

Public Document Pack

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Council**
held on Wednesday, 16th July, 2025 in the Council Chamber, SKA
Observatory, Jodrell Bank, Lower Withington, SK11 9FT

PRESENT

Councillor D Edwardes (Mayor/Chair)

Councillor J Snowball (Deputy Mayor/Vice-Chair)

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

21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors J Bird, L Braithwaite, P Coan, K Edwards, E Gilman, D Jefferay, P Redstone and J Saunders.

22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In relation to Item 7 – Letter from Assurance Panel, in the interest of openness Cllr S Gardiner and Cllr N Mannion declared that they were a member of the Assurance Panel.

In relation to Item 14 Notices of Motion – Housing Targets, in the interest of openness Cllr S Gardiner declared that he was a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

In relation to Item 14 Notices of Motion- Housing Targets, in the interest of openness Cllr N Mannion declared that he was a retired member of the Chartered Institute of Housing.

In relation to Item 14 - Notices of Motion, Cllr A Kolker indicated that he wished to declare a personal pecuniary interest, but he felt unable to publicly state the reason for doing so. Officers advised that the matter could be discussed with the Council's Monitoring Officer, separately. Cllr Kolker stated that he would not take part in the consideration of the Notice of Motion.

23 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Mayor Making and Annual Meeting held on 14 May 2025, and the Special Meeting of Council held on 14 May 2025 be approved as a correct record.

24 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor referred to the death in June of Councillor Chris Hilliard and stated that it had been a privilege to attend their funeral. The Mayor invited representatives from each political group to pay tribute and then asked those present to stand for a minute's quiet reflection.

25 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

The Mayor stated that he had decided that the public speakers wishing to speak in relation to the Notice of Motion on Housing Targets would be invited to speak when that item was considered.

Mr Robert Douglas expressed his concern about the loss of detailed Pay-by-Phone car park income data due to a system change and asked if procedures were now in place to ensure that data would not be lost whenever there was any updating or swapping of I.T. systems. Mr Douglas asked whether the impact on footfall in Congleton was due to the increase in car parking charges. He referred to the public consultation on extending car parking charges and stated the results of this had not been discussed at the committee and was enacted via delegated authority. He asked that this be not repeated.

In response Cllr Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, stated that access to real time and historic data from Pay-by-Phone was lost when the Council changed supplier to Ring Go, following a competitive procurement process. The provisions for access to information at the end of this contract had been defined in contract documents, following advice from ICT officers.

The decision to introduce evening and Sunday charging was made in January 2024. The public consultation in August 2024 was therefore only to review operational matters, such as maximum times of stay at car parks. The consultation was not intended to be a review of the January decision. As these changes were operational matters, they would not be discussed by the Highways and Transport Committee, which focused on strategy.

Cllr Goldsmith stated that regarding the Town Centre footfall in Congleton, this was recorded by a company called Visitor Insights, which tracked the total number of connections to local mobile phone masts to track visitor numbers. Cllr Goldsmith undertook to forward the data for Congleton to Mr Douglas. Cllr Goldsmith reported that this data was obtained for all towns

in Cheshire East and encouraged other councillors to seek out the data because it was very informative.

Cllr Goldsmith reported that the data for Congleton showed that from July 2024 onwards there was a footfall increase every year vs the corresponding month in 2023. This increase ranged from 5% to 27%, the latter being over the key Christmas retail period. Therefore, there was no adverse effect on footfall. Additionally, the data showed that council car parks in Congleton were visited +2% between June 2024 and June 2025.

Cllr Goldsmith stated that In January 2024 the Highways and Transport Committee gave authorisation to officers to review and change parking charges depending on inflation and other relevant factors. This is to ensure any changes were conducted in a timely and efficient manner. He stated that no one liked price rises but inflation was a fact of life, and this had to be acknowledged and acted on accordingly. He, therefore, did not expect this procedure to change in future years, where car park tariffs would be reviewed by officers alongside other council fees and charges.

Ms Sue Helliwell asked if this Council could pass on her thanks to all involved in the Linley Road appeal in Alsager as the planning inspectorate had turned down the appeal on the grounds of Cheshire East Council Good Design Guide and stated that this proved beyond reasonable doubt that the design guide document was a fantastic document. Ms Helliwell thanked all involved in writing this document and Councillors for voting in support of it. She asked if the Protected Open Space land at Linley Road would be maintained by Cheshire East Council. She asked what was the latest information on the Cheshire East Local Plan and when residents would know what the call for sites would be, and what were the timings for the Local Plan go out to public consultation.

