny.
- 13 Corporate Policy Committee would then be able to consider the detail fully, and therefore evaluate:
 - Financial benefits to Cheshire East and partner local authorities.
 - Extent of devolved powers and control.

- Roadmap and timetable for any proposed change.
- 14 These benefits should be then set against government's devolution requirements;
- Geographical / Functional Economic area.
 - Combined Authority structure.
 - Mayoral or Non-Mayoral.

Latest Position

- 15 At the time of the June report and before the General Election it was considered that any future discussions would see engagement over an extended period, say 9-12 months.
- 16 However, it is now clear that the new Government is seeking to respond and drive forward discussions at a pace.
- 17 The Council received a letter (see appendix 1 – note: this was sent to all Council leaders) from the Deputy Prime Minister, and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, which stated;
- (i) *We will devolve new powers over transport, skills, housing, planning and employment support. As we have set out to Mayors, we want more regions to benefit from integrated settlements, with access to this important financial flexibility for mayoralities with capacity, strong accountability structures and exemplary track records of financial management.*
 - (ii) *We will move away from a deal-based approach, setting out clear conditions and a clear offer in return for places seeking devolution agreement, and will enshrine a presumption towards devolution, so places can take on new powers automatically if they meet certain conditions.*
- 18 The Government has identified the opportunity for Councils to engage with its ministers and officials now to secure an early outcome to negotiations on a successful devolution agreement.
- 19 As outlined in the report presented previously to Committee, the key areas of focus for any future discussion would likely remain within certain areas and themes of previous devolution settlements. For example:

Financial

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

Devolved powers

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

Supporting next steps

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

20 It could enable the following options to be included:

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

21 From initial discussions with government, it is clear that the government consider Cheshire & Warrington as an early candidate for accelerated and proactive engagement to achieve a proposal, and they would seek to commence detailed discussions with the three councils in the next 6-8 weeks, i.e., by end of September 2024.

22 The indications are that government is looking to move away from bespoke negotiated ‘deals’ with different areas and is now focused on establishing consistent framework models for two style of governance. Namely;

- Non-Mayoral, and
- Mayoral

The new frameworks are currently being established and intended to be finalised over coming months.

- 23 With regard to discussions, it should be noted that the council will be engaging with government on both models to establish the principles, and key benefits to Cheshire East, and also Cheshire & Warrington sub region.
- 24 As stated previously, when the final proposal is made by government, then a further report will be presented to Corporate Policy Committee.
- 25 Being within the first wave of discussions could have multiple benefits, as opposed to being placed at the back of the queue of local authorities with Cheshire East potentially losing out on investment and funding to support programmes, services, and projects for an extended period of time.

Member Reference Group

- 26 Recognising that the government wishes to move at a pace, and to ensure members are able to provide appropriate advice and guidance to officers, to assist their efforts in establishing the basis of a detailed proposal for discussion and debate with government, it is considered critical to form a Member Reference Group (MRG)
- 27 The Members Reference Group would be formed of five Members. Membership is proposed to be as follows :
- Leader of the Council
 - Deputy Leader of the Council
 - Leader of the opposition – Conservative Group
 - Leader of Liberal Democrats
 - Vice Chair of Economy & Growth Committee.
- 28 The Member Reference Group has an advisory role, with no decision making powers and its terms of reference will be drafted and will seek to identify protocols for the engagement of members in providing guidance and advice. Members views will then be considered by officers in engaging further with colleagues in Cheshire & Warrington, as well as government officials.
- 29 It is hoped the first meeting will be held before the end of August 2024.

Consultation and Engagement

- 30 Corporate Policy Committee considered a report on 13th June 2024. Previous to that Committee, Corporate Policy Committee also considered a report on Sub Regional Working on 11th July 2023. Throughout 2023/24, all member update presentations were held on 11th September 2023, 14th September 2023, and 11th June 2024.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 31 The reason the recommendation is to support accelerated engagement with Government officials to explore the options achievable under a devolution framework. The setting up of the member reference group will enable members to provide further advice and guidance to officers during any discussions with government.

Other Options Considered

- 32 The option not to form a Member Reference Group would see a lower level of communication on emerging proposals and limited advice provided to officers as they engage with Government, and potentially lead to greater uncertainty and delay on discussions concerning future allocations of funding and areas of increased regional control / governance.

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing - not to form a Member reference group would see a lower level of communication on emerging proposals and limited advice provided to officers as they engage with Government.	Reduced guidance and advice around principles of funding and control. No agreement with government would led to a funding deficit between Cheshire East / Cheshire & Warrington and adjoining 'devolved' areas.	The risk of losing funding established for devolved areas is likely.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 33 This report seeks authority to progress to start the formative stages of proposals and to continue to engage with Government.

It will be necessary to bring back to Committee any final proposal for consideration, review, and scrutiny, with full Council approving the final proposal.

