

Cabinet Agenda

Date: Tuesday, 4th May, 2021

Time: 1.00 pm

Venue: Virtual Meeting

For anybody wishing to view the meeting please click on the link below:

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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 in the report.

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

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

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

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

3. Public Speaking Time/Open Session - Virtual Meetings

In accordance with paragraph 3.33 of the Cabinet Procedure Rules, a period of 10 minutes is allocated for members of the public to address the meeting on any matter relevant to the work of the Cabinet. Individual members of the public may speak for up to two minutes. The Chairman or person presiding will have discretion to vary this requirement where he/she considers it appropriate.

Please contact	Paul Mountford, Executive Democratic Services Officer
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Members of the public wishing to ask a question or make a statement at the meeting should provide at least three clear working days' notice in writing (ie no later than Tuesday, 27th April) and should include the question with that notice. This will enable an informed answer to be given.

4. **Questions to Cabinet Members - Virtual Meetings**

A period of 20 minutes is allocated for questions to be put to Cabinet Members by members of the Council. A maximum period of two minutes will be allowed for each member wishing to ask a question. The Leader will have discretion to vary this requirement where he considers it appropriate. Members wishing to ask a question at the meeting should register to do so in writing by not later than 4.00 pm on the Friday in the week preceding the meeting. Members should include the general topic their question will relate to and indicate if it relates to an item on the agenda. Questions must relate to the powers, duties or responsibilities of the Cabinet. Questions put to Cabinet Members must relate to their portfolio responsibilities.

Where a question relates to a matter which appears on the agenda, the Leader may allow the question to be asked at the beginning of consideration of that item.

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

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13th April 2021.

6. **Covid-19 - Annual Report of our COVID-19 Response and Recovery** (Pages 15 - 54)

To consider a report which looks back over some of the key moments and achievements in the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and which provides a summary of developments since the April report.

7. **Household Waste Recycling Centre Provision** (Pages 55 - 198)

To consider a report on Household Waste Recycling Centre provision in Cheshire East.

8. **Carbon Neutral Programme - Progress Report** (Pages 199 - 212)

To consider a progress report on the Carbon Neutral Programme.

9. **Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group - Members' Facilities, Accommodation and Culture Recommendations** (Pages 213 - 232)

To consider a report on the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the overview and scrutiny task and finish group, set up by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to review Members' Facilities, Accommodation and Culture.

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

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

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

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

11. ASDV Review - Transport Service Solutions (Pages 233 - 314)

To consider the report.

Membership: Councillors C Browne (Vice-Chairman), S Corcoran (Chairman), L Crane, K Flavell, T Fox, L Jeuda, N Mannion, J Rhodes, A Stott and M Warren

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the **Cabinet**
held on Tuesday, 13th April, 2021

PRESENT

Councillor S Corcoran (Chairman)
Councillor C Browne (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors L Crane, T Fox, L Jeuda, N Mannion, J Rhodes, A Stott and
M Warren

Councillors in attendance

Councillors S Akers Smith, R Bailey, M Beanland, M Benson, S Brookfield,
D Brown, C Bulman, J Clowes, T Dean, S Edgar, H Faddes, J P Findlow,
R Fletcher, S Gardiner, L Gilbert, P Groves, G Hayes, S Holland, M Houston,
A Moran, R Moreton, D Murphy, J Nicholas, S Pochin, B Puddicombe,
J Saunders, M Simon, L Smetham, D Stockton, L Wardlaw, J Weatherill,
P Williams and J Wray.

Officers in attendance

Lorraine O'Donnell, Chief Executive
Frank Jordan, Executive Director Place
Jane Burns, Executive Director Corporate Services
David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance
Ged Rowney, Interim Director of Children's Services
Jill Broomhall, Direct of Adult Social Care
Paul Goodwin, Head of Financial Services
Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance
Paul Mountford, Executive Democratic Services Officer

Apologies

Councillors K Flavell

The Chairman asked all present to observe a minute's silence as a mark of
respect for the life of HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh.

100 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

101 HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE PROVISION

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste informed Cabinet that it had
come to light that there was an administrative error in the papers relating
to Item 7 on the agenda - Household Waste Recycling Centre Provision,
which meant that Cabinet did not have all the information it needed to
consider the matter at this meeting. She therefore proposed that Item 7 be
deferred to the Cabinet meeting on 4th May 2021.

RESOLVED

That Item 7 on the agenda - Household Waste Recycling Centre Provision be deferred to the Cabinet meeting on 4th May 2021.

102 **PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION - VIRTUAL MEETINGS**

Paul Duffy asked how a decision to review household waste and recycling centres could be taken during the 'purdah' period.

Kay Wesley asked Cabinet to convene a task and finish group to evaluate all possible options before taking a decision to remove household waste and recycling services from Congleton. She also said that the closure of the Congleton site would disproportionately impact elderly and disabled residents and those on a low income without their own transport.

Robert Douglas asked why the later, February report on responses to the recent consultation on household waste recycling centres had not been included with the report on the agenda, and why no reference had been made in the report to the recommendations of the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Suzy Firkin asked why there was no reference in the report on household waste recycling centres to the recommendation of the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee that a task and finish group be appointed to consider all options for a new recycling centre in Congleton.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste commented that as the report on Household Waste Recycling Centres had been deferred it would be inappropriate for her to respond to the questions in detail at the meeting. She therefore undertook to respond to each question in writing.

James Law asked what traffic studies had been made to inform and direct the active travel proposals for Congleton, and why the proposals were being put forward now rather than waiting until the changes to traffic flow caused by the imminent opening of the Congleton By-Pass could be studied.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste responded that the timing of the consultation had been determined by the requirement for the Council to confirm its intended use of the Active Travel funds by the end of the last financial year. The results of the recent consultation had shown a clear majority against the proposals. Therefore, the Council did not intend to take them forward, and Active Travel funding would be deployed in other areas where such proposals had received widespread support.

Sue Helliwell asked if the 317 bus service from Alsager to Leighton Hospital, which ran on Mondays to Fridays, could be extended to Saturdays to enable Alsager residents to use a bus with a direct route to attend hospital appointments on Saturdays.

The Deputy Leader responded that it was important to remain vigilant for Coronavirus as lockdown measures eased, with national guidelines still affecting the use and provision of bus services. As the entire bus industry was supported by government funding, now was not the right time to commence new services. A number of towns in Cheshire East had no direct bus service on Saturdays, although trips could be made by interchanging, and concessionary passengers would incur no additional costs by using two different routes.

David Mayers referred to the road accident figures for Cheshire East and asked if the Cabinet would promote and organise at least one event, or issue a press release or other public statement, to support the UN Global Road Safety Week which called for policymakers to limit speeds to 20 mph where people walked, lived, shopped, worked and played. He asked if such measures could also be incorporated into the current speed management strategy review.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste responded that the Council's Safer Cheshire East Partnership report showed that since 2016 there had been a decline year-on-year in the number of road traffic collisions and the number of killed and seriously injured as a result of these collisions. The Council was considering how best to promote road safety during the UN Global Road Safety Week in May and would be engaging with key stakeholders to have a shared approach where possible. The revised speed management strategy would cover a number of measures that could be utilised in the management of vehicle speed.

103 **QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS - VIRTUAL MEETINGS**

Councillor R Fletcher asked what action the Council had taken to resolve an issue with the play area at Swallow Drive, Alsager.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning undertook to provide a written response.

Councillor S Gardiner referred to the recent installation by Booths supermarket of metal plates at the exit to the Booths Car Park, Knutsford; this was causing damage to low lying cars. He asked why the Council had not been consulted before the works were undertaken, and why the Council had not worked with the supermarket to resolve the issue.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste undertook to provide a written response.

Councillor L Gilbert referred to an application which had been made under the Active Travel scheme for new street lighting to be provided for Manor

Lane, Holmes Chapel. The Council had turned down the application on the grounds that the provision of additional street lighting was precluded by current policy. He asked whether the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste was aware of the policy, what process had led to its adoption, and what member involvement there had been.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste undertook to provide a written response.

Councillor B Puddicombe sought clarity as to the status of council meetings after 6th May, and what could be done to reassure members and officers who may be apprehensive about returning to physical meetings.

The Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Corporate Services responded by referring to an email circulated recently to all councillors by the Head of Democratic Services and Governance which sought to assure members that all possible measures were being put in place to ensure their safety in the event that face-to-face meetings had to resume. The legislation which permitted virtual meetings to take place was due to expire on 6th May 2021 and clarification was being sought, including through legal action elsewhere, regarding the implications for local authority meetings after that date. The Leader added that virtual meetings had reduced travelling, were good for the environment and had been a success. All Group leaders from Cheshire East Council had signed a letter lobbying for councils to be allowed to continue to hold virtual meetings beyond 6th May.

Councillor P Williams asked if a proposed site visit to Alsager School to discuss safety concerns raised by the Headteacher about the Active Travel scheme on Lodge Road had been held and whether the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste had considered the safety concerns expressed by the Headteacher and residents.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste confirmed that a site meeting between the Head of Strategic Transport and the Headteacher had taken place on 24th March 2021. Following that meeting, a comprehensive assessment of the scheme impacts and the outcomes of the community consultation had been reported to the Portfolio Holder and senior officers. On balance, the review had confirmed that the Emergency Active Travel measures be suspended, to take effect before the end of the Easter holidays. Following this change, access to the school grounds by school bus, and traffic levels on Lodge Road, were expected to return to normal.

Councillor S Akers Smith asked when the Council would start to introduce lower speed limits on Cheshire East roads.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste responded that this had been timetabled for consideration by the Highways and Transport Committee under the new committee system.

Councillor R Moreton asked if a decision on the future provision of household waste recycling centres could be referred to the relevant committee under the new committee system to provide greater transparency.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste responded that a decision on the matter was being deferred today which would allow more time for reflection on the matter, and there would be an opportunity for members to comment further when the report was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 4th May.

104 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2021 be approved as a correct record.

105 **COVID-19 - UPDATE ON RESPONSE AND RECOVERY**

Cabinet considered an update report on the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Leader welcomed the fact that the infection rate in Cheshire East had fallen sharply over the last month, although he also expressed a note of caution, given the variants of the virus in circulation, and advised that people continue to maintain all precautionary measures.

On Finance, the Leader pointed out that the majority of the £200m in grant funding had been passported through and that the Council had borne the cost of administering the grants. The Council had also provided financial support to ESAR as leisure centres had not been reimbursed for lost income.

The Deputy Leader outlined the financial pressures for the coming financial year and welcomed the Council's continued lobbying through the Local Government Association and the County Councils Network for a fair funding settlement from Government.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration provided an update on restart grants and additional restriction grants.

Councillor J Clowes reported the comments of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee as Chairman of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. notes the issues outlined in the report;

2. recommends to Council a Supplementary Revenue Estimate for £1,561,000, fully funded from the Covid-19 Emergency Grant, to increase the budget for Leisure Services Commissioning, this reflecting reported spending in 2020/21 in support of the provision of leisure services in the Borough;
3. approves a Supplementary Revenue Estimate for £881,340, fully funded from the DfE Holiday Activity Fund Grant to increase the 2021/22 Early Help & Prevention Service Budget, enabling the Council to pass on grant funding to local organisations to deliver school holiday activity and food for children who are pre-school and school age and eligible for Free School Meal entitlement; and
4. delegates authority to the Director of Children's Services to distribute the DfE Holiday Activity Fund Grant and to approve a temporary and limited variation to the Corporate Community Grant policy to extend the scope of payments made under the policy to include Holiday Activity Grants made under the DfE grant determination half programme 2021 No 31/5325; and for this limited period section 3.9 of the policy be amended to enable private businesses who provide holiday club activity to apply for this grant between March 2021 and April 2022 only.

106 **HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2021-2025**

Cabinet considered a report on a draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-2025.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. approves the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy as outlined at appendix 1 to the report as the basis of consultation; and
2. notes that, following consultation, the final version of the strategy will be presented for approval to the Economy and Growth Committee.

107 **CONSULTATION ON THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY CHARGING POLICY**

Cabinet considered proposals to consult on a change to the Assistive Technology charging policy.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. agrees that a consultation exercise be undertaken on a proposed change to the Assistive Technology charging policy which would provide that those aged 85+ and living alone would pay the standard charge of £5 per week for this service like all other Assistive Technology service users, but that no one unable to afford the service would have to pay for it; and
2. notes that a report will be presented to the Health and Social Care Committee outlining the results of the consultation and seeking a decision on the proposed change.

108 **TREE RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Cabinet considered a proposed Tree Risk Management Strategy which was designed to ensure an active approach to risk management of the Council's trees.

RESOLVED

That the Tree Risk Management Strategy appended to the report be approved.

109 **CHESHIRE ARCHIVES: A STORY SHARED**

Cabinet considered an update to the 'Cheshire Archives – A Story Shared' project and a second stage application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. endorses the approach regarding the next steps in the development and delivery of the 'Cheshire Archives – A Story Shared' project;
2. notes that the Executive Director Place will take all necessary actions to develop the project and will submit a bid for grant funding to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to enable the delivery of the second stage of the proposed project (in line with the constitution);
3. notes that any future acceptance of grants will be undertaken in accordance with the constitution and finance procedure rules;
4. delegates authority to Executive Director Place, in consultation with the Director of Governance and Compliance, to agree terms in relation to

the grant funding with Cheshire West and Chester Council who are acting as the accountable body for this project; and

5. notes that a report to update on delivery of the project will be considered at a future meeting of the relevant committee.

110 **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE REPORT - ONE YEAR ON**

Cabinet considered a report on progress to date, and the delivery of key actions to respond to the Corporate Peer Challenge recommendations.

Councillor J Clowes reported the comments of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee as Chairman of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet notes the progress to date, and the delivery of key actions to respond to the Corporate Peer Challenge recommendations.

111 **REFRESHED EQUALITY OBJECTIVES AND EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY 2021-2025**

Cabinet considered a report on refreshed equality objectives and an updated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

Councillor J Clowes, as Chairman of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, reported the Committee's support for the refreshed equality objectives and EDI strategy.

Councillor Marilyn Houston, as the Council's Equality and Diversity Champion, also expressed her support for the refreshed objectives and strategy.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. approves the following five equality objectives at Appendix 1 to the report:

Include - Listen and involve all voices.

Inspire - Celebrate and promote the diversity in our borough and surrounding areas and make the most of the positive opportunities this brings

Integrate - Deliver and promote accessible and equitable services for all.

Inform - Be a council which empowers and cares about people.

Impact - Support and deliver meaningful change.

2. adopts the All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims' definition of Islamophobia;
3. reaffirms support for the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism; and
4. agrees the Equality and Diversity Strategy 2021-2025 for Cheshire East (Appendix 2).

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 3.10 pm

Councillor S Corcoran (Chairman)

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Working for a brighter future together

Key Decision: Y
Date First Published: 31/7/20

Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 4 May 2021

Report Title: Covid-19 – Annual Report of our COVID-19 Response and Recovery

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Sam Corcoran - Leader of the Council
Cllr Craig Browne - Deputy Leader of the Council

Senior Officer: Lorraine O'Donnell - Chief Executive

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. Cabinet has received nine detailed reports since June 2020 on how the Council, working with its partners, continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and plan for the recovery from it.
- 1.2. This has been an unprecedented year in terms of circumstances and challenges which have affected every aspect of Cheshire East Council. It is appropriate, therefore, that as the first national anniversary of this pandemic has recently been marked, this final Cabinet report looks back over some of the key moments and achievements in the Council's response (Appendix 1) as well as providing a summary of developments since the April report.
- 1.3. The report also summarises the latest information on infection rates which have fallen considerably since last reported.
- 1.4. The financial impact of the pandemic on the Council continues to be significant. A further update is provided in section 6.2. It is important to note that over £200m has been provided in ringfenced grants for specific purposes, the majority of which has been or is to be passported directly to other organisations. This may create an incorrect impression that all the Council's COVID pressures are funded. Furthermore, the administration costs of passporting money directly

to other organisations fall directly on the Council. This is significant in the case of business grants and infection control in care homes grants, for example.

- 1.5. It is important to note that there may be other new developments following the publication of this report. Verbal updates will be given at the meeting, as appropriate.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the main achievements in responding to Covid-19, outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.
- 2.2 That Cabinet note the developments since April 2021.

3. Other Options Considered

- 3.1. Not applicable.

4. Background

- 4.1 The WHO Weekly Epidemiological Update issued on 12 April 2021 showed an increase in infections with a further 488,141 new cases of Covid-19 reported in the previous week.
- 4.2 As of 12 April, there have been 135.4 million Covid-19 confirmed cases worldwide and 2.92 million deaths. As of the 8 April a total of 669,248,795 Covid vaccine doses have been administered.
- 4.3 The latest international, national and local statistics are available from the following data dashboards:

<https://covid19.who.int/>

<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>

https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/council_information/coronavirus/latest-covid-19-figures-for-cheshire-east.aspx

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-r-number-in-the-uk>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-vaccinations/>

- 4.4 Three vaccines to protect against Coronavirus are being rolled out nationally to priority groups. As of the morning of 12 April 2021, 201,990 (62.29%) of the eligible population of Cheshire East residents who are registered with Cheshire GP Practices have received their first dose. Over 96% of people aged over 70 years had received their first vaccination and second doses are now being

administered. Almost 95% of people who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable have received their first vaccination.

- 4.5 The UK Government National Restrictions continue at the time of writing. The Prime Minister announced changes that came into force on 12 April. Details of this change are found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>
- 4.6 Case rates continue to show a fall. In the last full week of data until 7 April 2021, 66 people in Cheshire East tested positive. The local infection rate was recorded as 17 cases per 100,000 population. This represents a 15% reduction in cases from the previous week.
- 4.7 Case rates for Cheshire East remain slightly under the England average. Hospital capacity continues to improve with small numbers of patients requiring hospital care. As of 12 April 2021, East Cheshire NHS Trust had 4 occupied Covid beds (2% of capacity) and Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust had 13 occupied Covid beds (2% of capacity).
- 4.8 Using data up to 9 March 2021 shows the rate for those aged 60+ has plateaued between 4 and 7 per 100,000. As the number of infections continue to fall, we will see a small number of cases in each age group causing large swings in percentage change. Cases have dropped in the under 19s as a whole. We have seen a significant fall in rates for the working age population. Rates in the 20-29 year group and the 50-59 year group have fallen by 78% and 63% respectively in the last week. As infections fall, continued careful monitoring and surveillance of cases is vital to ensure that the Covid-19 response can adapt to any observed changes.
- 4.9 Infection prevention and control within Care Homes and the weekly testing of care home staff has helped detect people who may not have symptoms and as a result reduces the risk of a serious outbreak. Numbers of care homes in outbreak have reduced over the last month and as of 12 April, there were no homes with a Covid-19 outbreak.
- 4.10 With the return of all pupils to school on 8 March, enhanced Lateral Flow Testing measures were put in place to assist all secondary schools implement the national programme. After the initial two week school based testing programme, pupils were expected to carry out twice weekly home testing. A report of the school based programme is being prepared for members.
- 4.11 Infection prevention and control within Care Homes and the weekly testing of care home staff has helped detect people who may not have symptoms and as a result reduces the risk of a serious outbreak. As of 8 March, care homes have

begun to offer the Government's new LFT programme to enable a designated family member to visit a loved one.

4.12 Financial support for Local Authorities at Local COVID Alert Level Medium and High is to fund the following activities:

- a. Targeted testing for hard-to-reach groups out of scope of other testing programmes.
- b. Additional contact tracing.
- c. Enhanced communication and marketing e.g. towards hard-to-reach groups and other localised messaging.
- d. Delivery of essentials for those in self-isolation.
- e. Targeted interventions for specific sections of the local community and workplaces.
- f. Harnessing capacity within local sectors (voluntary, academic, commercial).
- g. Extension/introduction of specialist support (behavioural science, bespoke comms).
- h. Additional resource for compliance with, and enforcement of, restrictions and guidance.

5. Progress update

5.1 Since March 2020, Cheshire East Council has continued to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic. At the same time the Council has continued to strive to:

- deliver essential local services
- protect our most vulnerable people
- support our communities and local businesses.

5.2 A summary of the key achievements and any changes since the April update that have continued to be delivered by the Council in Appendix 1.

5.3 *Test and Trace and Outbreak Management*

5.3.1 *Testing:*

On 6 April 2021, England's first dual use testing site was launched in Cheshire East for a national pilot project at the Crewe local testing site. This is a pilot offering both symptomatic and asymptomatic testing in one location for residents. The pilot was operational from 6 April 2021; an evaluation will take place to consider the ongoing function of the site.

5.3.2 There are now 6 asymptomatic testing sites available in Cheshire East in Alderley Edge, Middlewich, Sandbach, Congleton, Prestbury and Macclesfield offering lateral flow testing for local residents. From Monday 12 April, these sites also became collection sites for home testing kits, along with the Salvation Army site in Crewe. These sites are undertaking approximately 600 lateral flow tests weekly and in the first week alone the Salvation Army site handed out 777 home test kits.