In response Cllr H Seddon, Vice Chair of Environment and Communities Committee, thanked Ms Helliwell for recognising the hard work of the officers, and for her support of the Cheshire East Design Guide and stated that the Council had put great weight on ensuring that new developments were of a high design quality, adhered to strong environmental guidelines and had a focus on place making. It was encouraging that the Planning Inspector took account of these principles in rejecting the recent appeal.

Cllr Seddon stated that the Council would continue to maintain the Linley Road public open space in accordance with the current grounds maintenance policy and the designated classification of the area.

Cllr Seddon stated that the Council was progressing work on a new Local Plan under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, as outlined in the Local Development Scheme 2025-26 and whilst the Council awaited national regulations and policy guidance, expected later this year, was intensifying project planning and undertaking preparatory work, including an initial assessment of sites submitted through the 'Call for Sites' process from last year. These sites would be published in due course as part of the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment which did not confer

any planning status but formed part of the evidence base. It was anticipated that the new regulations would introduce mandatory consultation events, and the Local Development Scheme would be updated accordingly. Residents would be kept informed as the process developed and consultation opportunities are confirmed.

Mr Stuart Redgard asked how the Council complied with the Public Sector Equality Duty with regard to planning applications. He stated that he had looked earnestly and could not find any evidence whatsoever that it did. He referred to a development in Wilmslow which had now been completed and stated that there was no access for people with disabilities on the public footpath through the site.

Cllr H Seddon, Vice Chair of the Environment and Communities Committee undertook to provide a written response.

26 LEADER'S AND DEPUTY LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader, in summary:

- 1 paid tribute to the late Cllr Chris Hilliard acknowledging their contributions to the work of the Council.
- 2 stated that this council meeting marked one year since he had been elected as Leader and acknowledged the challenges and tough decisions faced over the past year.
- 3 highlighted the Council's reliance on exceptional financial support to balance the 2025-26 budget and warned of a £51m funding gap to 2029
- 4 highlighted the Government's Fair Funding Review consultation and urged councillors to respond
- 5 confirmed that the Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council and Warrington Borough Council remained part of the devolution priority programme for a Mayoral Combined Authority and the Councils had requested that the Mayoral elections move from May 2026 to May 2027.
- 6 referred to the Government's decision to introduce legislation to mandate a leader and cabinet model for councils in England and that the Council would need to prepare for this change
- 7 highlighted the improvements in the Children and Families services following Ofsted monitoring.
- 8 acknowledged the work of councillors and officers in driving the transformation programme.

The Deputy Leader, in summary:

- 1 paid tribute to the late Cllr Chris Hilliard.
- 2 reported that the traCE system would be launched on Wednesday 23 July, which was a new, map-based online tool to report potholes, fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles and streetlighting and would replace the current Fix My Street platform.
- 3 reported that the Council had received long awaited approval and grant funding from the Government for the Middlewich Eastern Bypass.
- 4 referred to the ongoing regeneration work in Crewe.
- 5 announced the launch of four new community grants - Cost of Living Community Response Fund, Digital Communities Fund, Enabling Prosperity and Wellbeing in Cheshire East Fund and Healthy Neighbourhoods Fund
- 6 reported the launch of a new SEND strategy which had been developed by the Cheshire East 0–25 SEND Partnership.
- 7 reported that additional DfE funding had been secured for supported internships for young people with SEND.
- 8 highlighted that the AI transformation programme was underway which was expected to say £40m over three years. AI would be used in customer services, adult social care and children’s services.
- 9 reported the launch of the “We Still Need You” project for male veterans by Mentell, funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust.
- 10 highlighted that the Active Travel consultation was open until 31 August 2025.

27 ASSURANCE PANEL PROGRESS UPDATE LETTER

Consideration was given to the update letter from the Chair of the Assurance Panel on the Council’s process since the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge in March 2024 and establishment of the Panel in August 2024.

As part of the LGA’s Corporate Peer Challenge process, a one-day revisit had taken place in mid-February 2025, and the revisit report was appended to the report.

RESOLVED:

That Council note the progress letter from the Assurance Panel, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, and the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge revisit report, as set out at Appendix 2 to the report.