- 34 In considering the proposal for a combined authority, the Secretary of State must be satisfied that making the relevant order creating a combined authority is likely to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of some or all of the people who live or work in the area, and that it is appropriate having regard to the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and to reflect the identities and interests of local communities.
- 35 Appropriate delegations will be required for officers to take forward proposals. Legal advice and support will be required through out the process and further implications of any proposal will be assessed at that time.
- 36 As the Member Reference Group is advisory and has no decision making powers there is no requirement for political proportionality.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

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

Policy

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

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

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

Human Resources

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

Risk Management

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

Rural Communities

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

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

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

Public Health

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

Climate Change

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

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Peter Skates Acting Executive Director - Place

	peter.skates@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Letter from the Deputy Prime Minister
Background Papers:	n/a



Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP

*Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for
Housing, Communities and Local Government*
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

16 July 2024

RE: The next steps to devolution

Dear Leader,

I am delighted to be writing to you with the weight of a new Labour government behind me, laser focused on pushing power out of Whitehall and lighting the touch paper of growth across our regions.

In my first correspondence to you, I would like to invite you to partner with this government to deliver the most ambitious programme of devolution this country has ever seen. I know you agree that for too long, Westminster has hoarded power and held back towns, cities, and villages across the country from achieving their true potential.

Last week, the Prime Minister and I had the pleasure of meeting England's metro Mayors, a signal of intent about our desire to bring local leaders into the heart of our government. We discussed how to deliver sustained economic growth through better housing, more tailored skills, and decent, well-paid jobs, through both national and local levers.

This government has been elected on a manifesto to widen and deepen devolution across the country. I have seen first-hand the benefits of devolution, from better integrated transport and publicly controlled buses to new skills programmes and good, affordable housing projects.

But our ambitions go further. We will devolve new powers over transport, skills, housing, planning and employment support. As we have set out to Mayors, we want more regions to benefit from integrated settlements, with access to this important financial flexibility for mayoralities with capacity, strong accountability structures and exemplary track records of financial management.

We will move away from a deal-based approach, setting out clear conditions and a clear offer in return for places seeking devolution agreement, and will enshrine a presumption towards devolution, so places can take on new powers automatically if they meet certain conditions.

Devolution underpins our national mission to deliver economic growth for everyone, everywhere, raising living standards across the UK. This government will work in partnership with local leaders to implement Local Growth Plans, and I am excited to establish a Council of Nations and Regions to bring together the Prime Minister, the leaders of the devolved administrations and metro Mayors. I want to see more places represented at that Council, with more Mayors at the table.

Together, we can drive growth in every corner of the country. That is why we are inviting more places to use these enhanced powers and play a leading role in our national renewal. Now is the time to come forward and work with this new government to deliver growth in your area.

Many of you will have struggled to get devolution settlements over the line, or were in the process of negotiating a settlement before the general election. You may have been held up by lengthy negotiations over powers, geographies, or governance. This government will begin to work with you to resolve those issues.

My Cabinet Colleagues and I also understand that all too many councils are facing financial strain and have been left balancing new obligations with higher costs and interest rates after a decade of financial mismanagement from the centre. Rest assured, we will ensure that you have the resources to deliver new devolved powers and functions.

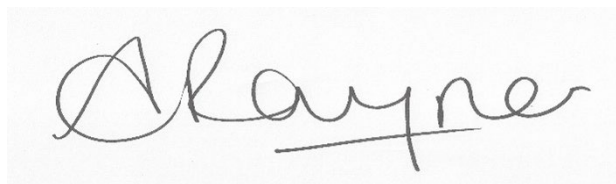
We know we will only be able to improve public services through economic growth, and it is critical you play a leading role in delivering it. But we also recognise this must be accompanied by reforms to local government and long term funding settlements, providing you with the certainty to plan and provide the best possible value for money for residents.

In due course, the government will publish a new devolution framework, setting out the new powers and flexibilities available to you. While we will not force places to take on a metro Mayor, we will not shy away from making the case for their huge advantages, with some powers continuing to be reserved for institutions with directly elected leaders, such as Mayoral Combined Authorities.

We continue to believe that new devolution settlements should be tailored to sensible economic geographies so that local leaders can act at the scale needed to effectively deploy their powers. In the majority of cases that will require local authorities to come together in new combined or combined county authorities. I encourage you to begin discussions with your neighbouring authorities on this basis.

The Minister for Local Government and my officials stand ready to meet to discuss proposals and to support you, so you are ready to board the train of devolution as we surge along this journey to give every community a voice in the future of Britain. I would welcome proposals by the end of September to participate in a first set of devolution settlements.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Rayner', with a horizontal line under the 'ne' part.

RT HON ANGELA RAYNER MP

Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

OPEN

Corporate Policy Committee

21 August 2024

**Membership of decision making and
other bodies, chairs and vice chairs**

Report of: Director of Governance and Compliance, David Brown

Report Reference No: CPC/27/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: all wards

Purpose of Report

- 1 To inform the Committee of changes to the memberships of committees and sub-committees, chairs and vice chairs, member champions and to seek agreement to membership changes of outside bodies. This aligns with the Cheshire East Plan 2024-25 aim of being an open and enabling organisation.

Executive Summary

- 2 The change in Council leadership on 17 July 2024 necessitated a change to a committee chair, but also created the opportunity for changes to be made to committee memberships, and changes to outside organisation memberships.
- 3 Under the Council's Constitution, in-year committee membership changes, and changes to chairs and vice chairs of committees can simply be notified to officers, but changes to memberships of outside organisations must be approved by committees. As the Corporate Policy Committee has cross-cutting powers, it is the appropriate committee to receive this report and to agree such changes as appropriate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the changes to chairs, vice chairs and member champions as set out in the Appendix to this report.
2. Agree the proposed changes to outside organisations as set out in the Appendix to this report.