5.3.3 There are now 11 pharmacies in Cheshire East being supported to undertake lateral flow testing for local residents. The national government are also in the process of launching a community collect model in pharmacies, allowing people to collect home testing kits from a community pharmacy. All sites can be viewed and booked here: <https://cheshireeast.zipporah.co.uk/LFT.Bookings>

5.3.4 The Cheshire East Swab Squad are currently supporting over 100 local businesses in Cheshire East with advice, training and testing support. This includes six local businesses who have received rapid response urgent testing to prevent Covid-19 outbreaks. This has required the team to undertake 248 lateral flow tests within those organisations. The successful contact tracing rate in Cheshire East is currently approximately 94% and is changing regularly.

5.4 *Contact Tracing and Self Isolation Support:*

5.4.1 Cheshire East Council is now undertaking all contact tracing in Cheshire East as part of a national pilot called Local-0. This means that positive cases are referred to the Cheshire East Local Contact Tracing Team after 1 hour. To support the rollout and management of this locally, a bespoke case management system has been created using Microsoft Dynamics 365. This allowed for cases to be escalated to the various programme workstreams immediately, to help prevent and rapidly control local outbreaks when they arise.

5.4.2 In addition, the local contact tracing offer has been extended to include the new Self Isolation Framework. This means that the Local Contact Tracing Team now undertake a much more detailed conversation during the initial contact tracing to assess what self-isolation support may be required by the individual and a directory of local support available has been created. In addition, People Helping People, Care4CE and the Swab Squad are now offering self-isolation support out of hours where required. A detailed self-isolation booklet has been created (<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/covid-19/covid-19-self->

[isolation-support-pack.pdf](#)) which will also be printed and available in libraries and community centres too.

5.5 *Covid-19 Mass Vaccination*

- 5.5.1 The Covid vaccination programme continues to be rolled out to the remainder of the nine priority groups. The uptake rates in the priority groups remains high and refusal rates low. Particular focus is being given to Hard to Reach and Vaccine Hesitant Groups. In conjunction with Cheshire CCG and local community organisations, Local Authority staff are coordinating targeted media messages and accessible vaccination sessions for such groups. The initial sessions for homeless people have been well received with good participation. Further sessions are planned. Faith leaders have been contacted to offer “Pop Up” vaccination clinics in venues such as mosques, churches and associated community halls. A joint bid has been submitted to provide mobile vaccination clinics in our communities with the highest levels of health inequalities.
- 5.5.2 At the time of writing, second doses of the vaccines are being offered to those priority groups who received their first dose in January and February. This is including care home residents and people aged over 70 years. Local Authority staff are working closely with NHS colleagues to follow up those homes and to encourage staff who may have been reluctant to be vaccinated earlier in the year.
- 5.5.3 The latest Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation has updated its guidance regarding the use of the Astra Zeneca Vaccine. As the level of infection is falling it is recommending that people under the age of 30 years do not receive an initial dose of the Astra Zeneca Vaccine. Instead they should be offered either of the two other vaccines that are licenced. Anyone in this age group who has received their first dose of the Astra Zeneca Vaccine without significant side effects can receive a second dose of this vaccine.
- 5.5.4 Cheshire East Council is working closely with NHS Cheshire CCG and Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership to address vaccine inequality. The agencies are working together to identify and engage with underserved groups, including ethnic and faith groups, people who are homeless, people with learning disabilities and people accessing alcohol and substance misuse services to support them in getting information about and access to vaccines.

- 5.6. *Communities – Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) Support:* People Helping People was a service created by Cheshire East Council in March 2020. It works collaboratively with new and existing Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector partners and local volunteers to channel community-based support to meet the needs of our residents. This service is recognised amongst all residents across the borough as an essential community service.
- 5.7. From 31 March 2021, the Council is expected to provide similar support as that provided to those were shielding to those who are told to self-isolate. The intention is to reduce the spread of Covid-19 by providing practical, emotional and social support.
- 5.8 Some of the key achievements over the last year for this service are as follows:
- 1,946 volunteers recruited and utilised including the codesign of a volunteer website: <https://cheshireeastvolunteers.co.uk/>
 - Software launched to effectively recruit volunteers and a volunteer recognition scheme created.
 - 4,108 non-shielding vulnerable people supported.
 - 1,440 shielding individuals supported, including delivery of 350 food parcels.
 - 16 community groups (volunteer coordination points) set up to recruit, coordinate and support volunteers in local neighbourhoods.
 - £450,000 of funding allocated to the VCFSE sector to change their delivery model and meet the changing needs of communities, including £10,000 of winter wellbeing goods provided to those suffering fuel poverty.
- 5.9 The People Helping People service has become a household name amongst adult social care and health professionals and our communities. It has been the Council's response to support the clinically extremely vulnerable, the non shielding vulnerable cohort, those required to isolate and the vaccination programme. The success of this service in responding to the needs of our communities resulting in reducing transmission of Covid-19 and protecting our most vulnerable is a key Council achievement.
- 5.10 *Adult Social Care* – The Commissioning Team have provided significant support for the Adult Social Care Market during the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure market stability and the safe service delivery and provision of care for the residents of Cheshire East. This includes Care Homes, Care at Home (Domiciliary Care), Complex Needs, Extra Care Housing and Supported Living schemes.

5.11 During the last year there has been a number of achievements that have been delivered across the Commissioning, Contract Management and Quality Assurance teams. Officers have worked tirelessly to support providers across the Borough, thus ensuring comprehensive market oversight of all commissioned care providers was robustly in place. Provider support mechanisms that have been adopted and implemented are as follows:

- Resident safety and effective care and support maintained
- Business continuity planning
- Covid outbreak management
- Staff wellbeing and resilience programme via project 5
- Risk management planning and implementation of the designated visitor
- Provider mutual aid calls
- Focused care home quality assurance visits
- Whole home testing programme implementation
- Vaccination programme roll out for residents and staff
- Dedicated IPC Nurse advice and support to care homes
- Implementation of an approved Designated Setting for Covid recovered patients leaving hospital
- Partnership focused provider Webinars with Cheshire CCG and colleagues in Cheshire West to support safe hospital discharge pathways
- PPE training to care providers.
- Managed the allocation of over £15 million of Covid specific Government funding to Adult Social Care providers throughout the borough.

5.12 During the year providers have formally written to the Council to express their appreciation for the level of support received by Officers locally. Some examples are given below:

“You have been amazing... from the fabulous Council staff who delivered our PPE during the height of the pandemic to you – this support has meant so much - just knowing that during the darkest of times there were people out there who cared and above all understood of the things that we were going. You listened to me rant at times and cry at others which I did unashamedly.”

“Without being too boring the support that East Cheshire has given this home is second to none and you are of course a hero to me!”

“Over the last year which has been incredibly difficult for everyone, we have been extremely lucky to have been supported by the Quality Assurance team.”

“We have been able to ask any questions and we have been met with a quick response and a very understanding attitude”

- 5.13 *Care homes* - Of all care sectors, care homes have been the most significantly impacted by the pandemic with many homes having experienced at least one Covid-19 outbreak. Care homes have been supported throughout by the Council's Quality Assurance team as set out in previous Cabinet reports.
- 5.14 As of 13 April 2021, there are no care homes across Cheshire East with a Covid Outbreak. This is an extremely positive and significant milestone for care homes given the number of outbreaks homes have encountered over the last 12 months.
- 5.15 The Care Quality Commission have undertaken several focused Infection Prevention Inspections across care homes within Cheshire East. The feedback from the regulator summarised that homes fully understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to infection prevention control and have robust outbreak management, and safe systems of work in place.
- 5.16 Care Homes have operationally embedded the Designated Visitor guidance across homes which was introduced on 8 March 2021. Visits are regularly taking place for family members and residents. The feedback to date is that visits are having a positive effect for residents and their wellbeing.
- 5.17 The introduction of a second designated care home visitor commenced from 12 April 2021 as Covid restrictions continue to be cautiously eased. Regular visits are being extended from one to two people under carefully designed conditions to prevent transmission of Covid-19. Care Homes are implementing this guidance and continue to risk manage additional visitors in line with their dynamic visiting risk assessment.
- 5.18 All care homes have now received government funding via the Infection Control Fund (Rounds 1 and 2) and the Rapid Testing Fund to support infection control, workforce resilience and Lateral Flow Testing regimes. Care homes were also invited to apply (along with other care providers) for additional funds under the Workforce Capacity Fund which, as the name suggests, is designed to increase staffing capacity to support continuity of care and hospital discharge. Unlike other funding streams there was no requirement to passport the funding directly to providers and so a decision was taken to award the limited available funding to those providers that were able to demonstrate a clear plan on how the funds would be used to increase capacity within the short timeframe of 31 March 2021. 14 care homes were successful in being awarded funding. Passporting out of this funding was completed by Commissioners in a very short timeframe, thus ensuring the grant funding was issued in a timely manner to providers.
- 5.19 A third round of Infection Control Funding and second round of Rapid Testing Funding has just been received and, subject to authorisation, will shortly be passported to providers in accordance with Government guidance.

5.20 Whole home and Lateral Flow Testing continues in care homes. Revised guidance on testing for professionals visiting care homes was published on 17 March. The main changes to the guidance are:

- The default position is that without a negative test, the professional should not be allowed into the care home (unless in an emergency, unless overridden by the care home manager following a risk-based decision, or unless their entry is required by law such as CQC inspectors).
- For NHS professionals, care homes should see evidence from the professional of a negative rapid Lateral Flow Test within the last 72 hours, which shows they are following the NHS staff testing regime.
- As per the previous guidance, professionals who are not part of regular testing for NHS staff or CQC inspectors (for example professionals such as podiatrists or engineers) will need to be tested at the care home in the same way as visitors.
- If they are visiting multiple care homes in one day, they will now only need to be tested at the first care home they visit that day and can use evidence of this test at the next care home they visit that day.
- CQC inspectors will now test at home using a Lateral Flow Test on the day of a care home inspection, in addition to their weekly PCR.
- Like care home staff, visiting professionals are exempt from testing for 90 days following a positive PCR test, unless they develop new symptoms.

5.21 The roll out of the Whole Home Testing Programme was a complex logistical task that required partnership system planning. The roll out of the testing was successfully implemented in a timely, safe manner across care homes.

5.22 *Domiciliary care* - On the whole domiciliary care providers have coped well with the additional demands of the pandemic. There have been some isolated staffing issues due to sickness or the need for self-isolation but commissioners have worked closely with the care providers to help them resolve these issues and some providers have experienced an upturn in recruitment levels due to the prevailing economic circumstances.

5.23 More recently there has been an upturn in demand for domiciliary care which is impacting on the number of people awaiting a suitable package of care. Particular pinch points are double handling packages of care. An increase in carer breakdown also represents a risk factor impacting on the demand for domiciliary care. Additional capacity is currently being sought for the Care Brokerage team to facilitate more timely care sourcing and to explore creative solutions to care provision e.g. split or shared care packages. It is envisaged

that the Workforce Capacity Fund will help to increase capacity within the sector as 19 domiciliary care providers successfully applied for the funding.

- 5.24 Domiciliary care staff are eligible for the Covid-19 vaccination under Priority Cohort 2 – Frontline Health and Social Care Workers. Latest available data which is collated directly from care providers suggests that vaccination rates are 83% for frontline care workers but 73% when including back office staff (who are sometimes required to deliver care).
- 5.25 *Complex care/ Supported Living* - Like domiciliary care, there have been a relatively small number of issues related to complex care and supported living. Someday services were unfortunately forced to close at the start of the pandemic.
- 5.26 Updated guidance was issued by the Department of Health and Social care on the 30 March 2021 relating to visits in and out of extra care and supported living settings which can now be supported by rapid lateral flow testing.
- 5.27 Providers of complex care were eligible to apply for funding from the Workforce Capacity Fund. A total of nine providers were successful.
- 5.28 *Extra Care Housing* - Although sadly there have been a small number of Covid related deaths of residents at Extra Care Housing schemes since the start of the pandemic, there have been no major outbreaks. Housing and care staff now receive regular lateral flow tests.
- 5.29 The major area of concern for residents of two Extra Care Housing schemes was the temporary closure of the restaurant facilities in line with Government regulations. An alternative meal delivery service was put in place.
- 5.30 From the very beginning of the pandemic the Council identified PPE as a priority and recognised the urgency to develop our supply chains and to access a supply of PPE. The Council purchased and delivered a significant amount of PPE to a number of stakeholders including our frontline staff, Schools, Funeral Directors, and Care Providers etc. This meant that we were able to continue to deliver safe and effective care in Cheshire East. Care Providers were able to access PPE from Cheshire East Council while supply chain difficulties were being reported nationally and locally. A robust system was implemented and officers worked incredibly hard to ensure that any Care Provider requiring PPE received it within 24 hours of their request.
- 5.31 The Council now receive a regular supply of PPE via the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC). This arrangement with the LRF has been extended to the end of June 2021, with the Council receiving fortnightly deliveries of PPE directly to our offices in

Sandbach on a fortnightly basis. The Council continue to distribute PPE to eligible organisations across Cheshire East. So far, the Council has distributed just over 5 million items of PPE locally.

- 5.32 *Children's Social Care* – We are continuing to see that families' needs are more complex as a result of the pandemic, which is increasing demand and providing additional challenges to services. In response our teams, parents/cares and our partners have risen to the challenge and provided support to our most vulnerable children and young people. We have recruited and retained frontline staff and developed an even more robust response to domestic abuse. We have also enhanced short break care opportunities and have seen a growth in the recruitment of foster carers and people interested in adoption. We have also developed a new support service for foster carers (Mockingbird) and recommissioned our 16+ supported accommodation offer.
- 5.33 On 9 March the government laid The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 following a public consultation. The regulations will come into force on 30 March 2021 and will see an extension of the current flexibilities for medical reports (for fostering and adoption), virtual visits and Ofsted inspection cycles.
- 5.34 Rapid progress has been made in permanency planning for children, and our cohort of cared for children is reducing. We have now achieved 25 adoptions this year. We recently attended a regional leadership event where we presented on the positive impact we have achieved for children and young people through the Mockingbird project which provides a peer support network to foster carers. Fostering was included on the annual leaflet which goes to all Cheshire East residents which will hopefully result in an increase in inquiries on becoming a foster carer.
- 5.35 We celebrated social work practice with all our teams on World Social Work Day on 16 March in an online staff workshop. Some social workers shared their experience of having the Covid-19 vaccine in Team Voice to encourage colleagues to receive a vaccination. Foster carers have now been offered vaccinations which is very positive as it will support children and young people to continue to access family homes and to experience stability in where they are living.
- 5.36 *Prevention and Early Help* – Over 22,600 vouchers have been distributed to families and young adults in need through the Winter Grant Scheme since the beginning of December. The grant is continuing to be used as intended - to offer practical support in the form of food and utilities payments for vulnerable children, young people and adults, as agreed by Cabinet on 1 December. This has included provision of food vouchers for families eligible for free school meals over the Christmas period, February half term, and will also include the

Easter holidays. In January, the scheme was extended to include support for vulnerable families to replace or access white goods. A referral process is in place for professionals to refer families who need this support which is working well. One parent said, “We are incredibly grateful for your help; it feels like a weight has been lifted.”

- 5.37 Holiday activities will be taking place for families over Easter using the DfE holiday activity fund. The aim is to provide healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged young people. The DfE have confirmed that they are happy with our proposal for the use of the fund.

- 5.38 *Education and Skills* – The return to school and college for all pupils has been a success. The attendance in schools across Cheshire East at the end of the spring term 2021 was 94.89% in primary schools and 89.59% in secondary schools. This is 3% above the national attendance rate. Schools, colleges, and the Education Service have worked extremely hard to ensure all arrangements were in place for transport to and from school and the safe return of all pupils on March 8th. We provided all schools with template letters for children and parents to reassure them about the return to school and the expectations around attendance. We produced a guide for professionals who were working with families to support the transition back to school, help to address anxieties and any barriers to attendance. Guidance was also provided to schools and colleges on updating risk assessments and reducing transmission.

- 5.39 Full attendance data from secondary schools was phased over the first week to allow for the rapid testing of pupils. Rapid testing of secondary aged pupils is going very well, and we have a robust system in place to monitor incident rates in schools and put the right support in place. The Education team have visited a number of secondary schools and have been very impressed with the calm organisation that has been seen with implementing the testing arrangements.

- 5.40 In the run up to the return to school of all pupils in March, secondary schools, special schools and colleges were asked to carry out three Lateral Flow Tests (LFT) on each student as they returned, and to prepare them for twice weekly home testing once these had been completed, to help control the spread of the virus. Participation by students is voluntary and while most schools have reported very high levels, there have been some schools where students have been more reluctant to be tested. In these cases, staff have tried to encourage students to participate, pointing out the advantages and helping to reduce any anxieties.

- 5.41 Schools were able to start testing from 1 March and this is now complete. The number of tests carried out by each school ranges from 2,000 to almost 7,000. Concerns about the accuracy of the tests have been raised but there have been

less than 20 'void/ inconclusive' results reported, all of which gave a conclusive result on re-testing.

- 5.42 A total of 23 positive cases in pupils have been found since the start of March, of which 17 have not shown any symptoms and so would have been in school were it not for the tests.
- 5.43 Home testing has now been rolled out to nursery setting. Kits have been delivered and colleagues in this sector started home testing from 22 March.
- 5.44 The council has dedicated resource to the roll out of LFT across Cheshire East. This has enabled schools to have access to advice and support when setting up the testing sites and has enabled the council to have some oversight of the process through ongoing dialogue with schools and by visiting test sites, while they are in operation.
- 5.45 Our focus is on pupil wellbeing and catching up on learning, and we are continuing to assist schools in supporting pupils' mental health and wellbeing, so they can help those who are most anxious. Plans are also being discussed for summer schools and catch up programmes. We are working with schools to develop a recovery plan, which will focus on how schools need to adapt the curriculum to address gaps in knowledge and the curriculum during the last year.
- 5.46 At the beginning of March, parents across the borough received offers of secondary school places for children starting in September 2021, with the majority getting their first choice of school. The council has worked with the local schools to offer preference places to 98% of Cheshire East residents (an increase from 97% in 2020) with 92% being offered their first preference of secondary school (compared to 91.6% in 2020). These figures are expected to increase before pupils start in September 2021, as some parents will decline places as their circumstances change and places become available. The school admissions process has continued during the coronavirus outbreak, with the council co-ordinating this for most state schools in Cheshire East. Schools have adapted well, offering virtual tours to help parents in making preferences for their child's school and they will now be working with primary schools and parents to prepare children for their move to secondary school. The number of applications for school places in Cheshire East continues to increase. In 2021, the total number of applications was 4621 with 470 applications received from families living outside the borough, an indication of the popularity of Cheshire East schools.

- 5.47 *Business Support* – The Council is continuing to support those businesses required to close due to lockdown or similar measures through distribution of grants. The table below provides a breakdown of the allocation of the current grants available to businesses. There have been two publications of a league table indicating performance for the Mandatory and Discretionary grants, and the latest being for the period up to 28 February 2021. On ‘total paid out’ and ‘number of payments’, Cheshire East is within the top 7% on Mandatory Grants (LRSG closed) , and 10 % on the Discretionary Grants (ARG). A link to the tables is <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-grant-funding-local-authority-payments-to-small-and-medium-businesses>.”
- 5.48 The Council has further supported businesses with new Restart Grant which Government launched on the 1st April, and is also continuing to engage with businesses throughout this period and is now developing longer term support plans for the local economy to support economic recovery.

Total received @ 20 Apr 2021:			
	Applications Approved	Payments Made	
Mandatory Grants via Rates:	20,543	£	43,417,223
Restart Grant	689		5,260,719
LRSG (open)	3,196	£	2,258,757
LRSG (closed)#1 November	3,003	£	4,845,718
LRSG (sector)	3	£	2,286
CSP (wet led)	274	£	274,000
LRSG (closed)#2 December	10,348	£	16,086,743
CBLP	3,030	£	14,689,000
Discretionary Grants:			
ARG	3,119	£	6,298,692
TOTAL	23,662	£	49,715,915

- 5.49 Throughout the pandemic, the council has maintained key neighbourhood services for our residents. Ansa, the environmental services company wholly owned by the council, has maintained all kerbside waste and recycling collections when other local authorities have at times suspended one or more of their collections. The Household Waste and Recycling Centres were closed during the first national lockdown, but once they were able to re-open measures were quickly implemented to cope with the initial high level of demand and ensure staff and customers were kept safe. Ansa have also helped to ensure our parks and green spaces have remained open throughout to provide vital access to green spaces for physical and mental wellbeing.
- 5.50 Orbitas Bereavement Services, another company wholly owned by the council, played a key role in delivering the council’s excess death management plan,

responding to increased demand for cremations during the first wave as well as ensuring services can take place in a Covid-secure environment to keep staff and mourners safe.

- 5.51 Through the Regulatory Services team the council has been responsible for ensuring local businesses complied with the Covid-19 restrictions. Detailed guidance has been issued to over 3,500 businesses to help them understand and comply with the ever-changing national guidance and regulations to ensure they protect their staff and customers. This has included hospitality premises, takeaways, taxi drivers, supermarkets and close contact services. In addition, officers have directly engaged with over 4,000 businesses to answer questions and provide specific advice for their premises or, in response to a complaint made by the general public. Detailed advice and support including, where appropriate, referrals for onsite testing has been undertaken with 50 business premises where there has been an outbreak of Covid-19.
- 5.52 Libraries and Leisure Centres have been required to close during the three national lockdowns and when they have been able to open their activities have been restricted. This led to the launch of new services to support people with their physical and mental wellbeing while at home during lockdown. This included a new order and collect service for library books, a new home library service for customers unable to leave their home, online fitness classes, online Rhyme Times and Story Times, online Lego club, and online coffee and craft sessions. During periods of lockdown, colleagues from the library service and Everybody Sport and Recreation, the leisure trust who operate the council's leisure centres, have volunteered to help out in other ways including contacting clinically extremely vulnerable residents required to shield, supporting the payment of Covid-19 business grants, participating in the people helping people scheme, supporting mobile testing units for the re-opening of schools, and supporting the establishment of an emergency food distribution centre.
- 5.53 *Homelessness and Rough Sleeping* - In March 2020, the Government announced, "Everyone in" and under this programme alone, we provided emergency accommodation for 117 individuals and families. The Housing Options team have then worked to secure more sustainable accommodation options.