28 OFFICER DECISION RE FUNDING FOR PHASE 3 OF THE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the report on the circumstances around the publication of the Officer Decision Record following an officer decision in relation to funding in respect of the Transformation Programme and the requirement for Council to approve a virement of funds to cover the expenditure approved by Council in February 2025 as part of the MTFS.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1 note the contents of the report, and the opportunity provided by the use of the decision-referral process to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.
- 2 approve a virement of up to £3.5m from earmarked reserves; this potentially to include sums of over £1m but which will not exceed the total virement without a further decision by full Council.

29 RECOMMENDATION FROM CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE: CONSTITUTION OFFICER SCHEMES OF DELEGATION

Consideration was given to the recommendation from the Corporate Policy Committee on 12 June 2025 in relation to the Officer Schemes of Delegation in the Constitution.

The revised and expanded officer Schemes of Delegation were aimed at improving clarity, consistency, and accountability in decision-making across the council departments.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1 approve and adopt the new officer Schemes of Delegation, as set out in Appendices A to G to the report, to be incorporated into the Constitution at Chapter 2 Part 5 to replace the existing schemes and the revocation of all former officer schemes of delegation, including local or service specific schemes.
- 2 delegate authority to the Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer to make any minor necessary amendments to the Scheme of Delegation.

**30 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE: FINAL
OUTTURN 2024-25 - APPROVAL OF SUPPLEMENTARY REVENUE
ESTIMATES AND CAPITAL ESTIMATES**

Consideration was given to the recommendation from the Finance Sub Committee held on 2 June 2025 in relation to the approval of supplementary revenue estimates and supplementary capital estimates.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1 approve the Supplementary Revenue Estimate Requests for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £1,000,000, as set out in Annex 1, Section 3, Table 1 to the report, as follows:

Children and Families – Core Schools Budget Grant	£2,502,000
Corporate Policy – Housing Benefit Subsidy	£2,231,000

- 2 approve the Supplementary Capital Estimates over £1,000,000 in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Rules, as set out in Annex 1, Section 4, Table5, as follows:

High Needs Capital Grant	£3,955,823
Local Transport Grant	£7,754,000
Warm Homes Local Grant	£7,792,725

**31 RECOMMENDATION FROM ADULTS AND HEALTH COMMITTEE:
CONNECT TO WORK FUNDING - APPROVAL OF SUPPLEMENTARY
REVENUE ESTIMATE**

Consideration was given to the recommendation from the Adults and Health Committee on 23 June 2025 in relation to the supplementary revenue estimate in relation to the Connect to Work delivery proposals.

RESOLVED:

That Council approve a Supplementary Revenue Estimate of the value of £2,090,769, as referenced in paragraph 35 of the report, over the 2025-2030 financial years.

**32 RECOMMENDATION FROM HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT
COMMITTEE: BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - 2025/26
DELIVERY PROGRAMME - APPROVAL OF SUPPLEMENTARY
REVENUE AND CAPITAL ESTIMATES**

Consideration was given to the recommendation from the Highways and Transport Committee on 19 June 2025 in relation to the supplementary revenue and capital estimates in respect of the Department of Transport Local Bus Grant award for 2025/26.

RESOLVED:

That Council approve the associated, fully funded Supplementary Revenue and Capital Estimates for the value of revenue funding of £2,879,963 and capital funding £2,122,646.

**33 RECOMMENDATION FROM AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:
RECRUITMENT OF CO-OPTED INDEPENDENT MEMBERS**

Consideration was given to the recommendation from the Audit and Governance Committee on 29 May 2025 in relation to extension of the co-opted independent member's term of office to October 2027 so that this would be co terminus with a second co-opted independent members term of office, which would end in October 2027.

RESOLVED:

That Council approve that Mr Ron Jones' term of office as co-opted independent member on the Audit and Governance Committee be extended to October 2027.

34 NOTICES OF MOTION

The Mayor invited Mr Nick Cheetham and Ms Sarah Bradley to speak in relation to the Notice of Motion on Housing Targets.

Mr Cheetham spoke in support of the Notice of Motion on Housing Targets and stated that since December 2024 national housing targets had increased by 2.5 times at the same time the National Planning Framework being revised to increase the housing supply. He noted that the Council had a valid Local Plan and was working on a refresh, but the present Plan no longer met the five-year housing supply, and this was leading to speculative applications from developers often on unprotected or green belt land. He felt this was leading to developer-led rather than a plan-led process.