Background

- 4 On 17 July 2024, the leadership of the Council changed, which created the need, and provided an opportunity, for changes to be made to committee and sub-committee chairs and vice chairs, and to their memberships. Outside organisation memberships have also been reviewed and changes to them must be agreed by the committee.
- 5 The Council's Constitution provides for in-year changes to chairs, vice chairs and committee/sub-committee memberships to be formally made, by written notification to officers. The Appendix to this report details the changes to Chairs and Vice Chairs, which can be made available to all members. The committee is asked to note these changes.
- 6 With regard to in-year changes to memberships of outside organisations, these must be formally agreed by the committee. Details are set out in the Appendix to this report, and the committee is asked to agree them.

Consultation and Engagement

- 7 Apart from consultation with officers, no other consultation was required, or necessary. The changes referred-to in paragraph 4 are a matter for members and the Corporate Policy Committee.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 8 The recommendations of this report have been made as it became necessary to make changes, as set out in paragraph 4, as a consequence of the change in Council leadership on 17 July. As it is an aim of the Cheshire East Plan 2024-25 that the Council should be an open and enabling organisation, it is appropriate for a report to be made to the committee, in public, detailing these changes.

Other Options Considered

- 9 Whilst one option would have been not to report the changes to the committee, this would not have been in line with the Council's Constitution, nor would it have been in line with the Council's Cheshire East Plan 2024-25 aims.

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	Non-aligned with the Constitution and Cheshire East Plan 2024-25 aims	Failure to be open and enabling and the public would not be informed of the recommended changes
As recommended	Aligned with the Constitution and Cheshire East Plan 2024-25 aims	No identifiable risks.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 10 The legal and constitutional position is as set out in the report. Certain of the changes to membership and/or Chair of committees and outside bodies, resulting from the appointment of a new Leader of the Council will occur by way of automatic transfer but others will require new formal appointment by the relevant committee or body. For outside organisations, appointment will also be led by their own constitutional arrangements.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 11 A budget of £1,551,990 exists on cost centre E810010 to meet the cost of Members Allowances. This budget is currently forecast to underspend by approximately 10% so there is some flexibility to meet additional costs that this change may result in without impacting on the Council's approved budget/ Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Policy

- 12 Reporting the changes which arise from the change in Council leadership ensure that officers, Members, and members of the public have full information about who are members of the Council's committees, sub-committees and outside organisations, and who is responsible for chairing them.

An open and enabling organisation The relevant priority is P1.1, which is to ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of Council decision-making.	A council which empowers and cares about people No direct link to the report recommendations.	A thriving and sustainable place No direct link to the report recommendations.
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

13 No direct implications.

Human Resources

14 No direct implications.

Risk Management

15 No direct implications.

Rural Communities

16 No direct implications.

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

17 No direct implications.

Public Health

16 No direct implications.

Climate Change

17 No direct implications.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance Brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Appendices:	Appendix 1 - which shows the changes identified in paragraph 4 of the report
Background Papers:	The Council's Constitution and published list of chairs, vice chairs, and memberships of committees, sub-committees and outside organisations

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Changes to Outside Bodies – For Approval by Corporate Policy Committee

Outside Body	Previous Appointment	Proposed New Appointment
Transport for the North: Partnership Board	S Corcoran	N Mannion
Transport for the North: Rail	S Corcoran	N Mannion
Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership	S Corcoran	N Mannion
County Council Network	S Corcoran	L Crane
Unitary Council Network	S Corcoran	N Mannion
Cheshire East Combating Drugs Partnership	J Place	A Burton
Cheshire East Safeguarding Adults Board	R Vernon	H Faddes
Environment Agency Regional Flood and Coastal Committee	N Mannion	L Crane
LGA General Assembly	S Corcoran	R Vernon
Tatton Park Board	N Mannion	M Brooks
Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Partnership	S Corcoran	N Mannion

Changes to Chairs and Vice Chairs – For Noting

Committee	Previous Appointment	New Appointment
Finance Sub Committee - Chair	N Mannion	D Clark
Economy and Growth Committee – Vice Chair	N Mannion	F Wilson
Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee	S Corcoran	N Mannion

Changes to Committee Places/Boards – For Noting

Committee/Boards	Previous Appointment	New Appointment
Corporate Policy Committee	S Corcoran (previous Chair)	F Wilson

Changes to Member Champions – For Noting

Role	Previous Appointment	New Appointment
Environment & Climate Change Champion	M Brooks	S Corcoran

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Corporate Policy Committee
Work Programme 2024-25