From March 2020 to March 2021 the team have:

- Accommodated 117 households through the Everyone In initiative
- Accommodated 172 households who presented as homeless in priority need
- Prevented 1,038 from becoming homeless

- 5.54 We have been able to maintain relatively low levels of rough sleeping, which has fluctuated between 2 and 10 during the year. Our dedicated Rough Sleeping Team have worked with those sleeping rough on our streets, providing them with a housing option should they wish to engage with our services. This has continued even when individuals have lost their initial accommodation.
- 5.55 Partnership working has been exemplary during this period, our partners have worked exceptionally hard to ensure that individuals have a safe place to reside. Furthermore, we have worked with the Ministry of Housing, Local Government and Communities to secure funding in order to set up new projects for those who need extra support.
- 5.56 There are however challenges ahead, the Government's eviction ban is due to be lifted in May, which we envisage will increase the level of homelessness as landlords look to seek possession of their properties if the tenants are in arrears.
- 5.57 The economic fallout of the pandemic is likely to impact on homelessness as the furlough scheme ends and some residents face unemployment. The need to prevent homelessness will increase. We are already seeing an increase in referrals to our Welfare Advice Officer with a 22% increase in referrals this year.

We are therefore:

- Increasing our skills within the Housing Team to deal with illegal evictions
- Establishing partnership working with the CAB to deal with the potential increase in referrals. We have developed our referral pathways between the agencies to ensure that people at crisis point are provided with the housing, debt, and welfare advice they need to prevent homelessness.
- Applying for further Government Rough Sleeping Initiative funding to ensure the continuation of existing schemes and services
- Have the resources to increase staffing rates on a temporary basis to deal with a significant increase in homelessness
- We are utilising our Homelessness Prevention funding to try and prevent evictions or assist those at threat of homelessness to access alternative accommodation
- We are working with the Benefits Team to explore options for more flexible use of/broader eligibility for Discretionary Housing Payments and Emergency Assistance budgets
- We are working proactively with both our commissioned Supported Accommodation Providers and Registered Housing Providers to move those who are ready from supported accommodation into alternative longer-term accommodation to ensure a flow through within provision

- We have conducted a training session with 40+ advisors from the DWP to ensure timely and appropriate referrals for households that are identified as at risk of homelessness or whom have had significant changes in their income that may impact their ability to sustain their accommodation.
- Providing more general welfare training across the Homechoice and Prevention Team to enhance skills and reduce this impact of the increased referrals to our welfare officer.
- We are contacting Private landlords who serve a 6-month notice to identify possible arrears and to intervene in advance of our 56-day duty

5.58 *Remote Meetings* - Since May 2020, councils have been allowed to conduct any formal meetings 'virtually' or remotely, in line with Covid-19 restrictions. This was facilitated by the rapid introduction of legislation.

5.59 The Council moved quickly to establish the necessary arrangements to make sure that virtual meetings would be successful. The first formal virtual Teams meeting was Cabinet on the 9 June 2020. By April 2021, all formal meetings were being conducted in this way, including 5 full Council meetings. At the time of writing this report, a further virtual Full Council meeting was due to take on the 19 April 2021. These arrangements have worked well and have brought many benefits.

5.60 Whilst there was never any intention to permanently replace all formal "face to face" meetings with virtual meetings, it had been hoped that councils would have local flexibility to hold some meetings virtually into the future. However, the legislation which allows formal decision making to take place virtually was time-limited and expires on 6 May 2021. Whilst Government is being lobbied to extend relevant provisions, and whilst it is understood that there is a legal challenge, which seeks to secure authority to continue with virtual meetings after 6 May, local authorities have been informed that this will not happen. We therefore must make new arrangements for our meetings after 7 May.

5.61 Proposals are currently being developed which will ensure that all necessary Council business after 6 May can be properly discharged, and this has been communicated to Members. A close watch is being kept for any further announcements from Government as to whether or not the virtual meeting legislation might be extended. The outcome of the legal challenge, which is due to come before the courts towards the end of April, will also be closely watched. Members will be kept informed of developments and any relevant updates will be provided at the Cabinet meeting.

5.62 *IT Migration* - A critical success factor in the council's response was the rapid deployment of mobile technology through laptops which continues to support remote working for Members and officers. Our IT Shared Service has migrated

over 7,300 users since the lockdown and introduced Teams across the entire estate. There are 4,500 connections daily. This is a significant achievement, widely praised across both councils.

- 5.63 *Customer services/contacts* and changed model of support - the Contact Centre adapted quickly to support customers whilst remote working. Staff previously working in a face to face environment were reskilled to support telephony and on-line support. A Chatbot was introduced to offer further contact options for customers. The Contact Centre supported the Communities Team by providing the People Helping People Helpline and the Track and Trace Team through providing Contact Tracing and more recently the Local Zero pilot.
- 5.64 *The Web Team* have ensured the external website and internal Centranet provide the definitive source of advice and information on Coronavirus. Digital services in support of Coronavirus have been developed by the Web Team including access to the PHP service, Business Grant applications, Self-isolation payment requests and Council Tax referrals.
- 5.65 *The Benefits Team* have continued to support our most vulnerable customers through the provision of the Council Tax Hardship Scheme for working age customers, development and delivery of the Self Isolation Payment Scheme and the ongoing delivery of the Emergency Assistance Scheme. They have provided expert advice and support to colleagues delivering additional hardship schemes including Shielding support and Winter Grant Scheme/HAF's.
- 5.66 *The Revenues Team* have been responsible for the delivery of Business Grants of which there have been 13 separate schemes and continuing. To date over 31,000 grant payments have been made in excess of £142M. The team have been placed under considerable pressures as guidance has frequently been delayed whilst businesses have obviously sought to receive payment as quickly as possible.
- 5.67 The Revenues Team have also supported customers struggling to pay Council Tax and Business Rates. Business Rates Relief Schemes were introduced and implemented by the Team for both 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years and options to defer and reprofile repayments have been introduced.
- 5.68 *The Registration Service* has coped with significant challenges as a result of Covid-19 restrictions. In terms of birth registration, the Registrar General's Office postponed the registration of births for a period of months at the start of the first lockdown, meaning that in the summer of 2020 the Service had to respond to a significant backlog of registrations.
- 5.69 Changes were made to the Register Office to ensure that staff had a safe environment in which to work and those registering births had the confidence

that they were doing so safely. The rules in relation to death registrations were changed, with all registrations being undertaken over the phone, this is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. This change necessitated the introduction (at very short notice) of a new “back office” system to ensure that registrars had the necessary information to accurately and sensitively register deaths. Feedback from families has been very positive.

- 5.70 In terms of marriages the restrictions relating to venues and numbers of guests changed multiple times. As well as the financial impact of lost income (circa £800k) staff have been dealing with couples who had to rearrange their plans, sometimes several times over. There has been some fantastic feedback about the flexibility of staff hurriedly rearranging ceremonies for couples in line with changing restrictions.
- 5.71 *Communications and engagement* - the Council provided a wide range of COVID-related information in various formats to keep residents, members of staff and other stakeholders informed throughout the first 12 months of the pandemic. For example, the council's communications and media team produced more than 330 general media releases and information bulletins in 2020/21 – an increase of 188% over the previous year. The first quarter of 2020/21 saw a 250% increase in proactive communication over the equivalent period in 2019/20.
- 5.72 This contributed to the council securing more media coverage than ever before, (a jump of 140% of previous year) as local and national media shared key information about the council's and partners' response to the COVID emergency.

This included:

- Prevention, infection control measures and symptoms
 - Changes to council services, schools, social care and safeguarding
 - Support for local businesses and community groups
 - Support for people who needed additional support when shielding and self-isolating
 - Vaccine programme
 - Test and trace
 - Mental health and general welfare
- 5.73 During the pandemic, the council provided more than 150 COVID briefings to members and MPs, and a similar number to all staff to give them the information they need to continue to deliver services. In January 2021, the council also introduced an e-newsletter for residents to receive COVID information by direct mail.

- 5.74 *Staff* - We are so proud of our fantastic teams of dedicated, flexible, and resilient staff who have gone above and beyond what we could reasonably expect. This applies to all services and teams across the Council. Special thanks go to our Public Health and Joint Emergency Planning teams who have worked tirelessly around the clock for more than 12 months.
- 5.75 We have all worked hard to maintain engagement and to support our staff providing them with regular guidance and advice throughout the pandemic. This has enabled our workforce to adapt to different ways of working, manage risk and look after their health and wellbeing. We have been in regular dialogue with our staff and Trade Union colleagues to ensure that everyone has been well informed and listened to as the pandemic has evolved. There has been lots of positive feedback from staff about the support provided to them during the past 12 months. The current pulse survey will inform future ways of working arrangements balanced against service requirements and the needs of our customers.

6. **Implications of the Recommendations**

6.1 **Legal Implications**

- 6.1.1 The UK has made hundreds of laws in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, with four national lockdown laws covering each of the nations. For England, the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Steps) (England) Regulations ('the Roadmap Regulations') recently came into force – 29th March 2021. These Regulations expire on 31 June 2021 unless revoked or replaced before, and the Government is obliged to have reviewed the Regulations on 12th April 2021 and, thereafter, every 35 days.
- 6.1.2 The Roadmap Regulations legislate for the Government's roadmap out of lockdown (the plans for which were initially published on 12 February 2021) as part of the Spring 2021 response to Covid-19. The Spring 2021 strategy also includes information on the Government's vaccine roll out programme, their coronavirus testing strategy and how they will respond to new coronavirus variants of concern.
- 6.1.3 The Roadmap Regulations are divided into 6 parts:
- Part 1** - sets out the circumstances where a linked household (or support bubble) or linked childcare household (or childcare bubble) may be formed between two households. It also provides for permitted outdoor gathering under certain circumstances;
- Part 2** - introduces Schedules 1, 2 and 3 which set out three "steps" of lockdown restrictions. The Government will be able to

move England (or areas within England) between the steps by amending the Roadmap Regulations.

Part 3 - introduces a restriction on leaving the UK. Recent regulations implementing coronavirus restrictions required individuals to stay at home unless it was reasonably necessary to leave home for purposes such as work and education. This requirement is no longer in place but there are now restrictions on international travel. Part 3 also introduces Schedule 5 and 6 which lists reasonable excuses to travel outside of the UK and set out which individuals are exempt from the restrictions on leaving the UK.

Part 4 - provides powers for the Secretary of State to disapply the coronavirus restrictions to a specific premises or event for the purpose of research on the potential transmission of Covid19 in controlled environments. The Secretary of State must seek advice from the Chief Medical Officer before making such a direction.

Part 5 - provides the police and others designated with powers to enforce the restrictions

Part 6 - contains final provisions including those regarding review and expiry of the regulations. It also introduces Schedule 8 which makes amendments to other coronavirus related regulations such as the self-isolation regulations, contact detail regulations and the international travel regulations.

- 6.1.4 The Roadmap Regulations provide for three legal steps out of lockdown. Earlier this week, the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Steps and Local Authority Enforcement Powers) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 came into force, which allows for England to move from Step 1 to Step 2.
- 6.1.5 The current restrictions under Step 2 include: an international travel ban (excluding those with a 'reasonable excuse'); a prohibition on people meeting inside with people not in their household/support bubble (although some exemptions apply); a prohibition on outdoor gatherings involving more than six people (unless exempted) and hospitality venues only being able to offer food and drink outdoors. As of 12th April, all non-essential retail and personal care services can re-open.
- 6.1.6 Step 3 (no earlier than 17 May) will further ease restrictions so as to allow for outdoor gatherings of up to 30 people and indoor gatherings of

up to 6 people. At this stage, hospitality venues can reopen indoors with table service. Businesses such as nightclubs must remain closed.

- 6.1.7 The final step (no earlier than 21 June) will remove all legal limits on social contact, with nightclubs reopening and the easing of restrictions on large events and performances.
- 6.1.8 Movement through the remaining steps is dependant upon four tests: the continual success of the vaccination programme; evidence of a reduction in hospitalisation and deaths; infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisation and the assessment of risks is not fundamentally changed by new variants of Covid-19.
- 6.1.9 Although the steps are designed to apply to all regions, the Government has reserved the right to reimpose economic and social restrictions at a local level.
- 6.1.10 The laws surrounding the wearing of face-coverings are found in The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings in a Relevant Place) (England) Regulations 2020. There is a requirement for most people to wear a face covering in shops, on public transport and in other public spaces.
- 6.1.11 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Self-Isolation) (England) Regulations 2020 require people to self-isolate when requested to do so by certain officials and apply to those who have tested positive for coronavirus or those who have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive. It would not apply to those who had been recommended to self-isolate by the NHS contact-tracing app only. Individuals are required to self-isolate for 10 days. Breaches of the regulations can lead to criminal prosecutions or fixed penalty notices on sliding scales of up to £10,000. If not previously revoked, these Regulations expire on 28th September 2021.
- 6.1.12 The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 remain in force and make provision for the conduct of local authority meetings up until 7 May 2021. On 25 March, the Government announced that this provision will not be extended. Hertfordshire CC, Lawyers in Local Government and the Association of Democratic Service Officers launched a judicial review against this decision which is due to be heard at the end of April. However, the Council should continue with preparations for the reinstatement of face-to-face meetings in the event that such a challenge

is unsuccessful. Preparations are underway for regulatory meetings to take place at Macclesfield and Crewe.

6.1.13 On 2nd December 2020, additional powers came into force to support local authorities' efforts to maintain COVID-secure environments. Further amendments were made in the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Steps) (England) Regulations 2021. Local authorities have tools consisting of: Coronavirus Improvement Notice (CIN); Coronavirus Restrictions Notice (CRN) and a Coronavirus Immediate Restrictions Notice (CIRN). These notices are based in part on the existing health and safety regime under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Proportionality and the principles established in the Regulators' Code should be followed and officers should attempt to engage with a business before issuing a notice wherever possible.

6.1.14 **Coronavirus Improvement Notice (CIN):** This can be issued when a business is failing to fulfil a provision set out in the relevant coronavirus regulations relating to COVID-secure measures. A CIN will be applied for a minimum of 48 hours (although its actual duration is at the discretion of the enforcement officer). Failure to comply with a CIN by the end of its operational period could lead to an FPN of £2,000 and/or a Coronavirus Immediate Restriction Notice or a Coronavirus Restriction Notice being issued.

6.1.15 **Coronavirus Restriction Notice (CRN):** This is issued where there has been a breach of the provisions of the relevant coronavirus regulations and the recipient has failed to comply with the terms of the CIN, where such non-compliance creates a risk of exposure to coronavirus. Following the 7-day period of application, the CRN can be withdrawn or allowed to expire. Failure to comply with a CRN during its operational period will result in an FPN of £4,000 or a new CRN / CIRN being issued.

6.1.16 **Coronavirus Immediate Restriction Notice (CIRN):** This can be issued where rapid action is needed to close a premises or restrict an activity to stop the spread of coronavirus (and without first having to issue a CIN). Closure will be for an initial 48-hour period. Where necessary, a CRN can be issued so that the premises is required to close for a further 7-day period, or where it is assessed that the premises is causing a serious and imminent threat to public health, a direction can be issued under separate regulations. Failure to comply with a CIRN will result in an FPN of £4,000 being issued.

6.1.17 Any notices can be appealed by the Claimant in the Magistrates' Court. Where an appeal is successful, compensation may be awarded. The period of appeal is limited to 28 days. Local Authority enforcement

officers have powers of entry and investigation as set out in the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984.

6.2 Financial Implications

6.2.1 The potential financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are regularly reported to Members via Cabinet, with additional briefings provided via Audit and Governance and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Member written briefings.

6.2.2 This report presents the latest financial position and identifies Government funding already provided or claimed to date. Significant levels of uncertainty remain over the final projected financial implications for local authorities, and the approach to funding costs and income losses associated with Covid-19 continue to change as the severity of the pandemic has changed. This creates issues with producing an accurate forecast of financial consequences compared to the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

6.2.3 The returns to Central Government identify three main types of financial pressure:

- (i) **Un-ringfenced Service Expenditure and Income Losses**
The most recent forecast of financial pressures from COVID-19 on the Council's 2020/21 budget for Services is £33.6m. The figures are under frequent review. Grant funding to support expenditure and income losses is detailed in Table 1 below, in a format consistent with previous reports. £25m of un-ringfenced Support Grant has been allocated to date for the 2019/20 and 2020/21 financial years; and £3.5m has also been claimed so far under the Income Compensation Scheme. The Government also announced that £100m had been top sliced from national grant provision totals to provide support to keeping leisure centres open; the Council has been allocated £964,000 (as shown in Table 2). Table 1a identifies funding announcements provided as part of the Spending Review 2020, which will feature as part of the management of COVID-related financial impacts in 2021/22 and potentially beyond.
- (ii) **Collection Fund**
Potential losses on the Collection Fund relate to Council Tax and Business Rates income. The Government requires councils to spread the deficit over the next three years, although a compensation scheme has been announced, to cover up to 75% of irrecoverable losses. Cash shortfalls in-year are currently expected to be in the region of £11m. The Council will continue to

recover late payments where practicable, however some losses will be permanent; for example, where businesses have ceased trading, individuals are now entitled to Council Tax Support Payments, or where growth in the tax base has slowed down compared to forecasts.

(iii) Ringfenced Expenditure

Table 2 provides information about the activities the Council has been undertaking which have received specific Government funding in 2020/21; and Table 2a is now included to show specific grants announced so far for the 2021/22 year.

Table 1: The approach to un-ringfenced funding for 2020/21 has changed over time

Announced	Funding for CEC	Notes
(England total)		
19th March	£9.150m (£1.6bn)	Adult Social Care based payment
18th April	£10.539m (£1.6bn)	Payment per capita to help reflect lost income
Sub-Total	£19.689m (£3.2bn)	
2nd July	£2.712m (£0.5bn)	Adult Social Care / deprivation based payment
12th October	£2.578m (£1bn)	To provide resources for winter. This tranche of funding has been used to equalise all payments using the same approach as the July payment, now referred to as the COVID Formula.
Total	£24.979m (of £4.6bn)	
2nd July	£6m (£n/k) for Income Compensation	Estimated total – subject to claims process. £3.5m claimed so far, in 2 of 3 data collection rounds Compensation at 75p in £1 for losses above 5% of sales, fees and charges budgets

2nd July	£tba for Collection Fund	Compensation at 75p in £1 for losses (to be received in 2021/22); and defer residual Collection Fund deficit over 3yrs
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Table 1a: Un-ringfenced support announced for 2021/22

Announced	Funding for CEC	Notes
(England total)		
18th December	£8.508m (£1.55bn)	5 th Tranche of Emergency Funding Grant
18th December	£1.5m (£n/k) for Income Compensation	Sales, Fees & Charges compensation scheme extended for April-June 2021

6.2.4 Un-ringfenced government funding received to date as detailed in Table 1 (above) is currently **£25m, of which £1m was utilised in 2019/20**; and the income compensation scheme is anticipated to bring in **£6m**, if settled in full. There is potential that there could be a shortfall in funding compared to the overall financial impact on the Council. The MTFS reflects that costs that are deferred, such as capital spending impacts (of £8.7m) and Collection Fund losses are managed through existing risks provisions within the Capital Programme or through use of the Collection Fund Earmarked Reserve. By taking this approach the Council is creating flexibility by carrying forward unspent COVID revenue Grant funding at year-end that can support the outturn position or provide financial support in the 2021/22 financial year. This position will be subject to ongoing analysis and review as part of the outturn reporting.

6.2.5 Returns to central government now include estimates for potential costs, and losses from sales, fees, and charges, in the 2021/22 financial year. The budget approved by Council in February 2021 was balanced on the understanding that COVID related financial impacts would be managed from additional COVID funding. Early estimates for the full year indicate the potential financial impact in 2021/22 could be as much as £17.6m. This is set against the potential funding identified in Table 1a above of £10m.

6.2.6 Mindful of the possibility for further expenditure/ net cost pressures going forward, it will be important to continue to review, understand and mitigate the potential shortfall between additional financial impacts and

the funding provided by Government. The Council continues to engage in several activities:

1. Managing and reviewing the financial forecasts in response to guidance and the local response to the emergency, and how this affects the Council's revenue budget.
2. Further analysing the Government proposals to compensate losses from Sales, Fees and Charges.
3. Analysing the level of Collection Fund losses across the three financial years 2021/22 to 2023/24; and
4. Reviewing the consequences of funding shortfalls on the Council's Capital Programme and how this impact on the Council's long-term funding of capital expenditure.