Ms Bradley referred to the significant number of new builds in Sandbach which had put a strain on local services and caused traffic congestion. She noted that no transport study had been undertaken since 2016. She stated that the current housing targets left the council vulnerable to speculative developments. It was not about stopping development but ensuring a fair distribution of new builds in appropriate places with supporting infrastructure. She urged Members to support the Notice of Motion to request the Government to lower the housing target and to allow time to develop neighbourhood and local plans.

Consideration was given to two Notice of Motion which had been submitted in accordance with the Council's Procedural Rules.

The Mayor stated that he had decided that both Notices of Motion would be dealt with at the meeting.

1 Housing Targets

Proposed by Councillor S Gardiner and Seconded by Councillor S Edgar

“This Council resolves to:

- 3.1 Ask the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council to write jointly to the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government to firstly seek a reduction in the Housing Target and also to request the creation of a reasonable period of grace within which any shortfall in the Council's land supply may be set aside allowing the full weight of existing Local or Neighbourhood Plans to be applied.”

During the debate two amendments were proposed and seconded and accepted by the proposer and seconder of the Notice of Motion

Amendment 1

Addition of:

- 3.2 Agree that the housing target shall take into account Cheshire East's current planning policies around environmental protection, biodiversity and sustainability, along with a requirement for an increased proportion of social housing, and a requirement that key infrastructure and services such as drainage, flood prevention, and sustainable transport along with provision of primary health care, school places and other key local services are delivered ahead of development.

Amendment 2

Addition of:

- 3.3 Ask that all Cheshire East Council Group Leaders commit to lobbying the LGA (through the respective LGA political group leaders) to take this matter on as an official campaign.

RESOLVED:

That the Motion be approved as follows:

This Council

- 3.1 Asks the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council to write jointly to the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government to firstly seek a reduction in the Housing Target and also to request the creation of a reasonable period of grace within which any shortfall in the Council's land supply may be set aside

allowing the full weight of existing Local or Neighbourhood Plans to be applied.

- 3.2 Agrees that the housing target shall take into account Cheshire East's current planning policies around environmental protection, biodiversity and sustainability, along with a requirement for an increased proportion of social housing, and a requirement that key infrastructure and services such as drainage, flood prevention, and sustainable transport along with provision of primary health care, school places and other key local services are delivered ahead of development.
- 3.3 Asks that all Cheshire East Council Group Leaders commit to lobbying the LGA (through the respective LGA political group leaders) to take this matter on as an official campaign.

2 National Cadet Forces Day

Proposed by Cllr A Harrison and Seconded by Cllr N Cook

"That this Council supports the national campaign to introduce a national 'Cadet Forces Day' on the Tuesday of Armed Forces week and proposes that Cheshire East Councils Leader, Deputy Leader and Leader of the Conservative Group sign a joint letter of support for the campaign to the Armed Forces Minister, Luke Pollard MP."

RESOLVED:

That the Motion be approved.

35 QUESTIONS

Cllr C O'Leary referred to the new pedestrian crossing, installed nine months ago, on the 40mph section of London Road, Lyme Green and stated that the lights and crossing were still not operational and asked if a date could be given when the crossing would be operational.

In response Cllr M Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, stated that the new traffic signals had been installed by the Developer and were ready to be switched on but there was currently a privately owned tree obscuring visibility to one of the signal heads which presented a safety issue. The Council had contacted the developer, who was leading on these discussions with the landowner, for a response. If a response were not forthcoming soon, the Council would utilise its own powers under the Highways Act to cut back the overhanging vegetation and claim the cost back from the landowner.

Cllr G Marshall referred to the Government announcement of support for the Middlewich Eastern Bypass and asked if reassurance could be given that there would be no last minute technical or financial issues which would get in the way of its completion and what was the Chair and the Highways and Transport Committee doing to ensure that any shortfalls could be mitigated.

Cllr M Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, stated that the Council remained committed to completing the Middlewich Eastern Bypass, and envisaged work starting in Spring 2026. The Council was looking into options to bridge any funding gaps, and a report was being prepared and would go to Highways and Transport Committee in September 2025.

Cllr S Bennett-Wake asked for information on funding for the Families Hubs and how it would be spent.

Cllr L Crane, Chair of Children and Families Committee, that a meeting had been set up with officers and more information would be provided following that.

Cllr R Kain asked why the planning department were insisting that an additional feasibility study needed to be carried out on Linley Lane in Alsager regarding flooding under the railway bridge, when funding had already been allocated.