Corporate Policy Committee Meeting Date	Report Reference	Title	Purpose of Report	CLT Member	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Exempt Item	Part of Budget and Policy Framework
August 2024								
21/08/24	CP/04/24-25	DMA Senior Management Report	To update committee on progress from the DMA review	Chief Executive	No	No	No	No
21/08/24	CP/28/24-25	Devolution - further update	to provide a further update on the emerging direction on devolution following the election of a new government.	Executive Director of Place	N/A	No	No	TBC
21/08/24	CP/27/24-25	Outside Organisations (Leader)	Appointments and Outside Organisations - Leader update	Director of Governance & Compliance	No	No	No	No
21/08/24	CP/30/24-25	Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan	For committee to agree the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan.	Director of Policy & Change	No	TBC	No	TBC
21/08/24	CP/29/24-25	Transformation Action Plan	For committee to agree the Transformation Action Plan.	Director of Policy & Change	No	Yes	No	No
October 2024								
03/10/24	CP/31/24-25	The Cheshire East Health and Care Blueprint and Care Communities Operating Model	Over the last year Council officers have been working with NHS and Community and Voluntary sector colleagues to draft a 'blueprint' for health and wellbeing and health and care service provision in Cheshire East in 2030. Alongside this is the 'operating model' for the eight Care Communities. The Care Communities form the foundation stones of the new model of care reflected in the 'Blueprint.	Executive Director of Adults, Health & Integration	No	No	No	No
03/10/24	CP/07/24-25	Amendments to the Constitution	To give consideration to changes to the petitions scheme and other constitutional changes	Director of Governance & Compliance	Yes	No	No	No
03/10/24	CP/14/24-25	Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation for 2025/26-2028/29 (Corporate Policy Committee)	To agree the Pre Budget Consultation survey and material for the four years 2025-2029. The consultation will run from October to December 2024 and will allow stakeholders and residents to engagement in the budget for the coming four years.	Director of Finance & Customer Services	No	No	No	Yes
03/10/24	CP/15/24-25	First Financial Review of 2024/25 (Corporate Policy Committee)	To note and comment on the First Financial Review and Performance position of 2024/25, including progress on policy proposals and material variances from the MTFS and (if necessary) approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements.	Director of Finance & Customer Services	No	No	No	Yes
03/10/24	CP/32/24-25	Healthier Food Advertising Policy	To approve a Healthier Food Advertising Policy that will require 'healthy option' food and drink to be advertised on any Council owned advertising estate (eg. roundabout sponsorship).	Executive Director of Adults, Health & Integration	Yes	Yes	No	No
03/10/24	CP/26/24-25	Workforce Terms and Conditions	A shaping report for Committee on review of terms and conditions, to seek permission to explore further	Director of Finance & Customer Services	TBC	No	No	No
03/10/24	CP/24/24-25	Revised Statement of Licencing Policy	In accordance with section 5 of the Licensing Act 2003 the Council must adopt a statement of policy dealing with licensing matters. This policy forms part of the Council's Policy and Budget framework and falls under Corporate Policy Committee to make a recommendation to full Council (the final adoption is reserved to full Council by the relevant legislation).	Executive Director of Place	No	No	No	Yes
03/10/24	CP/33/24-25	Performance Report Q1 2024/25	To provide the Committee with an oversight of organisational performance against the priorities and vision set out within the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25.	Executive Director of Corporate Services	No	No	No	No

Corporate Policy Committee Work Programme 2024-25

November 2024								
28/11/24	CP/13/24-25	Council Tax Base 2025/26 (Corporate Policy Committee)	This report notifies of the Council Tax Base for Cheshire East and identifies any changes to the calculation of the tax base for 2025/26, so that they can recommend the amount calculated to Council. In accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992 Cheshire East Council is required to agree its tax base before 31st January 2025.	Director of Finance & Customer Services	No	No	No	Yes
28/11/24	CP/17/24-25	Second Financial Review of 2024/25 (Corporate Policy Committee)	To note and comment on the Second Financial Review and Performance position of 2024/25, including progress on policy proposals and material variances from the MTFS and (if necessary) approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements.	Director of Finance & Customer Services	No	No	No	Yes
28/11/24	CP/21/24-25	Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2025/26 - 2028/29 (Corporate Policy Committee)	All Committees were being asked to provide feedback in relation to their financial responsibilities as identified within the Constitution and linked to the budget alignment approved by the Finance Sub-Committee in March 2024. Responses to the consultation would be reported to the Corporate Policy Committee to support that Committee in making recommendations to Council on changes to the current financial strategy.	Director of Finance & Customer Services	No	No	No	Yes
28/11/24	CP/34/24-25	Performance Report – Q2 2024/25	To provide the Committee with an oversight of organisational performance against the priorities and vision set out within the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25.	Director of Policy & Change	No	No	No	No
February 2025								
06/02/25	CP/16/24-25	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26-2028/29 (Corporate Policy Committee)	To recommend the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2025 to 2029 to Council for approval. The report will incorporate the Council's Priorities, Budget, Policy Proposals and Capital Programme. The report will also include the Capital, Treasury Management, Investment and Reserves Strategies.	Director of Finance & Customer Services	No	No	No	Yes
06/02/25	CP/18/24-25	Third Financial Review of 2024/25 (Corporate Policy Committee)	To note and comment on the Third Financial Review and Performance position of 2024/25, including progress on policy proposals and material variances from the MTFS and (if necessary) approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements.	Director of Finance & Customer Services	No	No	No	Yes
06/02/25	CP/23/24-25	Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2025/26 - 2028/29 Provisional Settlement Update (Corporate Policy Committee)	All Committees were being asked to provide feedback in relation to their financial responsibilities as identified within the Constitution and linked to the budget alignment approved by the Finance Sub-Committee in March 2024. Responses to the consultation would be reported to the Corporate Policy Committee to support that Committee in making recommendations to Council on changes to the current financial strategy.	Director of Finance & Customer Services	No	No	No	Yes
March 2025								
20/03/25	CP/22/24-25	Service Budgets 2025/26 (Corporate Policy Committee)	The purpose of this report is to set out the allocation of approved budgets for 2025/26 for services under the Committee's remit, as determined by Finance Sub Committee	Director of Finance & Customer Services	No	No	No	Yes
20/03/25	CP/35/24-25	Performance Report – Q3 2024/25	To provide the Committee with an oversight of organisational performance against the priorities and vision set out within the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25.	Director of Policy & Change	No	No	No	No