Table 2: Specific Grants announced for 2020/21 are valued at c.£255m

Activity (National Total)	Spending forecast*	Funding	Variance
Test & Trace (£300m)	£1,533,331	£1,533,331	£0
Towns Fund (Capital £5bn)	£750,000	£750,000	£0
Dedicated Home to School and College Transport (£n/k)	£883,387	£883,387	£0
Rough Sleeping/ Next Steps Accommodation (£3.2m+£10m) **	£157,648	£68,400	£89,248
Active Travel (£225m)	£743,050	£743,050	£0
Re-Opening High Streets (£50m)	£339,533	£339,533	£0
Culture Recovery Fund (£1.57bn)	£180,000	£180,000	£0
Infection Control in Care Homes (£600m)	£5,320,292	£5,320,292	£0
Infection Control in Care Homes (£546m) 2 nd Tranche	£4,712,872	£4,712,872	£0
Business Grants (£12.3bn)***	£87,445,000	£95,514,000	

	(spending to date)		Awaiting guidance
Discretionary Business Grants (£617m)***	£4,357,000 (spending to date)	£4,372,250	
Local Restrictions Business Support Grants (£n/k) ***	£61,201,875	£61,201,875	
Christmas Support Payment (Wet-led pubs)	£236,800	£236,800	
Business Rate Holiday (£10.7bn)	£62,339,000	£60,561,068	£1,777,932
Council Tax Hardship (£500m)	£2,691,326	£2,062,635	£628,691
Local Bus Network (£167m)	£229,632	£229,632	£0
Emergency Assistance Food and basic necessities (£63m)	£326,293	£326,293	£0
Contain Outbreak Management Fund (£per/ head, based on Tier) (6 tranches to 31 Mar)	£9,000,133	£9,000,133	£0
School Condition Grant (Capital) (£n/k)	£589,604	£589,604	£0
Wellbeing for Education Return (£8m)	£55,403	£55,403	£0
Compliance and Enforcement Grant (£60m)	£158,572	£158,572	£0
Bus Service Support Grant (CBSSG) Restart scheme (£n/k)	£671,101	£675,474	(£4,373)
Self Isolation Test and Trace Support Payment (£177m)	£740,476	£740,476	£0
Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (£175m)	£1,054,566	£1,054,566	£0

Covid Winter Grant Scheme (£170m)	£880,472	£880,472	£0
Domestic Abuse Building Capacity Fund (£6m)	£50,000	£50,000	£0
Leisure Centres (£100m)	£963,513	£963,513	£0
Workforce Capacity Fund (£120m)	£725,319	£725,319	£0
Rapid Testing Fund (£149m)	£1,361,266	£1,361,266	£0
Vaccine Roll-out Funding (n/k)	tba	tba	£0
Community Testing Funding (£11m)	£356,076	£356,076	£0
Holiday Activities and Food Programme 2021 (grant is split £88,630 for 2020/21 and £792,710 for 2021/22)	£881,340	£881,340	£0
LA Framework/ Practical Support for those Self-Isolating (for period March to June 2021) (£12.9m)	£70,806	£70,806	£0

* Note: where 'Spending Forecast' equals 'Funding' this does not necessarily indicate the full extent of spending to date but does demonstrate the expectation that funding will be fully utilised.

** Spending in relation to Rough Sleeping/ Accommodation exceeds specific Covid grant funding but is being met from other appropriate Housing grants and existing linked reserves.

*** Business Grant scheme funding has been combined to date. Scheme totals can also vary if payments are subject to review or appeal.

Table 2a: Specific Grants announced for 2021/22 are valued at c.£34m

Activity (National Total)	Spending forecast*	Funding	Variance
Covid secure measures for Elections (£15m)	£tba	£tba	£0
Additional Dedicated Home to School and College Transport (n/k)	£26,153	£26,153	£0
Contain Outbreak Management Fund (7 th Tranche) (£400m)	£2,195,538	£2,195,538	£0
Welcome Back Fund (£56m)	£339,534	£339,534	£0
Council Tax Support Scheme (£670m)	£3,371,000	£3,371,000	£0
Business Restart Grants (£5bn)	£21,294,675	£21,294,675	£0
Additional Restrictions Grant Top-up Allocation (£n/k)	£3,405,353	£3,405,353	£0
Business Rate Reliefs (£1.5bn)	£tba	£tba	£0
Infection control measures and rapid testing (£341m)	£3,028,690	£3,028,690	£0
Covid Local Support Grant (£40m)	£207,170	£207,170	£0

6.2.7 Further specific grants may become payable and require local administration in response to the emerging status of the pandemic response.

6.2.8 LGA and CCN collate returns from all member councils, though the types of financial pressure vary from council to council depending on their circumstances. For example, whether they provide social care, have a strong tourist economy, or the extent of deprivation. The overall impacts are similar across councils and Cheshire East Council is not an outlier. The Council will continue to support lobbying by the LGA and CCN in their aim to ensure fair settlement of the financial pressures facing local authorities.

6.3 Policy Implications

- 6.3.1 COVID-19 is having a wide-ranging impact on many policies. Any significant implications for the Council's policies are outlined in this report.

6.4 Equality Implications

- 6.4.1 Implications of any changes and restrictions will continue to be reviewed on a regular basis.
- 6.4.2 Vaccination programmes are prioritising people by age and those who are clinically vulnerable.
- 6.4.3 As mentioned in paragraph 5.30, over 21,500 vouchers were distributed over the Christmas period to families and young adults in need through the Winter Grant Scheme. The grant is to offer practical support in the form of food and utilities payments. The scheme was originally due to end March. It will now be extended in 2021/22.
- 6.4.4 We carried out individual risk assessments for staff with protected characteristics, particularly in relation to BAME colleagues and staff with a disability and are issuing regular reminders to keep these under review as circumstances may change.
- 6.4.5 We hosted a workshop on 4 March to understand how to improve our communications about the COVID-19 vaccine in targeting local underserved communities. This forms part of the ongoing work that is taking place with the NHS Cheshire CCG in dispelling myths and rumours about the vaccine and to encourage take up of the jab. Information shows there is a lot of hesitancy amongst some local communities including some ethnic groups, asylum seekers, Travellers, homeless people, boating and multi-faith groups. The session was hosted by our communications team, our local community engagement team and a representative from the NHS Cheshire CCG. Members of the community who attended included a freelance translator, the Waterways Chaplaincy, the Arch Deacon of Nantwich (subbing for the Bishop of Chester) and the manager of a homeless shelter in Crewe. The session was very insightful, with discussions around worries and fears amongst our underserved communities about the vaccine. It was noted that there is a need to support and represent our Bulgarian, Slovakian, Czech, Portuguese, East Timor, Polish and Romania communities more than we do currently. Discussions developed around how this could be achieved.

6.4.6 It was also noted that more work needs to be done around the accessibility of the vaccine. Many communities would be willing to have their jab if medical teams were able to come to them – e.g. those in the homeless shelter who aren't registered with a GP, the boating community, Travellers, older residents living in rural areas and many of the BAME community, as they can struggle to access services. The session was extremely uplifting, with an overwhelming feeling of positivity for the work the vaccination programme has done to date. All community representatives on the call were extremely keen to work with the council and the CCG to help further the scope of the work being done and to raise vaccination numbers amongst our underserved audiences. Actions have been noted and work is underway. Updates will be shared on this work in due course.

6.5 Human Resources Implications

- 6.5.1 The latest data on staff absences on 18 March 2021 are 19 (23 *last month*) staff self-isolating and working from home, 15 (27 *last month*) staff self-isolating and not working from home (role doesn't allow), 5 (4 *last month*) Covid-related absences, and 99 (102 *last month*) non-Covid-related absences.
- 6.5.2 Staff vaccinations: as at 18 March 1866 staff are eligible for vaccinations due to their role. Of these, 86.7% have had a first vaccination.
- 6.5.3 There continues to be regular communication with staff and good co-operation with the Trade Unions.

6.6 Risk Management Implications

- 6.6.1 The risk environment around COVID-19 remains dynamic. Risk registers have been maintained as part of the Council's response to date and the plans for recovery. Business Continuity Plans are being kept under review.

6.7 Rural Communities Implications

- 6.7.1 COVID-19 is having an impact across all communities, including rural communities. The support for small businesses will support rural business.

6.8 Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

6.8.1 There are implications for children and young people. There are implications for schools, early help and prevention and children's social care which are summarised in the report.

6.9 Public Health Implications

6.9.1. COVID-19 is a global pandemic and public health emergency. There are implications for Cheshire East which are summarised in the report.

6.10 Climate Change Implications

6.10.1 There have been positive benefits of fewer cars on the road. This includes most staff who have been working from home. There has also been lower demand for heating/lighting offices.

7 Ward Members Affected

All Members.

8 Consultation & Engagement

8.1 Formal consultation activities were initially paused due to the lockdown restrictions. However, we are now undertaking all consultations following a review on a case by case basis to ensure that we can continue to operate effectively.

9 Access to Information

9.1 Comprehensive reports on COVID-19 can be found on the Council's and the Government's websites.

10 Contact Information

Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officers:

Frank Jordan, Executive Director Place and Deputy Chief Executive

Jane Burns, Executive Director Corporate Services

COVID-19 – a summary of an unprecedented year

COVID-19 is a devastating global pandemic that has touched every country and community.

Sadly, more than 450 of our Cheshire East residents have died. Countless others have been hospitalised and many are still living with the aftereffects. Every life lost has had a heart-breaking impact on their family, friends and loved ones.

This has been an unprecedented year in terms of circumstances and challenges which have affected every aspect of Cheshire East Council. It is appropriate, therefore, that as the first national anniversary of this pandemic has recently been marked, to look back over some of the key achievements in Council's response.

Since March 2020, Cheshire East Council has continued to work with partners to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic. At the same time the Council has continued to strive to:

- **deliver essential local services**
- **protect our most vulnerable people**
- **support our communities and local businesses.**

We are so proud of our fantastic teams of dedicated, flexible, and resilient staff and elected Members who have gone above and beyond what we could reasonably expect.

How we responded to the pandemic

- Our multi-agency Cheshire Local Resilience Forum has led the emergency response, with many people working around the clock, 7 days a week. Our Joint Emergency Planning and Co-ordination Team have done a superb job supporting by Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Cheshire Councils in what has been the longest civil emergency in recent history.
- From the very beginning of the pandemic, the Council identified Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as a priority and recognised the urgency to develop our supply chains and to access a supply of PPE. The Council purchased and delivered a significant amount of PPE to stakeholders including our frontline staff, schools, funeral directors, and care providers etc. This meant that we were able to continue to deliver safe and effective care in Cheshire East.

- We moved quickly to create our People Helping People service which works collaboratively with new and existing Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector partners and local volunteers to channel community-based support to meet the needs of our residents. Some key statistics:
 - 1,946 volunteers recruited and utilised including the codesign of a volunteer website: <https://cheshireeastvolunteers.co.uk/>
 - Software launched to effectively recruit volunteers and a volunteer recognition scheme created.
 - 4,108 non-shielding vulnerable people supported.
 - 1,440 shielding individuals supported, including delivery of 350 food parcels.
 - 16 community groups (volunteer coordination points) set up to recruit, coordinate, and support volunteers in local neighbourhoods.
 - £450,000 of funding allocated to the VCFSE sector to change their delivery model and meet the changing needs of communities, including £10,000 of winter wellbeing goods provided to those suffering fuel poverty.
- We designed and implemented active travel and other measures to make safer high streets as various tiers were introduced and restrictions were lifted.
- Through the Regulatory Services team the council has been responsible for ensuring local businesses complied with the Covid-19 restrictions. Detailed guidance has been issued to over 3,500 businesses to help them understand and comply with the ever-changing national guidance and regulations to ensure they protect their staff and customers. This has included hospitality premises, takeaways, taxi drivers, supermarkets, and close contact services. In addition, officers have directly engaged with over 4,000 businesses to answer questions and provide specific advice for their premises or, in response to a complaint made by the public.
- On 6 April 2021, England's first dual use testing site was launched in Cheshire East for a national pilot project at the Crewe local testing site. This is a pilot offering both symptomatic and asymptomatic testing in one location for residents.
- The Cheshire East Swab Squad is currently supporting over 100 local businesses in Cheshire East with advice, training, and testing support. This includes six local businesses who have received rapid response urgent testing to prevent Covid-19 outbreaks: This has required the team to undertake 248 lateral flow tests within those organisations. 93% of local contacts are traced.
- We have supported the development of a successful vaccination programme, working with Cheshire CCG, Cheshire and Warrington Health and Care Partnership, and reaching under-served/hard to reach groups.

- We developed a framework to support those who tested positive to self-isolate. In addition, a detailed self-isolation booklet has been created (<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/covid-19/covid-19-self-isolation-support-pack.pdf>) which will also be printed and available in libraries and community centres too.
- Communications has been central to our response: for example, the council's communications and media team produced more than 330 general media releases and information bulletins in 2020/21 – an increase of 188% over the previous year. The first quarter of 2020/21 saw a 250% increase in proactive communication over the equivalent period in 2019/20. During the pandemic, the council provided more than 150 COVID briefings to members and MPs, and a similar number to all staff to give them the information they need to continue to deliver services. In January 2021, the council also introduced an e-newsletter for residents to receive COVID information by direct mail.
- The UK has made hundreds of laws in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, with four national lockdown laws covering each of the nations. With the help of our legal team, the Council has digested, interpreted, implemented, and communicated the changes required locally.
- £25m of un-ringfenced Support Grant has been allocated to date for the 2019/20 and 2020/21 financial years; and £3.5m has also been claimed so far under the Income Compensation Scheme. In addition, we have received specific grants of c.£250m.

While continuing to deliver essential local services

- Throughout the pandemic, the council has maintained key neighbourhood services for our residents. Ansa, the environmental services company wholly owned by the council, has maintained all kerbside waste and recycling collections when other local authorities have at times suspended one or more of their collections. The Household Waste and Recycling Centres were closed during the first national lockdown, but once they were able to re-open measures were quickly implemented to cope with the initial high level of demand and ensure staff and customers were kept safe.
- Orbitas Bereavement Services, another company wholly owned by the council, played a key role in delivering the council's excess death management plan, responding to increased demand for cremations during the first wave as well as ensuring services can take place in a Covid-secure environment to keep staff and mourners safe.
- In one of the coldest and wettest winters for many years, our Highways crews worked around the clock to keep routes safe.

- Our teams have worked tirelessly and hand-in-glove with schools and early years settings to ensure secure openings, good attendance, safe travel to and from and rapid testing. This has been done whilst keeping in focus achievement (A-level and GCSE grades). 94.89% in primary schools and 89.59% in secondary schools. This is 3% above the national attendance rate.
- COVID restriction required those staff who were able to work from home to do so. We moved quickly to enable staff and elected members to work and meet remotely. We host over 7,300 users and 4,500 daily connections across the IT Shared Services with Cheshire West and Chester.
- Our Democratic Services and IT Teams quickly put in place arrangements to allow remote formal meetings to take place as the norm, which has had a bonus of increased access for the public.
- The Registration Service has coped with significant challenges as a result of Covid-19 restrictions. In terms of marriages the restrictions relating to venues and numbers of guests changed multiple times. As well as the financial impact of lost income, staff have been dealing with couples who had to rearrange their plans, sometimes several times over. There has been some fantastic feedback about the flexibility of staff hurriedly rearranging ceremonies for couples in line with changing restrictions.
- Libraries and Leisure Centres have been required to close during the three national lockdowns and when they have been able to open their activities have been restricted. This led to the launch of new services to support people with their physical and mental wellbeing while at home during lockdown. For example: a new order and collect service for library books, a new home library service for customers unable to leave their home, online fitness classes, online Rhyme Times and Story Times, online Lego club, and online coffee and craft sessions.
- During periods of lockdown, colleagues from the library service and Everybody Sport and Recreation, the leisure trust who operate the council's leisure centres, have volunteered to help out in other ways including contacting clinically extremely vulnerable residents required to shield, supporting the payment of Covid-19 business grants, participating in the people helping people scheme, supporting mobile testing units for the re-opening of schools, and supporting the establishment of an emergency food distribution centre.

And protecting our most vulnerable

- Infection prevention and control within Care Homes and the weekly testing of care home staff has helped detect people who may not have symptoms and as a result reduces the risk of a serious outbreak. Numbers of care homes in

outbreak have reduced over the last month and as of 12 April, there were no homes with a Covid-19 outbreak.

- We appointed mental health champions to recognise the huge impact COVID can have.
- Over 22,600 vouchers have been distributed to families and young adults in need through the Winter Grant Scheme since the beginning of December. The grant is continuing to be used as intended - to offer practical support in the form of food and utilities payments for vulnerable children, young people, and adults, as agreed by Cabinet on 1 December. This has included provision of food vouchers for families eligible for free school meals over the Christmas period, February half term, and will also include the Easter holiday.
- The Benefits Team have continued to support our most vulnerable customers through the provision of the Council Tax Hardship Scheme for working age customers, development and delivery of the Self Isolation Payment Scheme and the ongoing delivery of the Emergency Assistance Scheme. They have provided expert advice and support to colleagues delivering additional hardship schemes including shielding support and Winter Grant Scheme.

Supporting our communities and local business

- We moved quickly to listen to and work with businesses, through the Business Helping Business initiative.
- To date over 31,000 grant payments have been made; providing more than £142 million to support business.
- Other support for business and economy, including (with partners) Macclesfield Recovery Plan.

COVID-19 continues to be a challenge for our borough and the Council. However, there is cause for optimism, with lower infection rates, good vaccination take-up and the careful re-opening of our services, businesses, towns, and villages. This is thanks to all the efforts and hard work of a huge number of people.

Thank you

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Working for a brighter future together

Key Decision: Y

Date First
Published: 18/1/21

Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 4th May 2021

Report Title: Household Waste Recycling Centre Provision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Laura Crane – Highways and Waste

Senior Officer: Frank Jordan - Executive Director Place

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. Cheshire East Council is responsible for the management of all household waste within the Borough. This means making reasonable provision for a range of waste management services which enable waste to be re-used, recycled or composted wherever possible, and only disposed of as the last option. Approximately 80% of household waste is collected from the kerbside. The remaining 20% is collected through our household waste recycling centres and bring banks.
- 1.2. Councils are required to provide Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) which are reasonably accessible to the public. These provide an important waste management service to enable householders to dispose of, and recycle, their excess waste responsibly. The council currently operates 8 centres across the borough. The current contract for the delivery of these services ends in March 2023. It is to be noted the current facility in Congleton operates on a site leased by the council which is due to expire in 2021. All other sites operate on land that is under the ownership of the council.
- 1.3. Minimising waste in the first place is by far the best environmental and economic solution to tackling waste management. The council's Municipal Waste Strategy, which was approved by Cabinet in 2014 (reviewed 2020), sets out the aims and objectives for the management of waste within the Borough. The strategy acknowledges the national policy direction and legislative pressure to minimise the overall amount of waste produced and to be more responsible in the way waste is managed. Furthermore, the council's Environment Strategy, which was approved by Cabinet in May 2020 has waste reduction as one of its strategic objectives.

- 1.4. To assist in the commissioning of a new contract the council has undertaken a review of the current service provision in the borough. This outlined that the current provision compares favourably with neighbouring and similar authorities to Cheshire East.
- 1.5. In November 2020, Cabinet considered the findings of this review and agreed that a public consultation on the options for the future pattern of provision for HWRCs should be undertaken. The consultation reported that most residents supported the option to keep the current service provision pattern. Notwithstanding the feedback, the lease on the Congleton HWRC site expires in 2021 and so a timely decision is required on future provision in Congleton.
- 1.6. A key consideration for the commissioning of these facilities from 2023 onwards will be the cost of running such facilities in the future which are expected to rise considerably owing to the volatility of the global market for recyclables. Furthermore, keeping the current pattern of service provision across the borough would require the council to fund the capital costs associated with replacing the current facility in Congleton. The costs of replacing this facility are estimated to be at least £4m. The council would need to finance this through borrowing and the repayments would lead to an annual cost of at least £250k over 25 years.
- 1.7. Therefore, this report seeks approval for a revised distribution of 7 HWRCs across the borough by confirming that Congleton HWRC will not be replaced when the lease at the current site expires this year. This would:
 - 1.7.1. Reduce the future running costs of the service, which are expected to rise, therefore improving value for money for the service in the future
 - 1.7.2. Avoid the council having to find a further £250k of revenue to cover the costs of capital associated with providing a facility in Congleton which is particularly relevant given the ongoing challenges to the council's finances
 - 1.7.3. Still enable the council to provide a pattern of service provision across the borough which more than meets the required minimum level
 - 1.7.4. Supports the council's Environment Strategy and Municipal Waste Strategy which both have strategic aims of reducing waste across the borough.
- 1.8. An environmental appraisal seeking to assess the impacts of proposed closure of Congleton HWRC is contained in Appendix 4 of this report. The report concludes that 'the residual impact of closing the Congleton HWRC ranges between minor beneficial to minor adverse' and makes a number of suggestions to reduce these impacts. The council will monitor usage and consider measures to improve traffic flow at Macclesfield and Alsager sites.

- 1.9. There is a risk that the revised distribution will not fully mitigate the increased cost of running the remaining HWRCs through the new contract. Once market testing of the new contract has been undertaken, it may be necessary to consider further the distribution of sites to deliver the service at an acceptable cost. However, these considerations would be subject to further consultation and a decision that would be taken under the committee system of governance.