Cllr M Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr A Moran asked if the Council could increase the size of the grey recycling bin to encourage residents to recycle more and to increase the Council's recycling statistics.

Cllr Fiona Seddon, Vice Chair of Environment and Communities Committee undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr H Whittaker asked if the Council could urgently review its communications strategy during multiagency responses to critical incidents, following recent event at Poynton Train Station.

In response Cllr Nick Mannion, Chair of Corporate Policy Committee, undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr S Gardiner referred to the high turnover of senior staff at the Council and asked what efforts were being taken to attract and retain the best people to the roles and if a cross-party Staffing Committee could be set up.

Cllr Nick Mannion, Chair of Corporate Policy Committee, undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr A Gage asked if the Council could explain why traders at Crewe Makers Market had been targeted regarding parking issues.

In response Cllr Mark Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, stated that the Council had a legal responsibility to ensure that roads were kept safe. The ticketed vehicles in questions were abandoned for around 10 minutes and the Council had a duty to ensure that the spaces are kept free and only used for dropping off equipment and moving on and parked appropriately elsewhere. This was part of the Enforcement Team's regular monitoring.

Cllr L Buchanan asked if the prioritisations scores for Crewe Road and Nantwich Road in Nantwich could be appraised with a view to reducing them from 40mph to 30mph and ensure that they were compliant with Active Travel Routes.

In response Cllr Mark Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, stated that the Council's 2022 Speed Management Strategy set out the Council's ambitions to promote safer road and compliance across the borough and that new reviews of roads of concern could be carried out.

Cllr N Cook asked if the green space maintenance of the Grange Way Estate, Elworth, could be reviewed in line with the Environment and Communities Committee decision in 2024.

Cllr H Seddon, Vice Chair of Environment and Communities Committee, undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr L Wardlaw asked if the Leader of the Council would agree that a staff survey should be carried out regarding staff culture.

Cllr Nick Mannion, Chair of Corporate Policy Committee, undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr M Brooks asked what steps were Cheshire East Council's Trading Standards taking to enforce the ban on disposable vapes.

In response Cllr H Seddon, Vice Chair of Environment and Communities Committee, stated that the Council had a zero-tolerance approach to the supply of single-use vapes and were working with partners to carry out enforcement visits, and so far, had seized over 2000 noncompliant vapes.

Cllr H Moss asked if the Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee could explain why not all 20mph School Safe Zones were indicated by flashing lights, and why didn't the primary school in Mobberley have these.

Cllr Mark Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr J Place asked if the planning department could ensure that councillors understand what large scale developer's planning constraints were.

Cllr H Seddon, Vice Chair of Environment and Communities Committee, undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr T Dean asked what plans did the Council have to pay off over £100million DCG grant before the 1 April 2028 deadline.

Cllr Nick Mannion, Chair of Corporate Policy Committee, responded that the Government had extended the repayment timeline by two years, and the Council was working to improve in-house provision, to reduce travel costs and work with the Government to ensure future policies work for residents.

Cllr C Browne asked when would the Council be installing Acoustic Cameras in Alderley Edge.

In response Cllr Michael Gorman, Chair of Economy and Growth, stated that the Council was still pursuing this, and meetings had been held with partners and that a report was currently being written which will go to the Economy and Growth Committee. He stated that the Police and Crime Commissioner would like to extend this scheme across other parts of the borough if this is successful. Cllr Gorman undertook to provide a written response with more details.

Cllr R Fletcher asked if the criteria used by Cheshire East Council for highways maintenance differentiated in any way between residential roads and roads and footways in the centres of towns? He stated that Lawton Road in the centre of Alsager must be one of the worst maintained roads and footways in England and asked if there was a flaw in the criteria that had made Alsager wait so long for improvements.

In response Cllr Mark Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, stated that all reviews into highways and footways improvements were done on an equitable basis with the worst and busiest roads getting the funding based on legal requirements and stated that there was a lack of funding from central government.

The meeting commenced at 11.00 am and concluded at 4.28 pm

Councillor D Edwardes (Mayor/Chair)

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNCIL 16 July 2025**Item 5 – Public Speakers: Written Responses**

3 Mr Stuart Redgard

Written Response

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) applies to all planning functions and decisions. Most planning application decisions concern development and use of land, not about using it so it will depend upon the context of the application as to how the PSED is considered. Having 'due regard' will therefore be a matter of judgement.

Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken on policy documents such as the Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Documents and these policies are then directly considered in planning applications, so regard is had to the duty in this respect. The extent to how much further consideration is given will be on the merits or otherwise of the application and whether it will impact on those with a protected characteristic.

Public consultation also takes place on planning applications so any views from different groups can also be put forward and considered, alongside those from statutory consultees prior to a determination being made.

If there is a particular application of concern, then please contact the Head of Planning directly so it can be reviewed.

This page is intentionally left blank

Good morning, Chair & Councillors thank you for allowing me to speak:

I am here today to urge you all to support the Motion regarding housing targets.

For example; in Sandbach there have been significant increases in new builds, services are stretched and our roads are constantly grid-locked. Note there has not been a transport study carried out here since 2016.

The Middlewich bypass will dump more traffic onto Sandbach, and much more when the 1,950 locked-in new homes are built there. Large HGV's vehicles get off at J17 and use Sandbach bypass to get to Crewe rather than J16, that is a fact.

We are now left in the ridiculous position of needing a bypass to circumnavigate the bypass!

Where will the funds come from for the required transformation of our infrastructure? This cannot come from S106 monies alone.

The Cheshire East Council Housing Completions Report states Sandbach has had 3,248 completions from 2010 to 2024. Out of the key service centres towns we have had many more builds in comparison to all other towns with the exception of Congleton which has a much larger population and a new bypass.

In just the last 6 months alone we have seen 217 new houses approved and 840 have been put through for outline planning permission to date.

By accepting the new target the Council finds itself disadvantaged from the outset, at the whim of speculative developments with the potential for substantial costs fighting appeals without a local plan.

To be very clear this not about stopping new homes, it's about making sure they are allocated fairly across all areas, built in the appropriate places, in a managed time-frame, with infrastructure to match, not forced on communities by developers applying pressure, offering sweeteners and taking advantage of the current situation.

As elected Councillors you will be voting today to ask the Government to lower the housing target and to ask for a grace period to get neighbourhood and local plans properly developed.

I am asking that you vote cross-party with consideration for all the residents of Cheshire East. Lastly, I'd like to call on Councillors to request a named VOTE. Thank you for listening.

This page is intentionally left blank



Working for a **brighter future** together

The Rt Hon Angela Rayner
Minister of State for Housing,
Communities & Local Government

Leader's Office
Delamere House
Delamere Street
CREWE
Cheshire
CW1 2LL

BY EMAIL

angela.rayner.mp@parliament.uk

nick.mannion@cheshireeast.gov.uk
michael.gorman@cheshireeast.gov.uk

DATE: 29 August 2025

OUR REF: NM/MG/NoM

Dear Minister

**Re: Cheshire East Council Housing Targets
Notice of Motion: Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework resulting in increased housing targets for Cheshire East**

Since the adoption of the local plan in 2017, Cheshire East Council has delivered an average of 2,230 homes every year. The Borough has seen and supported significant housing growth serving both the West Midlands and also Northwest economies given our notable and unique location, along the M6 corridor, north of the Core Cities of Birmingham and South of Greater Manchester and Merseyside. We are one of the busiest planning authorities in the UK and manage and determine over 5,000 applications per annum, quite an achievement given the acute shortage of skilled planning and building control professionals, given the sharp disinvestment in the sector since 2010.

We are in the process of refreshing our Local Plan given the new targets that have been set in order to deliver the Governments ambitions for 1.5m homes built over the parliamentary term. Our new housing target, established through changes to the standard method, is to build 2,603 units per annum, a 166% increase on the previous requirement of 977 per annum.

A notice of motion titled the “*Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework resulting in increased housing targets for Cheshire East*” - see attached link: <https://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/documents/s126072/Notices%20of%20Motion.pdf> was tabled at our Full Council meeting on 16 July 2025 and unanimously agreed.