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Finance Sub-Committee**
held on Tuesday, 25th June, 2024 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor N Mannion (Chair)
Councillor L Anderson (Vice-Chair)

Councillors D Brown, J Clowes, B Drake, R Fletcher, S Gardiner and F Wilson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Adele Taylor, Interim Director of Finance and Customer Services
David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance
Julie Gregory, Legal Officer
Rachel Graves, Democratic Services Officer

For Item 12 only:

Tom Shuttleworth, Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods
Chris Allman, Director of Transformation
Deborah Upton, Senior Governance Lawyer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors R Kain and C O'Leary.
Councillors R Fletcher and S Gardiner attended as substitutes.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In the interests of openness, Councillors R Fletcher, S Gardiner, and N Mannion declared that they were as future beneficiaries of the local government pension scheme.

Councillor N Mannion declared that in his capacity as Chair of the Finance Sub Committee he acted as the Council's shareholder in relation to the Wholly Owned Companies.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2024 be approved as a correct record.

4 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no public speakers.

5 FINAL OUTTURN 2023/24

The Sub-Committee considered a report which provided an overview of the Cheshire East Council Outturn for the financial year 2023/24.

Referring to the PFI payments, which had been inherited from Cheshire County Council, it was asked how much longer the Council had to pay these. Officers undertook to provide a written response.

The report referred to the grants received, and it was asked if details could be provided on all the grants the Council received. The Chief Finance Officer undertook to provide a written response but noted that the Council received hundreds of grants, some very small and other very large.

Reference was made to underspends due to vacancies not being filled and it was noted whilst this helped the budget position it was not sustainable.

It was noted that the first quarter review 2024/25 report would be brought to the September meeting of the Sub Committee.

RESOLVED (by majority): That the Sub Committee

- 1 note the overall financial performance of the Council in the 2023/24 financial year, as contained within the report, as follows:
 - a) a Net Revenue Overspend of £8.5m against a revised budget of £356.2m (2.4% variance) funded by drawdown from General Reserves.
 - b) General Reserves closing balance of £5.6m
 - c) Capital Spending of £136.9m against an approved programme of £171.1m (18% variance)
- 2 note the content of each of the following annexes:
 - a) Annex 1 – Financial Stability section provides information on the overall financial stability and resilience of the Council. Further details are contained in the appendices:
 - Appendix 1 Adults and Health Committee
 - Appendix 2 Children and Families Committee
 - Appendix 3 Corporate Policy Committee
 - Appendix 4 Economy and Growth Committee
 - Appendix 5 Environment and Communities Committee
 - Appendix 6 Highways and Transport Committee
 - Appendix 7 Finance Sub Committee
 - Appendix 7a Update to the Treasury Management Strategy
 - Appendix 7b Update to the Investment Strategy
- 3 Recommend to Council the approval of the Children and Families Committee Supplementary Capital Estimates (SCE) over £1,000,000 and Capital Virements over £5,000,000 in accordance

with the Financial Procedure Rules, as detailed in Annex 1: Appendix 2, Section 4, Table 4.

- 4 Recommend to Council the approval of the Highways and Transport Committee Supplementary Capital Estimate (SCE) over £1,000,000 as detailed in Annex 1: Appendix 6, Section 4, Table 4.
- 5 Note the Environment and Communities Committee Capital Budget reductions, as detailed in Annex 1: Appendix 5, Section 4, Table 3.
- 6 Note the Highways and Transport Committee Capital Budget reductions as detailed in Annex 1: Appendix 6, Section 4, Table 5.

6 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY ASSUMPTIONS AND REPORTING CYCLE FOR 2024/25 TO 2028/29

The Sub-Committee considered a report which set out the baseline assumptions for net revenue expenditure and core funding, to assist with development of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2025 to 2029.

The Sub-Committee was being asked to approve the assumptions and to form a Working Group to review them further over the summer with the aim of feeding back in September.

The Sub-Committee was also being asked to approve the financial reporting timetable at Appendix C to the report.

In response to members' questions and comments, officers advised as follows:

- the RAG ratings in the report related to budget pressures and were applied by directorates. These ratings were challenged by CEBERT and directorates having to make alternative savings to cover these.
- the monitoring of budgets was undertaken by going through account and cost centre information, line by line, for all budgets across the Council to help identify any trends.
- the MTFS was about delivering the corporate priorities of the Council and the policies supporting these priorities needed to fit the resources available.