2. Recommendations

2.1. That Cabinet:

- 2.1.1. Note the lease on the current Congleton Household Waste Recycling Centre expires in September 2021
- 2.1.2. Approve the procurement of the new contract and notes that a further decision will be sought to award the contract, confirm the distribution of Household Waste Recycling Centres and their cost.
- 2.1.3. Agree that the Congleton Household Waste Recycling Centre will not be replaced at this time whilst this procurement process outlined at 2.1.2 is undertaken and a decision is taken regarding the overall provision for the borough and as such the amount indicated in the addendum to the capital programme will remain.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. This decision would support the aims of the council's Environment Strategy and Municipal Waste Strategy in relation to waste reduction.
- 3.2. A new contract for the delivery of the Household Waste Recycling Centre service in the borough will need to be commissioned by the end of March 2023. It is anticipated that the cost of the new contract will increase significantly owing to volatility in the global market for recyclables.
- 3.3. The lease for the current Household Waste Recycling Centre in Congleton expires in September 2021. Not replacing the current facility in Congleton would reduce the future running cost of the HWRC service and so partly mitigate the anticipated increased cost of the new contract. Furthermore, it would avoid the cost associated with repaying the capital investment required to deliver a replacement facility at Congleton which is estimated to be £250k per annum.
- 3.4. It is acknowledged that this proposal could result in longer journeys for some residents and an increase in carbon emissions from those journeys. However, the council's Corporate Plan and Environment Strategy prioritise waste prevention, reduction and reuse over recycling and disposal, and so this may encourage residents to reduce the amount of waste they produce. Analysis of waste levels at surrounding sites following the closure of Arclid HWRC in October

2017 suggests that not all the waste was transferred to surrounding sites with no significant increase in fly tipping and hence an overall waste reduction.

- 3.5. The revised distribution of 7 HWRCs would result in 96% of Cheshire East households being able to reach a site within a 20-minute drive. There would be approximately one HWRC per 27,000 households and 54,400 residents which remain well within the WRAP guidelines set out below.
- 3.6. Given the level of coverage that would be provided if we moved to a 7 HWRC pattern and the costs associated with replacing the facility at Congleton it is not considered to represent good value for money to proceed with its construction. Furthermore, the construction of a new facility will have environmental impacts in itself.

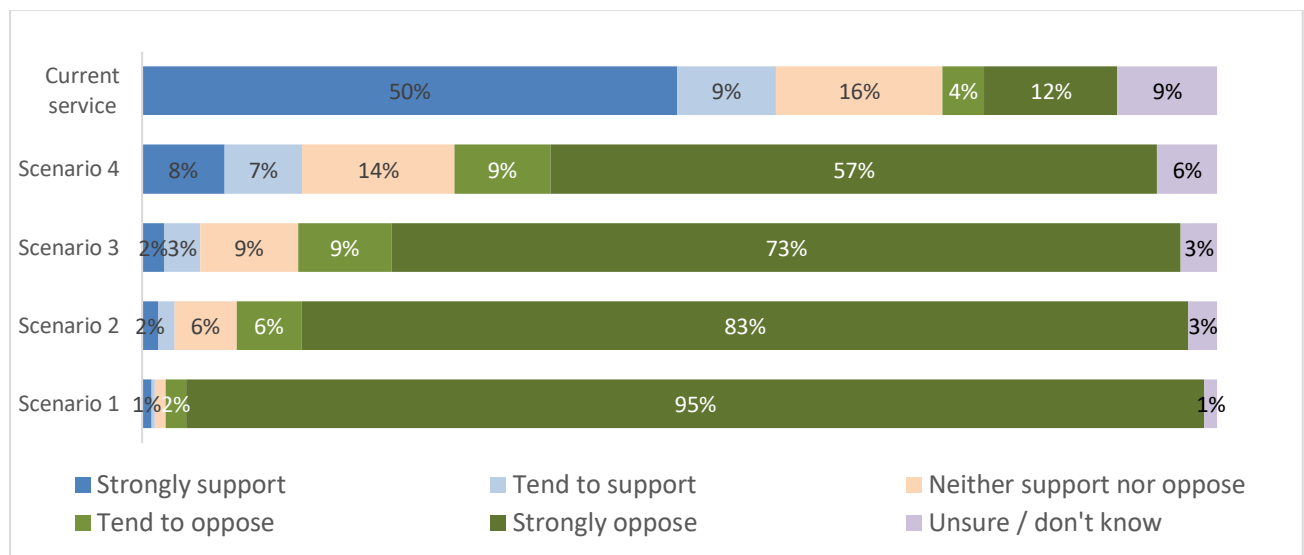
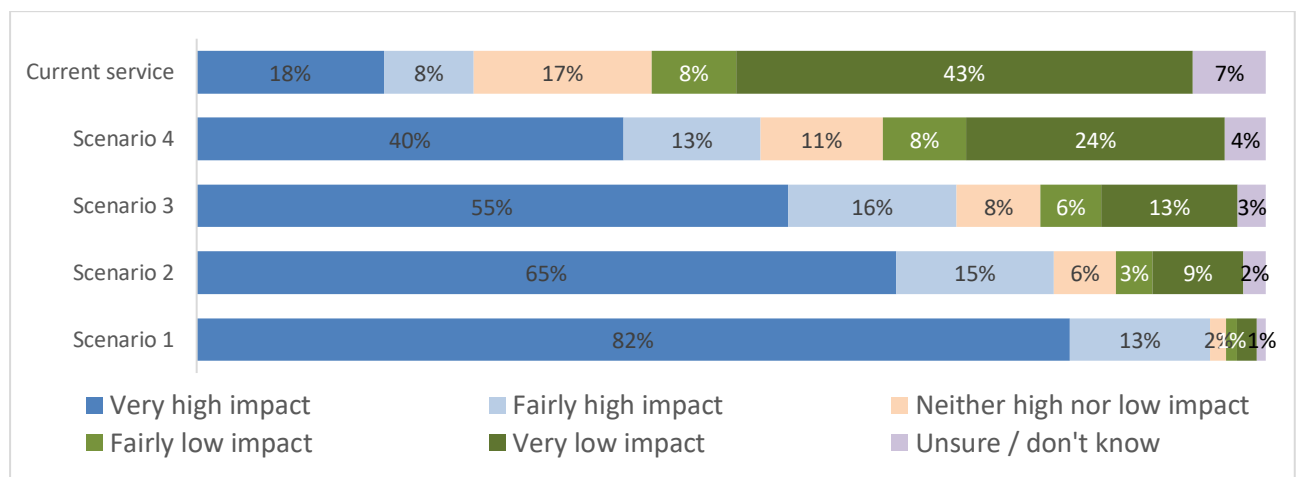
4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. There were a range of service provision options that were consulted on in the exercise undertaken.
- 4.2. The council could construct a replacement HWRC in Congleton, but this is estimated to cost in an initial appraisal of £3 - £3.26 million plus site acquisition costs. Cost would need to be further developed based on any site chosen at design stage. The annual cost of the capital investment would have to be met from the council's revenue budget. This would mean that savings would need to be found from elsewhere in the budget to accommodate this.

5. Background

- 5.1. The council has a statutory duty to provide Household Waste Recycling Centres free of charge and that are reasonably accessible to residents.
- 5.2. The council currently operates 8 Household Waste Recycling Centres in Alsager, Bollington, Congleton, Crewe, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Middlewich and Poynton. The delivery of the service is managed on behalf of the council by ANSA Environmental Services, a company wholly owned by the council, with site operations undertaken by HW Martin Ltd and the subcontracted Site Managers.
- 5.3. The current Household Waste Recycling Centre contract will end on March 31st 2023. A 5-year extension was actioned in 2018 and therefore there is no option to extend the current contract further.
- 5.4. The current facility in Congleton is on a site that is leased by the council. The owner of the site has informed the council that they will not consider a renewal of the lease. The replacement of such a facility is estimated to cost in an initial appraisal of £3 - £3.26 million plus site acquisition costs which would need to be funded from the capital programme with the annual cost of the capital investment having to be met from the council's revenue budget at an estimated £250k per annum.

- 5.5. An extensive review of the efficiency of the Household Waste Recycling Centres service in 2016 led to the closure of a site, a reduction in the opening hours, the introduction of a charge for disposing of rubble/construction waste and the opportunity for small traders to use our sites.
- 5.6. In order to prepare for the end of the contract the council commissioned a further review in 2020 to:
- Review the existing service, comparing it with neighbouring and similar authorities
 - Review the wider waste management market to examine existing contracts and delivery arrangements
 - Model a range of scenarios for the future shape of the household waste recycling centre contract.
- 5.7. It is to be noted that the Waste and Resources Action Partnership (WRAP) published an HWRC Guide in 2012 which recommended that the distribution of centres should:
- Be at 50,000 households per HWRC or less
 - Be at 120,000 residents per HWRC or less
 - Enable driving times to HWRCs to be up to 20 mins for the great majority of households in good traffic conditions (30 minutes in very rural areas).
- 5.8. In Cheshire East, the current provision equates to one HWRC per 24,000 households and 47,600 residents, more than twice the recommended distribution. 98% of households can reach a site within 20 minutes in normal traffic. The review highlighted that the current service also compares favourably with neighbouring and authorities that are similar to Cheshire East. This suggests that there is a potential over provision of sites within the borough.
- 5.9. Residents were consulted on the scenarios identified in the review and asked how they felt about the options being considered and what they considered the impact would be on them. Over 10,200 responses were received. As figures 1 and 2 show, most residents supported the option to keep the current service provision pattern.

Figure 1 How strongly do you support or oppose each option being considered**Figure 2 What impact would each option have on you personally?**

5.10. Respondents to the consultation were asked to provide comments on what the Council may need to consider as part of this review. The top themes emerging from the comments concerned the environmental impacts that closing sites may cause including fly tipping, increased carbon emissions from longer journeys, pollution and congestion from queuing to access sites, misuse of kerbside bin collections and reduction in recycling rates. Other concerns included the increased time it would take to travel to an alternate site; increased difficulty for the elderly and people with disabilities; and increase in demand due to new houses being built.

5.11. In addressing residents' concerns highlighted in the consultation, an environmental appraisal has been undertaken which can be found in appendix four to this paper. The report concludes that 'the residual impact of closing the

Congleton HWRC ranges between minor beneficial to minor adverse¹ and summarises the impacts in the table below:

SEA Objective	Assessment	Impact	Possible Mitigation	Residual Impact
Population & Human Health Material Assets	Transportation	Moderate Adverse	Bring sites. The management of fairer access systems.	Minor Adverse
Air Quality Population & Human Health	Air Quality	Neutral	N/A	Neutral to Minor Beneficial
Climate Factors	Climate Change	Moderate Adverse	Bring sites. Infrastructure Improvements.	Minor Adverse
Population & Human Health	Amenity	Neutral	Signage and CCTV	Neutral
Employment Social Inclusion	Socio Economic	Minor Adverse	Redeployment and infrastructure improvements.	Neutral
Population & Human Health Material Assets	Future Demand & Recycling	Minor Adverse	Bring sites. The management of fairer access systems. Wider infrastructure improvements.	Neutral

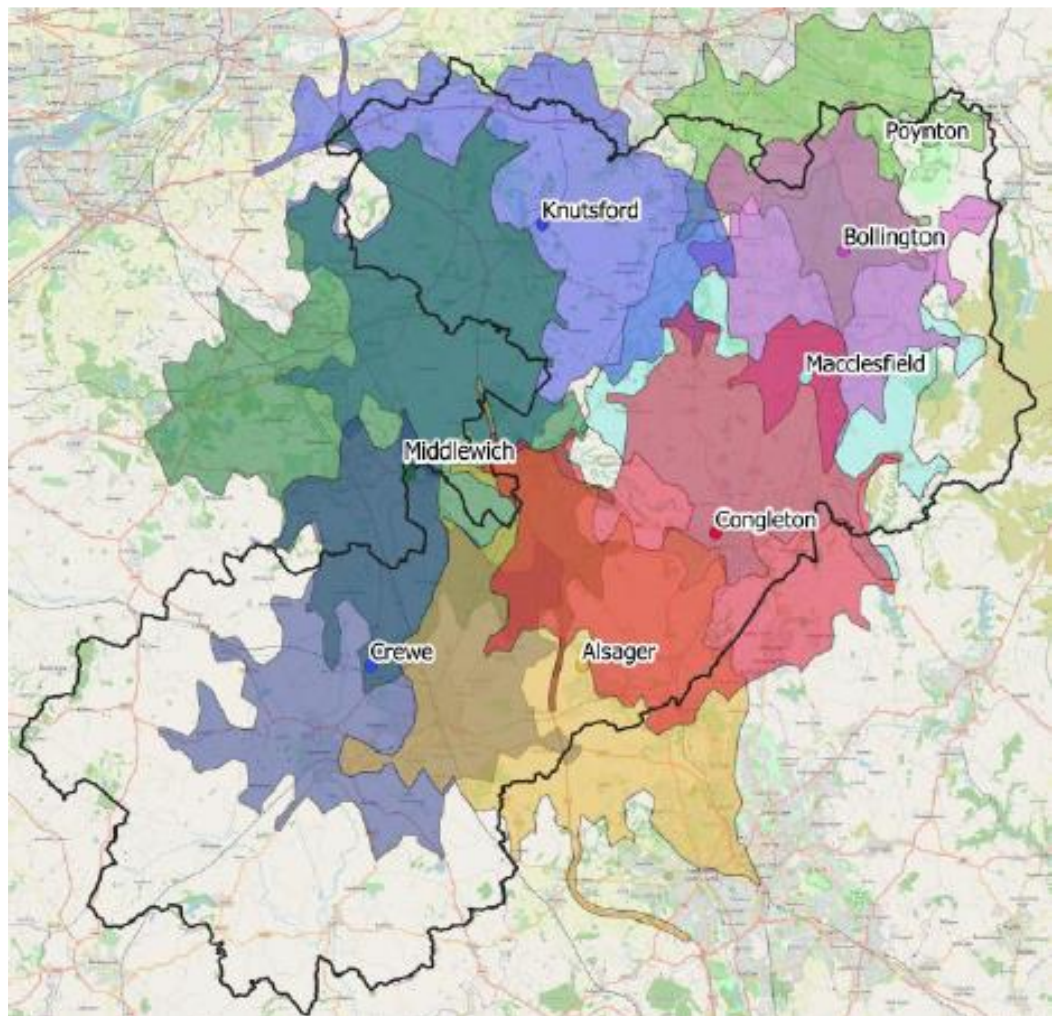
5.12. The appraisal proposes a number of mitigation measures to limit the impacts of closing Congleton. These consist of the provision of additional bring sites in locations 8km or more from the alternate HWRC; CCTV and signage at Congleton, on closure, to deter against fly tipping; managing fairer access and to monitor the effects of the closure; review potential to redeploy staff; and review of progress of improvements outlined within the Waste Strategy. The Council will monitor usage and consider measures to minimise congestion at Macclesfield and Alsager sites and look to introduce a change in traffic flow within the site boundary at Macclesfield to accommodate any further traffic. It is noted however that existing covid social distancing measures at our centres is creating longer queues at some peak times that would not be expected in normal operational times.

5.13. Notwithstanding these risks, the key consideration in relation to the future service provision is the future costs of running HWRCs. It is anticipated that the cost of the new contract will increase owing to volatility in the market for

¹ Resource Futures, *Environmental Appraisal of closure of Congleton HWRC* (2021) p 39

recyclables. Not replacing the current facility in Congleton would deliver a reduction in the future contract cost of the HWRC service. Furthermore, it would avoid the cost associated with repaying the capital investment required to deliver a new facility at Congleton which is currently estimated to be £250k per annum.

- 5.14. If Congleton HWRC were not replaced the nearest alternative sites would be in Alsager and Macclesfield. As the map below illustrates, there is currently significant overlap in catchment areas in this area of the borough. Alsager or Macclesfield HWRC are within a 15 minute drive time for the majority of Congleton households.



Current HWRC network and 15-minute drive times

- 5.15. The closure of Congleton HWRC would result in 96% of Cheshire East households being able to reach a site within a 20 minute drive. There would be approximately one HWRC per 27,000 households and 54,400 residents which remain well within the WRAP guidelines set out in 5.7 above.
- 5.16. However, there is a risk that the proposed closure of Congleton HWRC will not fully mitigate the future increased contract cost of operating the remaining

HWRCs. Once market testing of the new contract has been undertaken, it may be necessary to consider further rationalisation and review to ensure the service can be delivered within the available budget.

5.17. In addition, the new service will investigate technological solutions to ensure a fair use policy such as use of number plate recognition to ensure sites are accessed by Cheshire East residents only. The service will also investigate the potential of a mobile 'pop up' household waste service provision to provide fairer access to waste disposal for communities who are currently disadvantaged. There are examples such as North Yorkshire County Council and Conway County Borough Council providing a mobile service to rural areas which could be a model for our future service provision.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. Legal Implications

6.1.1. Councils must provide Household Waste Recycling Centres. Under [Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990](#)... it shall be the duty of each waste disposal authority to arrange ... for places to be provided at which *persons resident in its area* may deposit *their* household waste (1) (b). They must be reasonably accessible to persons resident in its area (2) (a), open at reasonable times, including Saturday and available *free of charge by persons resident in the area* (2) (c)

6.2. Finance Implications

6.2.1. It is anticipated that the cost associated with running HWRCs will increase owing to volatility in the market for recyclables. At this stage it is to be noted that the future cost of a contract is a future financial risk and will not be known until a new contract has been awarded. Therefore, the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 22/23 onwards will need to reflect the anticipated increase in costs for the 2023/24 financial year together with proposals on how the overall budget can be balanced.

6.2.2. The Council's MTFS Capital Addendum contains £4 million for the construction of a new Congleton site, however projects in the capital addendum are still subject to business case approval, in particular considering how the cost of the capital investment would be repaid.

6.3. Policy Implications

6.3.1. Household Waste and Recycling Centres support the vision within the Corporate Plan for an open, fairer, greener Cheshire East. The service helps to protect and enhance our environment by enabling the responsible recycling and disposal of waste. The proposal to investigate the feasibility of a mobile 'pop up' household waste service provision will help to provide fairer access to the service for all.

6.4. Equality Implications

- 6.4.1. An equality Impact assessment has been undertaken and is included in Appendix 3. The closure of Congleton HWRC will impact all households and residents that currently use the site. Residents will need to travel further to dispose of their recycling and waste. However, the impact will be the same for all users because all must currently drive to their nearest HWRC as the current service does not accommodate residents who have no vehicle access. The new service will seek to provide greater access through additional bring sites and a potential new mobile service.
- 6.4.2. Concerns were raised in the consultation that the issues of age and disability would impact their ability to drive further to access their nearest HWRC. Not replacing the Congleton site will result in the proportion of residents travelling less than 20 minutes to their nearest HWRC reducing from 98% to 96%. This is within national guidelines for the provision of household waste recycling centres and considered an acceptable coverage. Furthermore, the existing Congleton site contains stepped access to skips and by directing residents to alternative single level sites in Alsager and Macclesfield, access for the elderly and people with disabilities is improved.

6.5. Human Resources Implications

- 6.5.1. The proposal has no effect on Cheshire East and Ansa staffing but may result in staff implications for the household waste centre contactor.

6.6. Risk Management Implications

- 6.6.1. There is a risk that following soft market testing an alternative operator will not deliver what we are seeking but we will address this through a thorough commissioning and procurement process that will ensure a quality service.
- 6.6.2. Concerns were raised in the consultation concerning a potential increase in fly-tipping. The environmental appraisal notes that there is no evidence that the closure of a household waste recycling centre leads to an increase in litter and fly-tipping. A minor adverse effect has been assumed in the short term if members of the public drive to Congleton and find the site closed, fly tipping instead of travelling to an alternate site. This will be mitigated through CCTV and signage at Congleton once the site closes to deter against fly tipping.

6.7. Rural Communities Implications

- 6.7.1. Travel times for some rural residents will increase and though these are within acceptable limits in line with national guidance. The Council recognises this possibility and will seek to provide alternative, mobile facilities in the new contract.

6.8. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

6.8.1. There are no implications for children and young people.

6.9. Public Health Implications

6.9.1. The Council recognises that some residents will be required to make longer journeys to access a centre, thus increasing vehicle emissions, but anticipate that because of the greater distances that residents will make fewer journeys. The environmental appraisal identifies that in overall terms, based on the information available, it is considered the effect on local air quality from vehicle emissions to be neutral to minor beneficial impact, based on the reduction of 2 HGV collections per day that would no longer be required.

6.10. Climate Change Implications

6.10.1. Given the significant change in recycling since the previous contract was procured, we anticipate that site performance will be improved and the opportunity to reuse and recycle enhanced.

6.10.2. The environmental appraisal has assumed a complete re-distribution of trips across the network as a worst case, in reality (prior to any mitigation measures being employed) the number of trips is likely to reduce with residents making fewer trips but with larger quantities of materials. Notwithstanding this, overall, the development will have a moderate adverse effect as it will result in higher carbon emissions associated with transport emissions than if the HWRC remained open.

7. Ward Members Affected

7.1. Wards affected

- Congleton East – Cllrs D Brown, R Moreton, D Murphy
- Congleton West – Cllrs S Akers Smith, G Hayes and S Holland

8. Consultation & Engagement

8.1. A full borough wide consultation was carried out in which a range of options for future service provision were considered – there were over 10,000 responses.