Our members and residents are concerned about this uplift and new target. Not just around the impact on building on open land, but the key infrastructure and services that need to be put in place to support this large increase in population, specifically:

1. Our local health care system and support. This is already under strain, and without national policies to bring forward new GP surgeries and health care walk in centres, the current infrastructure will struggle to cope.
2. Managing drainage is critical in order to prevent and reduce the impact of flooding on our roads and residents' homes. Over recent years, we have experienced a record number of named storm events, as well as increased intensity of rainstorms during winter. We need a clear drainage and infrastructure management plan in place ahead of increasing the delivery of the number of homes per annum across our Borough. We also need to ensure that all new developments have appropriate and sustainable drainage.
3. Our school place strategy is critical in order to provide the education for our youngest and most vulnerable. Most in need is SEND places, and we recently wrote to Ministers McMahon / Phillipson about the lack of progress determining the funding to deliver a SEND school at the former Westfield site in Sandbach, a decision that is now significantly overdue, and one that is failing our SEND learners. There will not be support for additional housebuilding in the Borough if we cannot assure our communities that we are delivering on the current need let alone additional need.
4. We are a devolution priority programme borough within Cheshire and Warrington sub-region, looking to have a focus on our town centres as soon as we are able to bring forward the spatial strategies with the new combined authority, supported by an elected mayor.

Given the above deep concerns, we need to co-design and put in place our physical infrastructure and people-focused services, we ask:

1. Agree to an incremental ramping up or leading in period from the current 2,603 units pa to a jointly agreed new target, as we build the foundations for our revised local plan, and the need to do so alongside any newly elected mayor.
2. Agree how our urban settlement policies can play a significant role in delivering the government's overall ambitions for 1.5m homes over the parliamentary term. For example, by diversifying our town centres to deliver large scale developments of high-quality apartments, integral improvements in the public realm and which are digitally and physically connected to active travel options; car-free, sustainable, and highly desirable.
3. Agree a plan and set of measures around Crewe Railway Station. This is at the heart of our plans, namely Crewe 360, so it can get underway as soon as we have a local policy in place. Our partners Network Rail and Avanti West Coast are already fully aligned to plan to regenerate the station and its wider amenity to provide over 600 homes within five years.

4. Agree how we put into place joint social infrastructure plans, notably around the delivery of health facilities, additional school places, transport and drainage plans too, through a named senior civil servant.

We look forward to your reply. We can make ourselves available at very short notice to hold conference with you and your team.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Mannion', with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

Cllr Nick Mannion
Leader of Cheshire East Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Gorman', with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

Cllr Michael Gorman
Deputy Leader of Cheshire East Council

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNCIL 16 July 2025**Item 15– Questions: Written Responses****4 Cllr Sarah Bennett-Wake****Written Responses**

The Council year 4 allocation for family hubs funding was £342,400.

The areas of focus for 2025/2026:

1. Work to continue to integrate health partners into the new town centre delivery model at Crewe Lifestyle Family Hub.
2. Work to onboard/set up community hub venues within the most deprived areas (0%-30%), with a focus on parent voice and partnerships.
3. Work to enhance the Family Hub Training offer for our affiliated partners.
4. Development of a town centre Family Hub Connect site in Macclesfield (linked to Ash Grove Family Hub).
5. Work to continue to embed and strengthen the work of iThrive in Cheshire East.
6. Work to enhance the training offer for Family Hub staff with regards to local contextual issues (for example – substance misuse).
7. Establish the train the trainer UNICEF Breastfeeding accreditation and continue to embed the current breastfeeding friendly accreditation as the workforce evolves in line with the Children's Wellbeing Bill.

5 Cllr Reg Kain**Written Response**

The feasibility study at Linley Lane railway bridge is being paid for from monies from the Sainsburys development. The study has been requested by the Highways and Infrastructure team to look at ways to improve the pedestrian access and drainage under the railway bridge and includes site investigation works.

6 Cllr Arthur Moran**Written Response**

Rather than providing larger bins, the Council offer the purchase of additional bins to support increased recycling. This approach is based on important safety and operational considerations as in some parts of the Borough the recycling bins contained large quantities of glass. Larger bins are also more difficult to manoeuvre.

7 Cllr Hayley Whittaker**Written Response**

The Council, with Cheshire Resilience Forum (CRF) partners, has well-established joint operating principles and protocols for incident management and communications between agencies and with residents and other community stakeholders during emergency major incidents and major incident standbys.

However, that same comprehensive protocol does not come into force by default when an incident is not declared as a major incident or major incident standby, by a first responder agency.

British Transport Police were the lead agency for the immediate response to the Poynton Station incident. They convened a rapid review meeting. However, the incident was not declared as a major incident or major incident standby, in emergency planning terms, and a council emergency management and response team ('CEMART') was not formally established, and so those protocols did not apply.

Nevertheless, in such a sensitive and tragic incident, great care must be taken to manage inter-agency, community and public communication appropriately.

It is appropriate to undertake a review of the response to any serious incident. Officers involved in the response have reflected on the incident and will be making recommendations for some changes, both for incidents such as that seen at Poynton station and other complex multi-agency incidents.