The Sub Committee highlighted that the baseline assumptions were the initial interim assumptions for the start of the process, and these would be considered by the Working Group and any changes to them would be reported back to the Sub Committee.

It was requested that the Working Group meet via Teams and that an invite be sent out for the initial meeting to all members of the Sub Committee.

RESOLVED (by majority): That the Sub Committee

- 1 approve the budget assumptions underpinning the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2025-29, for planning purposes, as set out in Appendix A1 to the report.
- 2 approve the setting up of a Finance Sub Committee Assumptions Working Group to meet informally with the Chief Finance Officer to review the current assumptions with the aim of feeding back to the September committee meeting; the Group to be made up of at least four members of the Sub Committee.
- 3 approve indicative savings targets and budget envelopes for each committee for 2025/26, as shown in Table 7 of the report and Appendix B to the report.
- 4 approve the combined Budget setting and transformation timeline, as set out in Appendix C to the report.
- 5 note the 2024/25 Budget change items progress, as set out in Appendix D to the report.

7 DRAFT PRE-AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – WHOLLY OWNED COMPANIES 2023/24 AND OUT-TURN UPDATE 2023/24

The Sub-Committee considered a report which confirmed that the Council's wholly owned companies would publish, on their websites, their pre-audit Summary Financial Statements for year ended 31 March 2024, alongside the Council's 2023/24 Group Financial Statements.

RESOLVED (unanimously): That the Sub Committee

- 1 note the summarised position of the Wholly Owned Companies Financial Statements for year ended 31st March 2024 based on the presentation provided at this meeting and included in this report at Appendix 1.
- 2 note the dates in relation to the approval process for the Financial Statements.
- 3 note the overall financial performance of the Wholly Owned Companies in the 2023/24 financial year, as contained within the Appendix 1, as follows:
 - (a) ASDV Reserves increased by £0.173m, retained reserves are £2.016m.
 - (b) Wholly Owned Companies Net Core Contract Spending was £45.051m

8 APPOINTMENTS TO WORKING GROUPS AND WHOLLY OWNED COMPANY BOARDS

The Sub-Committee considered a report on the appointment of members to the Shareholder Working Group, the appointment of members of the Sub-Committee as shareholder representatives to attend and observe the board meetings of the Council's wholly owned companies and appoint a member to the Joint Extra Care Housing Management Board.

RESOLVED (unanimously): That

- 1 Councillors D Brown, D Jefferay, N Mannion, L Smetham and F Wilson be appointed as members of the Shareholder Working Group.
- 2 the following members of the Sub-Committee be appointed as shareholder representatives to attend and observe the board meetings of the wholly owned companies:

Councillor F Wilson – Ansa
Councillor F Wilson – Orbitas
Councillor J Clowes – Tatton Park Enterprises
- 3 one member of the Finance Sub Committee be nominated to the Joint Extra Care Housing Management Board.

9 WORK PROGRAMME

The Sub-Committee considered its work programme for 2024/25.

Reference was made to the briefing sessions requested at last meeting in March and it was stated with the change of Chief Finance Officer and officer availability, it had not been possible to arrange them, and it was expected that these would held in September.

It was asked if a briefing/training could be held on the management of assets as this was linked financial management. Officers undertook to look into this.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be noted.

10 REPORTING OF URGENT DECISIONS

The Sub Committee received a schedule of an urgent decision taken by the Chief Executive on behalf of the Finance Sub Committee, which was reported for information in accordance with the Council procedure rules.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the schedule of the urgent decision be noted.

11 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the final item on the agenda pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

12 WHOLLY OWNED COMPANIES STRATEGIC OPTIONS REVIEW - OUTCOMES

The Sub Committee considered a report on the outcomes of the Wholly Owned Companies Strategic Options Review.

RESOLVED (by majority):

That the recommendations as set out in the report be approved.

The meeting commenced at 2.30 pm and concluded at 5.06 pm

Councillor N Mannion (Chair)

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **General Appeals Sub Committee**
held on Tuesday, 9th July, 2024 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillors T Dean, E Gilman and L Smetham

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Rebecca Airey, Legal Clerk
Helen Rawlinson, Transport Manager
Karen Shuker, Democratic Services Officer
Kylie Timms, Transport Lead

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Emma Gilman be appointed as Chair of the meeting.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present.

5 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended on the grounds that it involves the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

6 SCHOOL TRANSPORT APPEAL

The Sub-Committee considered an appeal against a decision of the Council's School Transport Team not to offer assisted school transport. The Sub-Committee heard the appeal based on the written and oral evidence of the Presenting Officer, who detailed the local authority's case, and the written evidence of the appellant. Members of the Sub-Committee asked questions by way of clarification. The Presenting Officer withdrew from the meeting, following which the Sub-Committee reached its decision.