9. Access to Information

9.1. The review of the Cheshire East HWRC Network is provided as appendix 1.

9.2. The Consultation report is provided as appendix 2.

9.3. The Equality Impact Assessment is provided as appendix 3.

9.4. The Environmental Appraisal is provided as appendix 4.

- 9.5. The Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2030 and Household Waste and Recycling Centres Review can be accessed from the Council website:

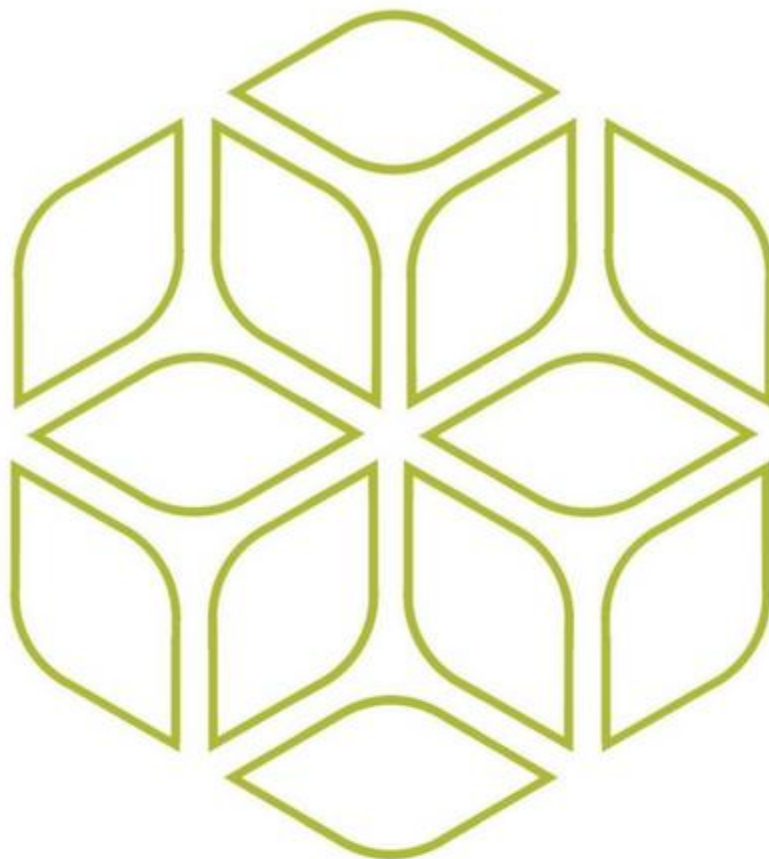
[Waste strategy and performance \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/waste-strategy-and-performance)

10. Contact Information

- 10.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

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Review of Cheshire East Council HWRC network

Cheshire East Council
July 2020

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Resource Futures was commissioned to carry out an update to a previous review and consider the options available to the Council for the future shape of the household waste recycling centre contract. With the contract ending in early 2023 the Council sought independent expert advice on the ways forward. CEC is aware that the current contract cannot simply be replicated and that national and international changes in the waste sector need to be considered. The volatility of the recycling market has severely impacted the planned income from these materials, and therefore future contracts may incur higher costs. The Council is seeking to understand the best contract model.

Contract procurement options

A comparison of the performance of the current contract alongside neighbouring and similar authorities recognised the range of contracts that are available; an evaluation of some working options was carried out. It is important to acknowledge that any contract options are going to be affected by the recent government Resources and Waste Strategy and the legislation which will result from it. The legislative environment means that the conditions within the waste management sector will be uncertain until at least 2023, when the majority of the initiatives are due to be implemented. Additionally, the situation on the international material markets means that the prices of materials are currently low. This suggests that the contractors bidding for any HWRC contract will be cautious while Local Authorities will need to build flexibility into contracts, which is likely to result in additional costs to operate services.

The analysis of the options available to the Council reveals that there are a number of key points that officers will need to consider before commencing the procurement process including appetite for risk, utilising the LA owned company, partnership work with the neighbouring authorities and the investment in infrastructure needed. The different operating models all have pros and cons so it is not possible to recommend one over another. In any case, it will be crucial to ensure that any future procurement exercise and contract documents (specification, payment mechanisms and incentives/penalties) are clearly set out to ensure best value is achieved for the Council.

Comparing the current service

To provide an informed understanding of the current service provision and its performance, a comparison was made with neighbouring authority sites and authorities that are similar to Cheshire East. On many of the measures used the provision is clearly highly rated and compares favourably, however with the contract due for renewal there is a need to ensure that the service is fit for purpose. The previous review revealed that the service provision was generous and therefore in order to determine the most efficient combinations of sites, Resource Futures was tasked with modelling four different scenarios that involved the closure of some sites. Could the Council operate more effectively by operating fewer improved sites and still deliver the same level of service?

Table E 1 below shows the scenarios modelled.

Table E 1 Network options scenarios

Site	Current	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
Alsager	✓		✓	✓	✓
Bollington	✓			✓	✓
Congleton	✓				
Crewe	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Knutsford	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Macclesfield	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Middlewich	✓				✓
Poynton	✓				

Impact on distance and travel times

The current provision offers the best coverage in terms of the shortest drive times for residents, as indicated in the table below, however both scenario 3 and 4 offer 96% of all properties less than a 20-minute drive to their nearest HWRC. In scenario 3 and 4, only 4% of households are required to drive for more than 20 minutes to reach their nearest site and in scenario 4, the majority (96%) are able to reach their nearest HWRC within 20 minutes by car.

Table E 2 Proportion of households in each of the drive time bands for each scenario

Scenario	Proportion of Households				
	Less than 5 minutes	Less than 10 minutes	Less than 15 minutes	Less than 20 minutes	More than 20 minutes
Current	22%	63%	91%	98%	2%
Scenario 1	11%	37%	68%	88%	12%
Scenario 2	13%	43%	78%	93%	7%
Scenario 3	15%	48%	82%	96%	4%
Scenario 4	17%	52%	86%	96%	4%

The analysis shows that a reduction in the number of sites, whilst having a localised impact, does not present a problem for the vast majority of residents. This understanding informs the preparation of the contract procurement since there may need to be flexibility within the contract to accommodate a reduction in sites if this is shown to be the most effective means of delivering a high-quality service. It is unlikely that the number of sites is a factor in how attractive the contract is to the market. The key considerations in the short term will be connected to the material markets and how this will impact the affordability of the contract.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Cheshire East HWRC network

Cheshire East Council (CEC) is a unitary Authority with a population of 370,100 and an area of 116,638 hectares. The Borough was created in April 2009 when Cheshire County Council and all borough councils within the County ceased to exist and was replaced by Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Unitary authorities.

The Council operates 8 Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC). The delivery of the HWRC service is currently managed on behalf of Cheshire East Council by ANSA Environmental Services, a company wholly owned by Cheshire East Council, with site operations being undertaken under contract by HW Martin Ltd and the subcontracted Site Managers. The Site Managers are responsible for employing and managing site staff, provision of adequate Certificate of Technical Competence cover on site, site security and site cleanliness. The individual site managers are also responsible for the provision of suitable containers for the collection and storage of non-ferrous metal and reusable bric-a-brac, and a significant part of their payment for operating the sub contract comes from the right to remove and sell this non-ferrous material and bric-a-brac. HW Martin retain responsibility for ensuring the HWRC are operated in line with contract requirements, and for providing outlets for all material deposited at the site, bar the aforementioned reusable material, non-ferrous metal, and non-recyclable material, (which HW Martin are paid to haul to disposal sites operating under the Council's primary waste disposal contract). This contract is in place until March 2023.

In 2016 Resource Futures was commissioned to carry out a review of the service and as a result of this work the Council implemented the following changes to the service provision:

- Site closure (Arclid)
- Reducing hours at all sites from an average of 10 to 8 hours per day
- Introducing a rubble/construction waste charge that has resulted in total throughput at sites dropping by 25%
- The opportunity for smaller traders to deposit rubble at the Council's sites

1.2 Cheshire East Municipal Waste Management Strategy

In 2014 CEC published a Municipal Waste Management Strategy, identifying how it plans to manage waste up to 2030. The Strategy included a recommendation to undertake a review of the HWRC network and identified that less than 20% of the borough's household waste is taken to the HWRCs. An objective of the Strategy was to maintain the role of HWRCs in collecting bulkier wastes and maximising the recycling and re-use of these items. It also indicated that CEC *"will examine the use of Third Sector Organisations as potential off takers for the re-use of bulky waste and WEEE collected at HWRCs"*. The Strategy also suggested that CEC investigates the management of commercial and industrial waste through provision of a dedicated commercial waste recycling centre in order to meet CEC's aspirations of serving the business community and improving overall waste management. Re-use and commercial waste were therefore considered within the 2016 review resulting in the acceptance of rubble/construction waste from small traders at all sites. This was deemed to be a more cost effective action than creating a single site dedicated to trade.

In 2020 the Council carried out a review of the Waste Management Strategy, taking into account the Government's Resources and Waste Strategy. The review was due to be consulted with the public, but this is currently put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The review included two updated targets which are particularly pertinent to HWRCs:

- *Having exceeded the national targets for recycling of 50% by 2020, to work towards the new national target of 65% by 2035.* HWRCs will need to contribute to achieving this target.
- *To utilise waste that cannot be reused or recycled as a resource for energy generation.* The sites are separating the residual material delivered by the residents to ensure that the bulky waste items can be shredded and sent for energy recovery.

1.3 Aims and objectives of this review

Resource Futures was commissioned to carry out an update to the previous review and consider the options that are available to the Council for the future shape of the HWRC contract. With the contract ending in early 2023 the Council sought independent expert advice on the ways forward. CEC is aware that the current model has been superseded by others, whose contracts are not based on the income from commodities as a key element. This is an important change as the volatility of the recycling market has severely impacted the planned income from these materials, and therefore future contracts are likely to incur higher costs. The Council is seeking to understand the best contract model based on the scenarios below.

Key objectives are therefore:

1. Modelling the scenarios identified by Cheshire East Council. The scenarios include:

- Scenario 1 - Keeping 3 key sites open. Crewe, Macclesfield and Knutsford and therefore closing Congleton, Poynton, Bollington, Alsager and Middlewich
- Scenario 2 – Keeping 4 sites open. Crewe, Macclesfield, Knutsford and Alsager
- Scenario 3 - Keeping 5 sites open. Crewe, Macclesfield, Knutsford, Bollington and Alsager
- Scenario 4 – Keeping 6 sites open, closing Poynton and Congleton

The analysis of the scenarios will help the Council understand the impact on the remaining sites in terms of throughput and traffic, the impact on residents in terms of site provision and drive times as well as any legislative or statutory implications.

Additionally, the review will help the Council understand how the services compare with the geographic and demographic neighbours. The review will identify how services could be improved and the potential for increased income.

2. Determining viable contract options from the analysis included in the review. This will assist the Council in assessing the future market and legislative situation and the impact of these on services as well as the contracts and procurement options.

2 Baseline

2.1 Current HWRC provision levels

The Council has a statutory duty to provide sites at which residents can deposit their household waste free of charge and that are reasonably accessible to residents. The legislation does not specify how many sites

an authority should provide and therefore the responsible authority is able to determine what is reasonably accessible based on local circumstances.

The Waste and Resources Action Partnership (WRAP) published an HWRC Guide in 2012, which identified guidance for the level of provision of HWRCs, these were:

- Maximum catchment for a large proportion of the population of 3-5 miles (7 miles in very rural areas)
- Maximum driving times for the great majority of residents in good traffic conditions of twenty minutes (30 minutes in very rural areas)
- Maximum number of inhabitants per HWRC of 120,000
- Maximum number of households per HWRC of 50,000

In Cheshire East, there are currently eight sites at Alsager, Bollington, Congleton, Crewe, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Middlewich and Poynton. This equates to one site for approximately 24,000 households and one site for every 47,600 inhabitants. 76% of residents are within 5 miles of an HWRC and over 98% can reach a site within 20 minutes in normal traffic. Taking account of the guidelines above, CEC currently has a sufficient provision of HWRCs to fulfil its statutory duty.

2.2 Current performance

The following Figure 1 shows the performance of the HWRC network between 2017 and 2020. The impact of the introduction of the rubble charges in January 2018 can be clearly seen in the significant decrease in the quantity of the material presented at the HWRC network. This therefore led to a decrease in the recycling rate (incl. rubble). However further analysis of the data (removing rubble from the calculation as shown by the dark blue line) shows a more general decline in the recycling rates across the network from 65% in 2016/17 to 61% in 2019/20.

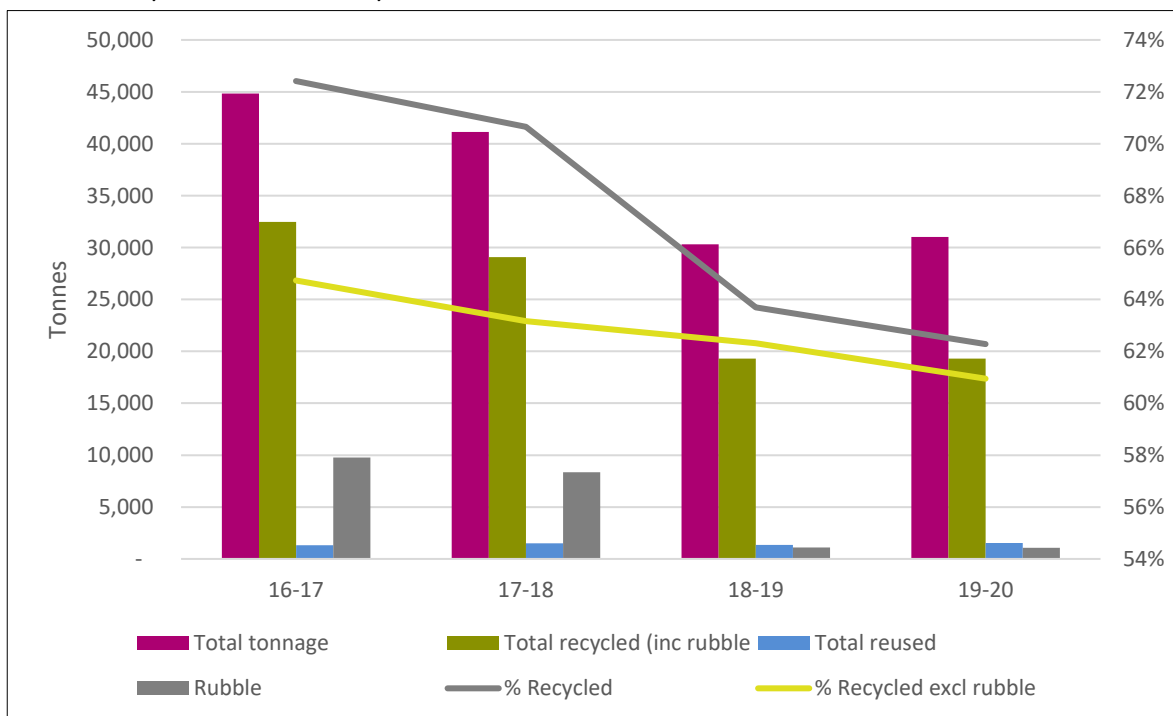


Figure 1 HWRC network performance between 2016/17 and 2019/20

2.3 Users

A user count was carried out in May and June 2020 following the reopening of sites, after the pandemic restrictions had been lifted. The results are shown in Table 1 below. Crewe, Knutsford, Macclesfield and Alsager had the highest footfall.

Table 1 Average users per day per site

Site	Average no of users per day
Alsager	304
Bollington	175
Congleton	186
Crewe	419
Knutsford	325
Macclesfield	303
Middlewich	172
Poynton	206
Total	2,090

3 Benchmarking

CEC was benchmarked with both neighbouring and similar authorities with the results provided below. Further detail is referenced in the following section and provided in Appendix A.

3.1 Neighbouring authorities

HWRC sites in six neighbouring local authorities were selected for benchmarking based on their proximity to the border with CEC. The neighbouring authorities are:

- Cheshire West and Chester
- Warrington Borough Council
- Greater Manchester WDA (incl. Manchester, Stockport, Trafford)
- Derbyshire County Council (incl. High Peak Borough Council)
- Staffordshire County Council (incl. Staffordshire Moorlands, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council)
- Shropshire

According to the 2018/19 national HWRC directory CEC has the second highest HWRC recycling rate excluding rubble (66.7%), following Warrington (71.0%). In terms of throughput, CEC has the second lowest annual tonnage, coinciding with a 25% drop from the previous year. Throughput per household is middle of the range (180kg/hh/yr.); with Shropshire and Greater Manchester residents producing the most HWRC waste (276 kg/hh/yr.). Both CEC and Cheshire West and Chester have the highest number of sites per 100,000 population (2.1 sites), when compared with the neighbouring authorities.

A summary of key policies and opening times are detailed in Table 2. All authorities enforce vehicle restrictions, largely related to vehicle payload and length. Shropshire enforces a similar permit scheme to CEC for vans or larger vehicles, while Warrington issues permits either for vans with large amounts of

household waste, or where non-household waste is being disposed of. Both Greater Manchester and Warrington allow only a certain number of visits per year, with the former restricting frequency based on vehicle type. Only Staffordshire requires residents to pay for disposal of rubble, plasterboard and soil type wastes, though most authorities state that only small DIY projects can be accepted. Greater Manchester and some sites in Staffordshire cannot accept plasterboard and asbestos.

HWRC opening times are varied across the authorities. Cheshire West and Chester, Warrington, Greater Manchester, and Derbyshire all provide at least one site with opening times similar to or greater than CEC. The Chester, Ellesmere Port and Winsford recycling centres, within Cheshire West, provide 12-hour opening times during weekdays in the summer months.

Table 2 HWRC policies and opening times of neighbouring authorities

Authority	Vehicle restrictions	Residents Permit	Limits on non-household waste	Opening Times	Trade Waste Accepted?	DIY Charges
Cheshire East	Yes	Yes, for vans or trailers	Small DIY projects only, charges applicable. No gas cylinders or tyres. Asbestos at Pym's Lane Crewe or Danes Moss Macclesfield only.	Seven days a week; 8:30am-5pm April-September, 8:30am-4pm October-March.	Yes, limited quantities of rubble from small traders	Hardcore/rubble/soil/ceramic/glass & plasterboard = £3.60 per bag, per sheet or individual item.
Cheshire West & Chester	Yes	No except for Neston, due to location near council boundary.	Cannot accept asbestos, gas cylinders, tyres.	3x sites open seven days a week: Summer months 8am-8pm weekdays, 8am-6pm weekends. Winter months 8am-4pm every day. 4x sites open five days a week (midweek closing). Summer months 9am-5pm. Winter months 8am-4pm.	No – separate centre allocated for trade waste next to Chester Site.	No
Warrington Borough Council	Yes	Yes, for non-household waste, or when using van for large amounts of household waste.	Requires permit with list of items, regardless of vehicle. Up to three visits in 12-month period. Can't accept car tyres or vehicle parts, fire extinguishers, gas bottles, hazardous or flammable liquids or chemicals, pallets.	Gatewarth: Seven days a week; 8am-6pm Stockton Heath / Woolston: Seven days a week; 10am-4pm weekdays, 8am-6pm weekends (Stockton Heath: 8am-4pm weekends in winter months).	No	No
Greater Manchester WDA	Yes	No	No asbestos, plasterboard (both to be taken to waste transfer facility) or food waste.	Seven days a week; 8am-6pm	No	No
Derbyshire County Council	Yes	No	No car parts except tyres (max 4), large tree branches, large items of fitted furniture, greenhouses, sheds, fencing, decking, Christmas cards or wrapping paper. Plasterboard – max. 50kg per visit per week, whole sheets not accepted. Asbestos – 2x roofing sheets or 2m downpipe.	Seven days a week; 8:30am-6pm	No	No

Authority	Vehicle restrictions	Residents Permit	Limits on non-household waste	Opening Times	Trade Waste Accepted?	DIY Charges
Staffordshire County Council	Yes	No	DIY only. Charges applicable to some items. No car parts (except tyres/batteries), animal carcasses, petrol or diesel. No plasterboard at Cheadle or Newcastle. No engine oil at Newcastle. Although usually accepted at Leek, asbestos is not currently permitted. Restricted to 4 sheets or 4 bags per household every six months.	Newcastle-under-Lyme: Five days a week (midweek closing), 9am-5pm. In summer months, 9am-6pm weekdays. Staffordshire Moorlands - Biddulph: Five days a week (Mon/Tue closed), 9am-6pm. In winter months, 9am-4:30pm. Leek: Seven days a week, 9am-5pm (in summer months, 9am-6pm weekdays). Cheadle: Five days a week (midweek closing), 9am-5pm (in summer months, 9am-6pm weekdays).	No	Rubble/bricks/concrete/glass/gravel/ceramic/sand/slate/soil/stone/tarmac/turf/tiles & fibreglass - £3 per bag or large item. Plasterboard - £4 per bag or sheet. Tyres - £4 per tyre.
Shropshire	Yes	Yes, for cars with large trailers, vans and 4x4s with goods body, long-term hire commercial vehicles.	Small DIY only. Asbestos requires notification prior to visit.	Seven days a week; 9am-5pm	No	No

3.2 Similar authorities

In order to benchmark the current CEC HWRC operation we have identified five target authorities using Office of National Statistics (ONS) area classification data which uses 59 key variables of demographic and socio-economic factors to rank the similarity of local authorities across the UK. The most similar authorities to CEC are identified as:

- Cheshire West & Chester
- Tewkesbury
- Stroud
- Stafford
- Monmouth

For authorities that are waste collection authorities only (Tewkesbury, Stroud and Stafford), HWRC data for the disposal authorities (Gloucestershire and Staffordshire) has been used.