Formalising how and when to update town and parish councils, among other community stakeholders, will be considered as part of this review.

8 Cllr Stewart Gardiner

Written Response

Recent high turnover of senior staff at Cheshire East Council has related to staff being interim. The Council has had real success in its Senior Leadership recruitment campaign conducted in partnership with Starfish. Out of 15 roles the Council was successful in appointing to 11, giving us a 73% hit rate and we saw very strong and experienced candidates in all of our recruitment exercises. The Council is very pleased about that.

In addition, it was always planned to reduce the dependency on interims as senior permanent staff join. The Council's People team are also working with Directorate teams at the moment to review all agency spend and the team anticipate further turnover as the Council look to encourage interim staff to convert to permanent employment in high agency usage areas.

The Council's People team has developed a series of foundational deliverables which are progressing through internal governance and will go to Corporate Policy Committee in Autumn 2025 following relevant consultation and engagement. These deliverables include a recent refresh of our Council values, a Staff Engagement Strategy, People Strategy, Employee Lifecycle and a suite of new workforce measures. The council is also actively developing a new Leadership and Management Development programme which is being discussed with CLT shortly. Additionally, brand new suite of workforce development offerings is in development, including a review of our current apprenticeship strategy, developing career development and succession plan routes and significantly improving our performance management process.

11 Cllr Nicola Cook

Written Response

A meeting to be arranged with Councillor Cook to discuss the issues raised in her question.

12 Cllr Liz Wardlaw

Written Response

The Council's People team are actively developing a Staff Survey which will be launched in Autumn 2025. This will build on work that has already taken place in refreshing Council Values, which was completed with staff in March and April 2025. This work is part of the broader Workforce Transformation Programme.

The intention for the Staff Survey is to keep it:

- Focused and as concise as possible. Previous response rates have not been as high as the team would like and we need to design and promote the survey in a way that will encourage participation.
- Focused on our refreshed council values so that the outputs of our staff survey can be used to drive behaviour change and development of a high performing culture.
- Evidence based. The team are looking at including as many questions as possible that can be benchmarked to previous years, AND to LA benchmark for comparison and driving evidence-based improvement.

There will be a 'you said we did' exercise once the responses to the survey have been collated and analysed. An update will be provided in due course.

14 Cllr Hannah Moss

Written Response

At the time of the Cheshire East school 20mph speed limit programme in 2017/18 engagement with local stakeholders identified that reducing Church Lane, Mobberley from National Speed limit to 30mph was the priority, along with other signage improvements, which were successfully implemented.

Under the speed management strategy programme, a scheme was designed in 2024 and shared with the local ward member. The inclusion of flashing lights isn't a standard requirement of these schemes but was considered in response to the Cllr's request. Funding limitations and associated delivery delays meant it was not possible to include in the scheme completed on site in May 2025.

15 Cllr John Place

Written Response

The Planning department manages approximately 5000 applications per annum, 50-60 of which are major applications (although this number can vary significantly). What constitutes a major application is a development over 10 dwellings, 1000 sqm of commercial floorspace or 1 hectare of land. It is normal for a developer of a major

application to seek pre-application advice for the proposed development. This is a separate and private engagement with the LPA to set out what is needed for each major application given the specifics of the scheme, the site, access, and the environmental features of the site.

As part of a pre-application process the detailed constraints of the site and the appropriateness of the application will be set out with the applicant and their agents.

Large unplanned (sometimes termed 'windfall') applications are those which are outside of local plan allocation or recognised policy and will inherently take more time to assess and process because all of the associated constraints are being considered from scratch. Due to the recent changes to national planning guidance and new housing targets, we do not have a five-year supply of housing land meaning that applicants are submitting applications on land which would not have previously been considered acceptable. As these applications fall outside of the local plan they are taking longer to both prepare by the applicant, but also longer to consider by the Council to ensure they meet the necessary requirements for the application to be properly considered and consulted upon. In such instances, it is not uncommon for such application to take many months before they may be ready to be formally submitted, validated and ultimately presented to a Planning Committee for decision.

17 Cllr Craig Browne

Written Response

The Executive Director of Place has provided a verbal briefing to the Deputy Leader and has further committed to bringing partners together to set out what resources would be needed over a five-year period to put into place a camera. After all considerations have been discussed, and if resolved, and agreed, a plan will be made.