RESOLVED:

That the appeal be dismissed.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 10.45 am

Councillor E Gilman

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board** held on Tuesday, 2nd July, 2024 in the Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe CW1 2BJ

PRESENT

Board Members

Helen Charlesworth-May, Executive Director Adults, Health, and Integration
Councillor Janet Clowes, representing the main opposition group, Cheshire East Council

Councillor Sam Corcoran (Chair), Leader - Cheshire East Council

Councillor Carol Bulman, Chair of Children & Families, Cheshire East Council

Councillor Jill Rhodes, Chair of Adults & Health, Cheshire East Council

Mark Groves, Healthwatch Cheshire (subbing for Louise Barry)

Peter Skates, Acting Executive Director of Place

Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children's Services, Cheshire East Council

Kathryn Sullivan, CVS Cheshire East

Mark Wilkinson, NHS Cheshire, and Merseyside Integrated Care Board

Charlotte Wright, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service

Chief Inspector Andy Baker (subbing for Superintendent Claire Jesson)

Cheshire East Officers and Others

Russell Favager, Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Guy Kilminster, Corporate Manager Health Improvement

Jeremy Owens, Development Planning Manager

Dr Susie Roberts, Public Health Consultant

Karen Shuker, Democratic Services Officer

Chief Inspector Daniel Reynolds (Joined remotely via Microsoft Teams)

Inspector Pete Brachaniec (joined remotely via on Microsoft Teams)

Kaylie Locke RCRP Administrator (joined remotely via on Microsoft Teams)

The Chair varied the order of business. Notwithstanding this the minutes are in the order of the agenda.

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

It was moved and seconded that Councillor Sam Corcoran be appointed the Chair.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Sam Corcoran be appointed as Chair.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

It was moved and seconded that Louise Barry be appointed as Vice Chair.

RESOLVED:

That Louise Barry be appointed as Vice Chair.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Louise Barry (Health Watch), Dr Paul Bishop (NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board), Michelle Davis (Guinness Housing), Dr Matt Tyrer (Director of Public Health - CEC), Superintendent Claire Jesson (Police), Claire Williamson (Children's Services - CEC) and Isla Wilson (Cheshire East Health and Care Place Partnership).

Chief Inspector Andy Baker (Police) and Mark Groves (Healthwatch) attended as substitutes.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

6 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no registered public speakers.

7 MEMBERSHIP REVIEW 2024-2025

The Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board's Terms of Reference require the membership to be reviewed and agreed at the first meeting of the Municipal Year. The Board considered a report which reviewed the membership for 2024-25.

It was noted that the Chamber of Commerce would be contacted in relation to the vacant position for a business representative to sit on the Board.

RESOLVED:

That the statutory Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board members agree the following individuals as additional members for 2024-2025

Councillor Janet Clowes – Opposition Group representative

Peter Skates – Acting Executive Director of Place

Isla Wilson – representing the Place Health and Care Partnership Board

Superintendent Claire Jesson – representing the Police and Crime Commissioner

Charlotte Wright - representing the Chief Fire Officer

Kathryn Sullivan - representing the community, voluntary and social enterprise sector.

Claire Williamson – an additional representative for Children and Families

Michelle Davis - representing housing providers.

A Business representative – to be nominated.

8 RIGHT CARE RIGHT PERSON UPDATE

The Board received an update on the Right Care Right Person initiative which had been implemented in Cheshire last year. The initiative sought to ensure that the public were getting the right care, by the right person with the right skills, training, and experience to best meet their needs.

Board members asked questions and made comments in relation to

- From a Health and Wellbeing Board perspective it would be useful to have comparative data on a regular basis and over a longer period of time.
- If a call does not meet the Police's threshold for a response is another service offered?
- Is there any extra demand on other agencies as a result of the new approach and if there is how would that be monitored?

In response Chief Inspector Reynolds reported that

- Attendance at a future meeting could be arranged to discuss the long-term data.
- If a decision is made that the threshold had not been met, the information would still be recorded, and a toolkit used to triage it. Alternative services and support would be signposted.
- The Tactical Co-ordination Group (TCG) have asked partners to track their data and they had not seen any displaced demand on other agencies to date.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

9 JOINT STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT (JSNA) UPDATE AND LIFESTYLE SURVEY FINDINGS

The Board received an update on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) work programme.

The update included:

- Following the conclusion of the lifestyle survey headline findings were that the overall picture of the health and wellbeing of residents in the borough was generally good, but with significant pockets of poorer health and wellbeing often aligned to areas of deprivation.
- Work was due to commence on unpicking the findings of the report in relation to whether perceptions of health and wellbeing match the challenges the respondents report in terms of lifestyle and further, to make sure there was cross-checking with other data sources as well.
- Work was progressing on social isolation and care of older people and there continued to be good engagement across the system on all of those aspects of work.
- Topic areas for 2024/25 included health and wellbeing in the early years (0 – 5-year-olds), sexual health needs assessment and a place-based JSNA focusing on Congleton and Holmes Chapel Care Community.

Work would continue to develop in the following areas:

- More resources in easy read and plain English summaries.
- Promotion of the JSNA to inform a wider audience including Members and Parish and Town Councils.

In response to questions asked in relation to taking advantage of Crewe Youth Zone once it had been built and the pilot that had taken place on financial incentives for pregnant women stopping smoking officers report that:

- Contacts were being identified to help progress the recommendations in relation to Crewe and this included the Crewe Youth Zone.
- An evaluation was currently underway in respect of smoking cessation and an academic partner was working with officers on that.