According to the 2018/19 National HWRC Directory, CEC has the highest HWRC recycling rate excluding rubble when compared to the similar authorities. CEC's throughput per household is second lowest amongst the group (180kg/hh/yr.), following Staffordshire (175kg/hh/yr.). Monmouthshire in comparison, had a throughput per household of 492kg/hh/yr., and provides double the amount of sites per 100,000 population (4.2.) when compared to CEC (2.1 sites).

A summary of key policies and opening times are detailed in Table 3. Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire normally use a similar permit scheme to CEC for vans and trailers, though both are currently enforcing a pre-booking system in light of Covid-19 restrictions. Both Gloucestershire and Staffordshire will accept tyres and batteries but not car parts, and also mention that they will not accept petrol or diesel. All authorities accept plasterboard, rubble and soil, as long as it is for DIY only and not trade waste, with only Staffordshire charging for the disposal of these items. Monmouthshire explicitly states that DIY waste is restricted to five bags or one small car boot load per visit, with a maximum of two visits per month.

The majority of sites have shorter opening times compared to CEC, with Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire and some Cheshire West sites opening for five or six days per week.

Table 3 HWRC policies and opening times of similar authorities

Authority	Vehicle restrictions	Residents Permit	Limits on non-household waste	Opening Times	Trade Waste Accepted?	DIY Charges
Cheshire East	Yes	Yes, for vans or trailers	Small DIY projects only, charges applicable. No gas cylinders or tyres. Asbestos at Pym's Lane Crewe or Danes Moss Macclesfield only.	Seven days a week; 8:30am-5pm. April-September, 8:30am-4pm October-March.	Yes, limited quantities of rubble from small traders	Hardcore/rubble/soil/ceramic/glass & plasterboard = £3.60 per bag, per sheet or individual item.
Cheshire West & Chester	Yes	No except for Neston, due to location near council boundary.	Cannot accept asbestos, gas cylinders, tyres.	3x sites open seven days a week: Summer months 8am-8pm weekdays, 8am-6pm weekends. Winter months 8am-4pm every day. 4x sites open five days a week (midweek closing). Summer months 9am-5pm. Winter months 8am-4pm.	No – separate centre allocated for trade waste next to Chester Site.	No
Gloucestershire County Council (Tewkesbury, Stroud)	Yes	Normally for vans. Booking system now in force for all visits due to Covid-19.	Cannot accept ammunition, flares, animal carcasses, car parts (except tyres/batteries), clinical waste, petrol or diesel, invasive or poisonous plant species, large items such as septic or heating tanks. Asbestos must be pre-booked.	Six days a week (mid-week closing). 9am-5pm.	No	No
Staffordshire County Council (Stafford)	Yes	No	DIY only. Charges applicable to some items. No car parts (except tyres/batteries), animal carcasses, petrol or diesel. Although usually accepted, asbestos is not currently permitted due to Covid-19. Restricted to 4 sheets or 4 bags per household every six months.	Seven days a week; 9am-5pm. In summer months, 9am-6pm weekdays.	No	Rubble/bricks/concrete/glass/gravel/ceramic/sand/slate/soil/stone/tarmac/turf/tiles & fibreglass - £3 per bag or large item. Plasterboard - £4 per bag or sheet. Tyres - £4 per tyre.
Monmouthshire County Council	Yes	Normally for vans. Booking system now in force for all visits due to Covid-19.	DIY waste restricted to five bags or small car boot load per visit, with maximum of two visits per month. No asbestos.	Six days a week (midweek closing); 8am-5pm. Covid: Key worker times: 8am-9am.	No	No

3.3 Benchmarking findings

The findings of the benchmarking with neighbouring and similar authorities suggest that:

- In terms of rubble/construction type wastes, only Staffordshire charges residents for disposal similar to CEC. Monmouthshire and Derbyshire do provide limits on the amount of waste that can be disposed, but most authorities are less explicit, asking only that small DIY wastes be brought to recycling centres.
- Most of the comparable authorities require some form of residential permit for vans, but not all.
- The majority of authorities accept asbestos but impose either limit to the amount that can be disposed or ask that site visits are pre-booked. Safe handling and bagging or wrapping of materials is advised in all cases.
- CEC is amongst the authorities which provide longer opening times. There are however three sites within Cheshire West which are open for 12 hours each weekday during the summer.

4 Scenario spatial analysis showing drive times and distances for residents

Spatial analysis has been completed to understand the distance residents need to travel to the nearest HWRC and the drive times for residents within Cheshire East. A number of scenarios were modelled to consider the impact of closing two or more sites. All calculations assume that residents are likely to visit their closest site in Cheshire East. The analysis does not include HWRCs outside the Cheshire East boundary.

Table 4 Sites included within each scenario (✓ denotes site remains open in the scenario)

Site	Current	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
Alsager	✓		✓	✓	✓
Bollington	✓			✓	✓
Congleton	✓				
Crewe	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Knutsford	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Macclesfield	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Middlewich	✓				✓
Poynton	✓				

The scenarios were chosen by CEC to represent different levels of HWRC provision, ranging from just two site closures in scenario 4, to a network of only three sites. Detailed results of the spatial analysis are included in Appendix B with the key points discussed below.

At present, with eight HWRCs, 98% of householders can reach a site within twenty minutes. Analysis indicates that more than 78% of all households could drive to an HWRC in less than fifteen minutes in all of the scenarios modelled, (with the exception of the scenario whereby only the core sites of Crewe, Knutsford and Macclesfield remain open). This suggests that there is a potential over provision of sites

within the authority and closure of up to three sites would not have a significant impact upon the majority of the population. Reducing the number of HWRCs to only three sites would mean that approximately 12% of households would have to drive more than 20 minutes to reach a HWRC. CEC may deem this to be acceptable given the WRAP guidance suggest that the great majority of residents are twenty minutes (30 minutes in very rural areas) away.

Drive time analysis has been used as a proxy for which sites a householder is most likely to use. Of course, convenience and preference will also play a role. However, assuming householders use their nearest sites, 67% of CEC households use Alsager, Crewe, Knutsford or Macclesfield. 7% of households use Poynton HWRC, 8% use Middlewich HWRC and both Bollington and Congleton are used by 9% of households. Previous analysis has shown that the proximity of sites within neighbouring authorities means that approximately 8% of households are closer to a site outside of CEC. The map below shows the locations of the HWRCs and the current overlap of 15-minute drive times.

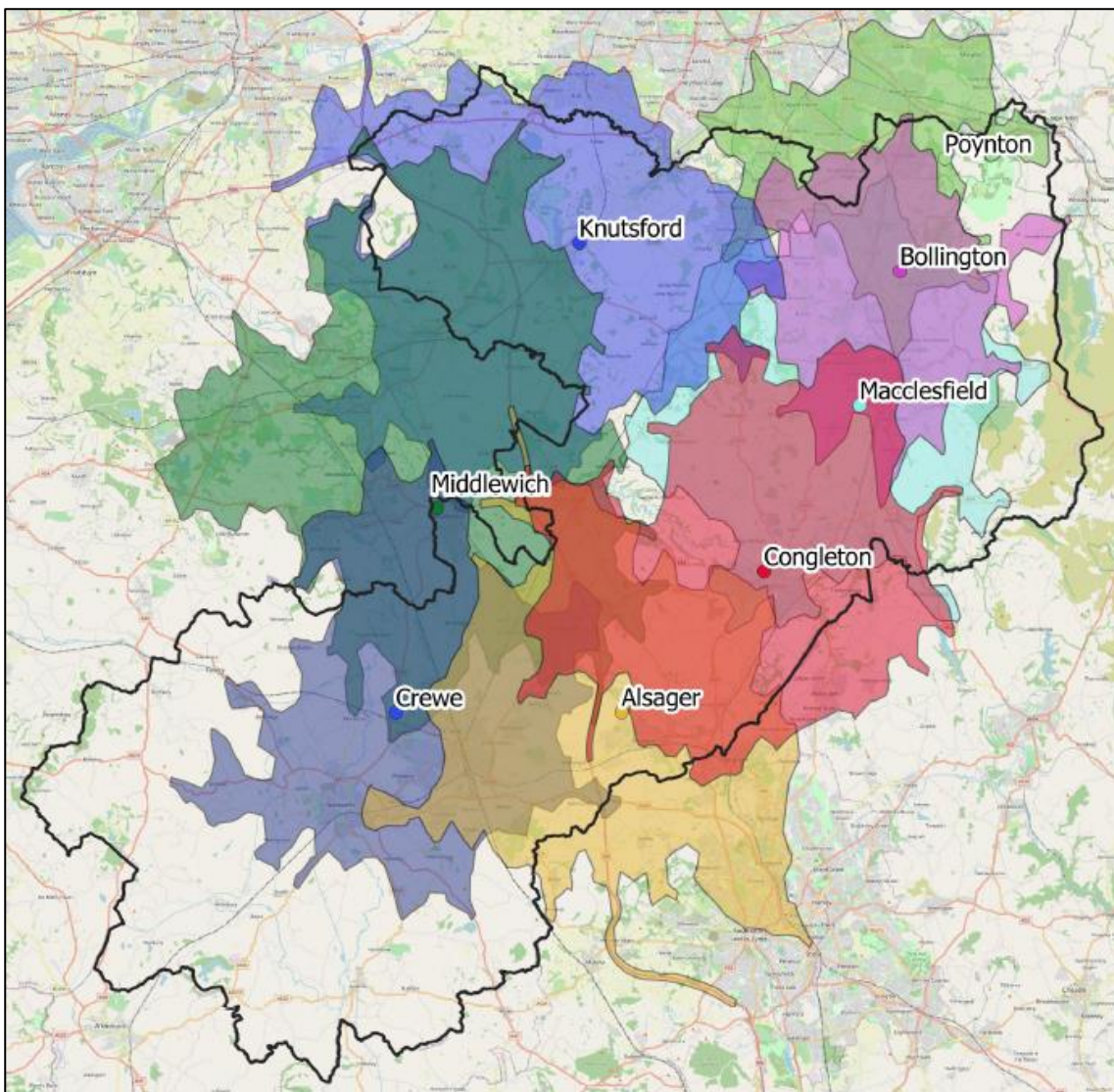


Figure 2 Current HWRC network and 15-minute drive times

4.1 Scenario 1 – Macclesfield, Crewe and Knutsford open

If five of the eight sites were to close, Macclesfield would be the closest site for another 21% of the population. Crewe would be the closest site of another 16% of the population. Therefore, both sites would require redevelopment or renewal to accommodate this additional throughput of site users and tonnage. Indeed, all three sites would also require investment to ensure they could accommodate the additional throughput whilst maintaining high recycling rates.

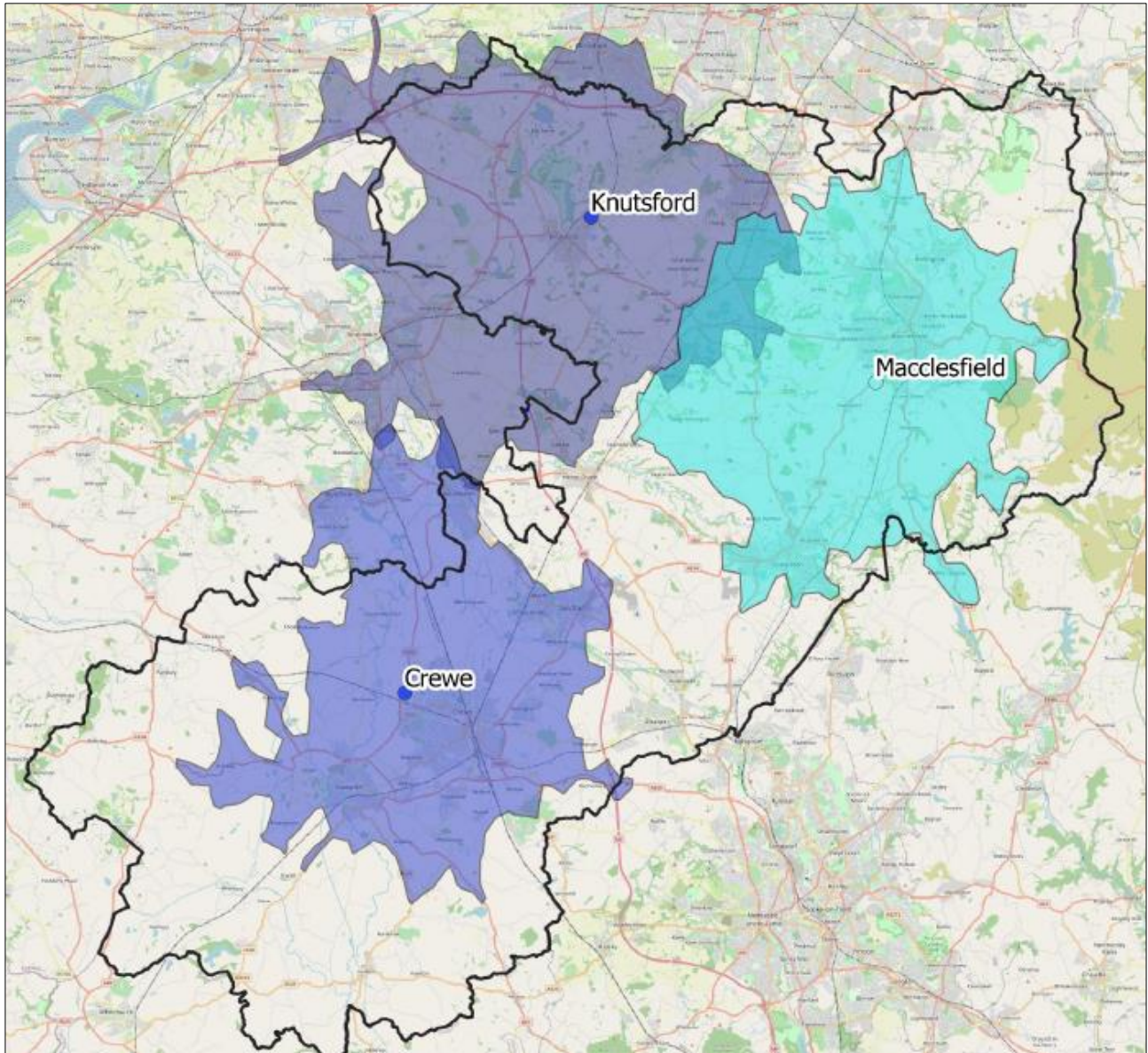


Figure 3 Scenario 1 and 15-minute drive times

4.2 Scenario 2 – Macclesfield, Crewe, Knutsford and Alsager open

A scenario that sees Bollington, Congleton, Middlewich and Poynton close (as the four sites with the smallest throughput) would minimise the overlap of HWRC catchments in the centre of the authority. There would be areas in the north around Colshaw Farm and Poynton and in the South in Wrenbury and Audlem where residents would be expected to drive for more than 15 minutes to reach their nearest HWRC within Cheshire East. However, based on WRAP guidelines, 93% of households would still receive acceptable levels of provision because they could reach a site within twenty minutes. In this scenario there would be a noticeable impact on Macclesfield HWRC with 37,000 more properties in the Macclesfield catchment area, compared with the current provision.

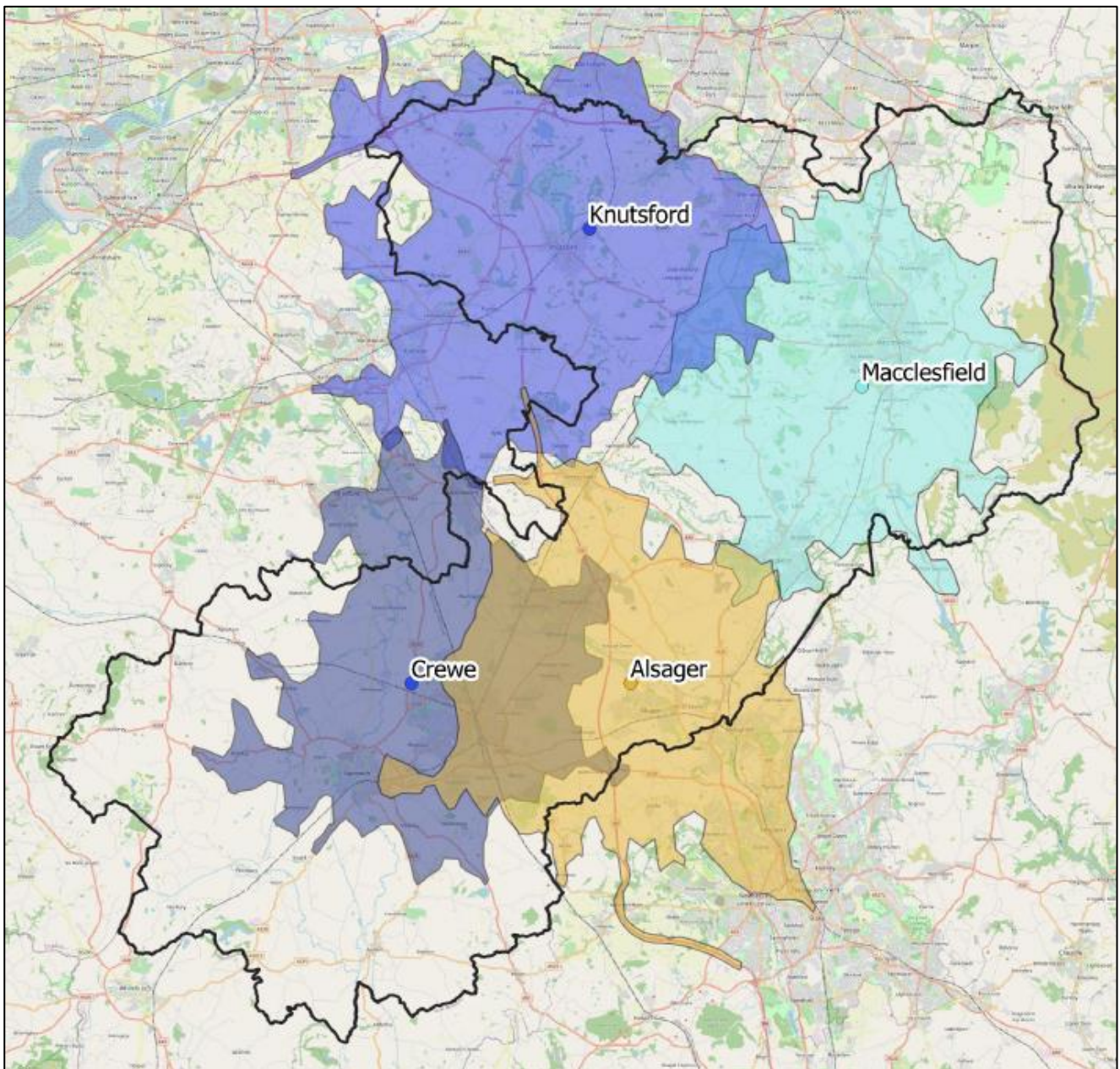


Figure 4 Scenario 2 and 15-minute drive times

4.3 Scenario 3 – Macclesfield, Crewe, Knutsford, Alsager and Bollington open

If Congleton, Middlewich and Poynton close, and assuming they are not replaced, the spatial analysis forecasts that Macclesfield and Bollington will see increased use. 9% more households will go to Macclesfield and 7% more households will go to Bollington. 96% of households will still receive acceptable levels of provision because they could reach a site within twenty minutes.