RESOLVED: That the Health and Wellbeing Board

1. Approve the reviews to commence during 2024/25.
2. Note the progress on the JSNA work programme and to adopt the recommendations that have resulted from this work.
3. Agree to utilise the JSNA to inform continued challenging decision making in relation to public sector budgets.

10 PHARMACEUTICAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2025 UPDATE

The Board considered a report which outlined the approach to be taken to the production of the revised Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment which was due to be published by the 1st October 2025.

RESOLVED: That the Health and Wellbeing Board

1. approves delegation of the day-to-day authority for the development of the revised Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) to the Director of Public Health (DPH). This will include the approval of the draft PNA prior to consultation.
2. approves the formation of a working group to steer the production of the revised PNA.
3. agrees contingency arrangements for endorsing the PNA virtually by board members in September 2025 in case the HWB meeting is cancelled, or the timing of the meeting is such that the PNA required publishing date (before the 1st October 2025) precedes the scheduled meeting date. Due to the consultation requirement of 60 days and to enable the final draft to go through the council review process, it is not feasible to present the final draft for endorsement at an earlier meeting. This will be the Board's only opportunity to review the results of the consultation and consider the impact of the results from the consultation.
4. note there is a cost implication in the production of the PNA, mostly for staff time which will be required across all partner organisations. Its production will impact on joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) activity during 2024/5 and 2025/6. Any financial implications that arise as a result of any actions taken in response to this report are fully covered by existing funding, meaning that there are no changes required to the Council's existing Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
5. note that the Pharmaceutical Regulations 2013 were amended in September 2023, however most of the amendments are concerning 100- hour pharmacies, changes to contracted opening hours and arrangements regarding temporary cover these do not affect the content or timing of the PNA.

11 LEIGHTON HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC OUTLINE CASE

The Board received a presentation on: A new Leighton: Strategic Outline Case (SOC). The presentation included the issues with the existing site, an outline of the 3-stage process for the business case approval, a list of the options considered, the preferred way forward, timelines, achievements to date and the next steps.

Board members supported the plan and provided comments and feedback in respect of

- Welcomed the enhanced communication and integration between community and secondary care built into the design.
- Clarity required around revenue affordability.
- Involvement required in signing off the provision of clinical capacity i.e., beds.
- Mental health services for patients with physical and mental health needs was a key issue. The SOC as it currently stood was light on

references to mental health whereas significant additional costs on caring for patients with mental and physical health needs in the A&E and on the wards was being incurred.

- Public transport between Crewe and Leighton was poor, and the SOC was silent on any aspiration to improve that position. Better transport was potentially a significant social value contributor if it could be addressed.
- Request to see the timetable for outline business case development.
- Welcome the carbon neutrality elements of the project.
- Wanted reassurance when going into the next stage that the highways network was sufficient to deal with the additional housing in the surrounding area and the additional volume of traffic that would be brought in.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

12 THE CHESHIRE EAST LOCAL PLAN

The Board received a report on Cheshire East's New Local Plan. The Plan would look ahead into the 2040s and would identify new long-term development requirements and how they would be met.

The Plan would set out a range of policies regarding a wide range of planning considerations – landscape, biodiversity, heritage, health, housing mix, etc, - so those matters would be taken into account when deciding planning applications.

The Council had published a new Local Plan Issues Paper which announced its intention to prepare a new Local Plan and to provide an initial opportunity for feedback about the scope of the plan.

It was noted that one of the challenges faced at present was the possibility of a change in government which may have different ideas in planning reform so there was some uncertainty about the future programme.

Members asked questions and provided comments in respect of

- It would be useful to have an opportunity for the Health and Wellbeing Board to have an input in to the new policies from a healthy and safe communities' perspective.
- Could the plan include developments that people are less keen to see in the area but would be good from an economic perspective, such as care homes and retirement orientated housing developments but could create additional pressures from a health care and social care perspective?
- Would the new plan have tighter controls over older properties?

- Would the new plan have more detailed Town Plans, or would it be similar to the current Plan?

In response officers reported that

- They would have to see what was happening in terms of the planning reform agenda following the election before the next steps could be taken with the Plan.
- National Policy stated that Local Authorities would be required to do a Housing Needs Assessment, including all sectors of the community.
- Due to not knowing how much development the Council would be planning for more detail within the strategy would be required for particular towns.

It was agreed that a workshop around the Local Plan would be added to the work programme of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

RESOLVED: That the Health and Wellbeing Board

Noted that the Council has commenced work on a new Local Plan through the publication of an Issues Paper inviting initial feedback on its scope.

13 CHILDREN'S OFSTED REPORT

The Executive Director of Children's Services provided a verbal update in respect of the findings from the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) conducted in February and March 2024, the plans in place to improve services in relation to the findings, and monitoring arrangements from Ofsted and the Department for Education (DfE).

Whilst the judgement was disappointing, board members acknowledged that there had been improvements in other areas and that there had been no statutory failings from a Health and Wellbeing perspective.

The Chair thanked the staff in Children and Families Services who were working hard to deliver the required improvements that had been identified.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

Councillor C Bulman and Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children's Services left the meeting after this item and did not return.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.00 pm

Councillor S Corcoran (Chair)

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