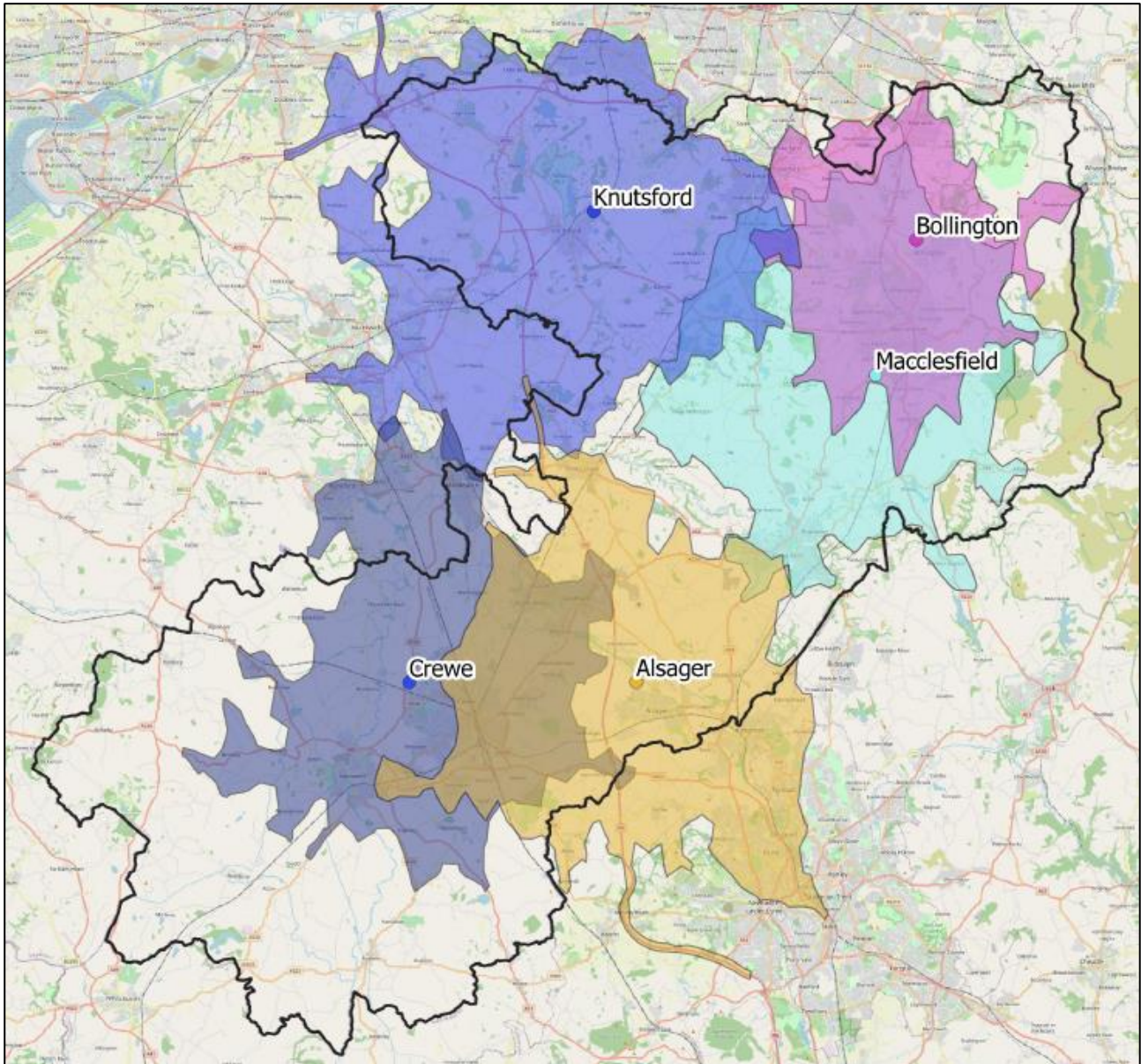


Figure 5 Scenario 3 and 15-minute drive times

4.4 Scenario 4 – Macclesfield, Crewe, Knutsford, Alsager, Bollington and Middlewich open

If Congleton and Poynton close, and assuming they are not replaced, the spatial analysis forecasts that Bollington and Macclesfield will see similarly increased use as in scenario 3. Middlewich will have the same number of households closest to it. As in scenario 3, 96% of households would still receive acceptable levels of provision because they could reach a site within twenty minutes.

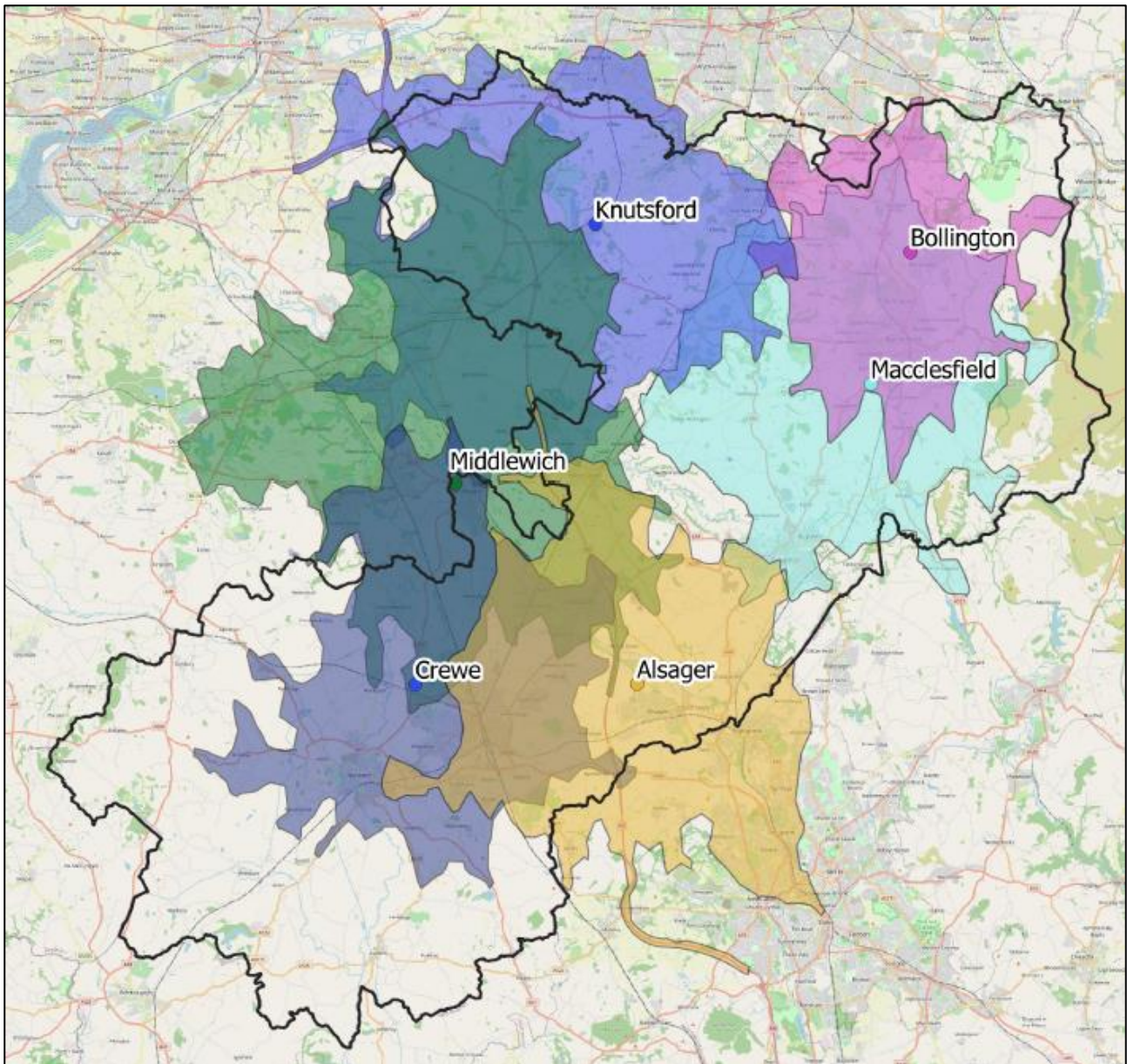


Figure 6 Scenario 4 and 15-minute drive times

5 Network Options

Cheshire East Council, with its responsibility to manage public finances in a sustainable manner, is reviewing the HWRC network to ensure the operation of the service is the best it can be.

CEC designed a range of scenarios to assess the associated impact on the residents. The analysis was based on current costs and tonnages with key assumptions including:

- A small decrease in tonnages of 4% for closure of Congleton and Poynton. This was based on the decrease in tonnages year on year in the three months Arclid was closed before rubble charges were introduced.
- The remaining tonnages are unlikely to decrease with the effect of tonnage reductions stopping after the two small sites are closed.
- An allocation of management fee proportional to current tonnage throughput on sites
- Reduction of management fees by 50% for each site closure with the rest having to be reallocated (in terms of staff, equipment and contractor overheads across the network)

Table 5 below shows the scenarios and the associated savings alongside estimated annual contract cost.

Table 5 Theoretical savings and network cost in the first year (without indexation) for the four scenarios

Scenario	Sites to close	Potential savings in the first year (without indexation)	Estimated annual cost of network in the first year (without indexation)
Scenario 1	Congleton, Poynton, Bollington, Alsager and Middlewich	£406,025	£2,057,958
Scenario 2	Congleton, Poynton, Bollington and Middlewich	£287,634	£2,176,349
Scenario 3	Congleton, Poynton and Middlewich	£213,131	£2,250,852
Scenario 4	Congleton and Poynton	£143,138	£2,320,845

The savings modelled for site closures are very similar to those reported in the 2016 study with the network cost dropping to just over £2million should only three sites remain open. However, as the estimates are based on the terms of the current contract which comes to term in 2023 it is difficult to say how the savings associated with site closures will translate to actual savings for the new contract. The material market conditions and the new contract specifications (including the material prices, the risks and income sharing mechanisms and the employment situation for example the minimum wage) will have a significant effect on the future costs of the HWRC network. It is therefore important to take the figures with caution and treat them as a way to offset any increases in the costs as opposed to a significant cost saving opportunity.

The analysis of the redistribution of the tonnages across the network for the different scenarios used the spatial analysis and assumed that the residents would use the site closest to them in terms of drive times. The results of this analysis should be treated with caution as this is not always the residents' main motivation for using a particular site. This is particularly well demonstrated by the analysis of current tonnages and the closest sites to households which is considerably different for some of the sites

(including Crewe and Macclesfield which are to remain open in all scenarios). This analysis however is at this current time the best approximation available. It is recommended that the Council considers on site user surveys with a question about the residents' postcode (even just partial) to collect better data on the users and where they travel from in the County. Table 6 below shows the results.

Table 6 Tonnage redistribution based on drive time analysis and current tonnages for the four scenarios

Site	Total throughput 19/20	Total throughput apportioned by closest site by drive time	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
Alsager	3,906	3,567		4,576	4,576	3,941
Bollington	2,664	2,942			4,875	4,874
Congleton	2,783	2,913				
Crewe	8,183	9,787	14,696	10,921	10,921	9,722
Knutsford	3,948	3,544	5,745	5,427	4,096	3,572
Macclesfield	4,918	3,886	10,367	9,884	6,341	6,304
Middlewich	2,350	2,354				2,394
Poynton	2,256	2,017				
Total	31,009	31,009	30,808	30,808	30,808	30,808

The increase in tonnages across the three sites in Scenario 1 are significant with all of the sites having to accept around double the material they are currently accepting. This would require significant improvements including a potential redevelopment of the sites and considering how the sites would be accessed by increased numbers of residents as well as the need to service these sites (number of haulage vehicles etc.). We note from the site plans that this would require the extension of the site into the adjoining land (with potential purchase of industrial or farmland required). In Knutsford this may be difficult due to the proximity of residential properties. We also note that this increase in throughput would result in significant increases in vehicle movements both of residents visiting the site and service vehicles. It appears from previous site plans and assessments that there is limited space for queuing and the queues could end up on public highways.

It is difficult to estimate the cost of site redevelopment with a wide range of costs reported across the industry. However, the recently redeveloped Chester site cost in the region of £900,000¹.

Early estimates of site options for a potential new replacement for Congleton (due to the fact that the site is leased, and the landlord has indicated they may shortly require vacant possession), would be around £4m.

Scenario 4 (providing the least number of site closures) shows an estimated increase in throughput ranging from 1% for Alsager to 28% in Macclesfield. In this scenario Bollington is likely to experience an increased

¹ <https://www.hwmartin.com/news/chester-residents-and-businesses-get-new-recycling-centres/>

throughput (almost doubling) because most of the tonnage from Poynton would be absorbed there. However, we cannot be sure how much of an outlier this may be. It would be important to survey the residents in the nearest site in Poynton to understand the split between Bollington and Macclesfield. In either case, both sites would require some improvement works. Bollington is surrounded by farmland and has an extended access road. Macclesfield is adjacent to the Council waste site so the potential for redevelopment could be carefully considered.

The savings associated with land sale could be used to fund site development and improvement. Table 7 shows the estimated land sale value based on 2017 Government estimated land values² of industrial land (which is the most recent available data set). The example costs have been calculated as an average for the two data points in the proximity to Cheshire East (Warrington and Chester) but the high and low estimate based on the highest and lowest estimated land value is also provided for interest and to demonstrate the range.

Scenario 4 would result in only small savings due to Congleton site being leased so the income would only be generated through the closure of Poynton.

Table 7 Estimated revenues from sale of land for the four scenarios

Site	Site size (SqM)	Potential revenue from sale of land	Comments	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
Alsager	6,240	£397,800		£397,800			
Bollington	4,701	£299,670		£299,670	£299,670		
Congleton	1,642	£0	Land leased	£0	£0	£0	£0
Middlewich	1,587	£101,171		£101,171	£101,171	£101,171	
Poynton	1,858	£118,422		£118,422	£118,422	£118,422	£118,422
Total estimated potential income				£917,063	£519,263	£219,593	£118,422
High				£1,442,421	£880,821	£457,758	£167,184
Low				£601,009	£367,009	£190,733	£69,660

5.1 Impact on recommended site provision levels

Although there are no statutory levels of HWRC provision, WRAP HWRC guidance recommends that the maximum number of inhabitants per HWRC is 120,000 and the maximum number of households per HWRC is 50,000. The following table shows the levels for the scenarios considered alongside the current situation.

The analysis shows that all but Scenario 1 would provide the recommended level of HWRC provision by households and inhabitants.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/land-value-estimates>

Table 8 Household and inhabitants per site for the four scenarios

Scenario	Households per site	Inhabitants per site
WRAP recommended	50,000	120,000
Current	23,979	47,599
Scenario 1	63,943	126,930
Scenario 2	47,958	95,198
Scenario 3	38,366	76,158
Scenario 4	31,972	63,465

6 Other service efficiency and cost improvement measures

Cheshire East Council has already implemented several best practice initiatives across the HWRC network including bag splitting (currently suspended due to Covid-19 pandemic) or accepting trade waste rubble on sites. The following section summarises additional measures that could be considered.

6.1 Improving the user experience and site aesthetics

It is well established that site performance is influenced by site aesthetics and user experience. This includes signage, site cleanliness and how the traffic is managed.

Following the 2016 HWRC review, the Council planned and costed a wide range of improvements for the sites.

Table 9 shows the breakdown of the measures and costs. Note that no improvements to Congleton site were planned.

Table 9 Planned site improvements and the associated costs

Site improvements	Signage	Traffic	Infrastructure	Welfare	Re-use	Total
Alsager	£17,100	£1,500	£21,600	£25,500	£0	£65,700
Bollington	£11,740	£0	£8,150	£45,000	£0	£64,890
Crewe	£17,100	£14,000	£20,400	£55,500	£0	£107,000
Knutsford	£8,610	£0	£53,850	£66,000	£0	£128,460
Middlewich	£11,365	£0	£28,500	£30,000	£0	£69,865
Macclesfield	£15,240	£1,935	£33,715	£27,000	£25,500	£103,390
Poynton	£9,945	£0	£35,625	£25,500	£0	£71,070

However, the work is currently on hold and there is potentially a saving associated with prioritising the improvements to sites that are earmarked for staying open indefinitely. Table 10 shows the potential savings for the four scenarios considered in this report.

Table 10 Potential savings from site improvements works for the four scenarios

Scenario	Sites to close	Potential savings
Scenario 1	Congleton, Poynton, Bollington, Alsager and Middlewich	£271,525
Scenario 2	Congleton, Poynton, Bollington and Middlewich	£205,825
Scenario 3	Congleton, Poynton and Middlewich	£174,460
Scenario 4	Congleton and Poynton	£71,070

7 Resources and Waste Legislation and Policy Impacts

A range of environmental measures have been proposed in recent years that could have far reaching impacts, such as the Drinks Return Scheme (DRS), consistency framework for household waste collections, and reform of the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) requirements. The measures are in different stages of development, consultation and implementation and key aspects are currently being debated for many of these policies. Three landmark policy and strategy documents outline the key policies and are analysed below for their potential impact on HWRCs:

- The Resources and Waste Strategy, 2018³
- The Environment Bill, Draft 2018⁴
- EU Ecodesign Implementing Regulations, 2019⁵

The measures in these three documents are discussed in the sections below. Based on this analysis, Table 11 lists key policies and indicates the nature of their impact on HWRCs. The table illustrates the large number of policies recently announced that have the potential to significantly impact operations at HWRCs.

The predominant impacts are expected to be on the quantity of the waste received and the nature of the waste, e.g. by diverting specific waste streams or products to other waste management systems or altering the products placed on market in terms of their design, materials, durability and repairability. The waste treatment options available are also likely to change. For example, EPR reform could incentivise recycling of difficult to recycle products such as carpets and mattresses. At a national level, economies of scale could be gained enabling new facilities to be opened to process these waste streams. EPR and DRS are anticipated to present funding opportunities if producers engage with Councils and HWRC services and pay for treatment of their waste products, and Councils could be reimbursed for handling deposit-bearing items not captured by the DRS return points and arriving as waste at the HWRC.

Interestingly, many of the policies could require more sophisticated data monitoring and reporting. Such data systems would allow Councils to interface with emerging waste systems such as EPR and DRS and

³ HM Government (2018), *Our waste, our resources: a strategy for England*, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/765914/resources-waste-strategy-dec-2018.pdf

⁴ Environment Bill, Bill 003 2019-20 (as introduced), <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/2019-2020/0003/20003.pdf>

⁵ Regulation laying down ecodesign requirements 1 October 2019, <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/regulation-laying-down-ecodesign-requirements-1-october-2019>

access the associated funding mechanisms. Several of the policies also imply the need for improved performance in waste management, and HWRCs are likely to have a pivotal role in delivering this.

Table 11: Summary of key policies and their impacts on HWRCs

	Quantity of waste	Nature of waste	Waste treatment options	Funding	Data and reporting	Performance requirements
Extended Producer Responsibility	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Drinks Return Scheme	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Ecodesign	✓	✓	?			
Right to repair	✓	✓	✓			
Addressing barriers to re-use at HWRCs					✓	✓
Tackling waste crime			✓			
Single-use plastics bans	✓	✓				
Single-use plastics charge	✓	✓		?		
Waste collection consistency	✓	✓				
Net-zero carbon emissions by 2050	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Mandatory electronic tracking of waste					✓	

✓ = Yes, ? = Impact is less certain

7.1 Potential future changes

The policy landscape is fast developing, and it is worth considering further measures that may be brought in to support those discussed above. We highlight two specific policy topics below.

The UK recycling rate has flat-lined in recent years. The 2020 municipal recycling rate target is likely to be missed, and subsequent targets will prove even more challenging. It is conceivable that individual targets will be set for local authorities and perhaps even targets for HWRCs. The emphasis and planned systems for waste data collection and reporting would support targets for re-use, recycling and waste reduction, and the new Office for Environmental Protection would be set to monitor progress and intervene where deemed necessary. Meeting higher targets will be bound with the funding impact of EPR and objectives around the collection and processing of food waste. Government has consistently said it will support local authorities with costs attached to these higher objectives and ensure that industry pays the full cost of EPR for packaging and that this accrues to councils in line with the desire for efficient, high-quality packaging collections. While the impact of EPR for packaging may not be the biggest factor in the evolution of HWRCs

it is still a factor to account for and may well lead to funding support for well collected packaging. The EPR for other items and especially for bulky items ending up in HWRC, such as furniture and mattresses, has not yet been discussed but will be an important consideration and an issue many organisations from the public sector and producers will need to be aware of.

To meet the environmental objectives, including carbon impacts, it is likely that further measures will be taken to influence the full product life cycle including design, production, supply, use and disposal. The initial focus could look to improve primary, secondary and tertiary packaging and transport of goods.

Beyond this, there may be potential impacts from other areas of policy development, outside the resources and waste arena that need to be considered in the development of new HWRCs and modernisation of existing sites. For example, growing demand for active travel and safe cycling is forecast. As infrastructure improves and demand increases, the opportunity to incorporate safe access to HWRCs by bicycles (including cargo bikes) may provide an innovative and timely accessibility improvement to the service that would prove popular and chime with Climate Emergency actions. Government has recently announced new funds⁶ for safe cycling infrastructure and access to these funds should be monitored and prove especially relevant for new site developments.

Further analysis of the implications of the new legislation and national strategy can be found in Appendix C.

8 Innovation within the HWRC sector

Local Authorities across the UK are looking at ways to run the services more efficiently while improving the recycling, reuse and diversion rates. The innovative ideas recently employed within the HWRC sector can be grouped into the following categories:

- Site operations
- Site design
- Contracts

8.1 Site operations

8.1.1 ANPR and CCTV

ANPR and CCTV have recently been used and requested in contracts by LA. The technology can be used for administering the permit systems, managing trade abuse and in some places, limiting the number of visits on a “fair usage” case (for example in Herefordshire County Council there is 12 fair usage visits per annum). The systems could also be used to monitor traffic flows, collecting data on numbers of visitors and using this to potentially communicate live updates to residents. This has been successfully employed by Bristol Waste Company where live CCTV footage of the HWRC queues can be accessed via their website⁷.

⁶ <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/news/2020/february/government-pledges-5bn-to-improve-bus-and-cycling-services-our-response/>

⁷ <https://www.bristolwastecompany.co.uk/hrrc-queue-camera/>

8.1.2 Further material separation

Further steps can be made to separate materials for recycling where multi-material furniture (e.g. sofas, beds, mattresses) are unsuitable for re-use. A site in Wales has set up a system where the items are stripped down by hand on site and then separated into various components. Initially only the wood and metal were recycled, but negotiations are ongoing with reprocessors to recycle additional materials such as flock and foam. Existing site staff are utilised to undertake the work which is carried out on a rotational basis depending on how busy the site is. Material stripping activities are attributed to an estimated 2-3% increase in the recycling rate. Cost benefits include increased revenue from the sale of recyclate and savings in landfill tax and gate fees. Additionally, staff motivation and happiness increase as targets are met and staff efficiency is maximised by utilising 'down time' to strip materials. An additional staff member is employed using revenue generated by the process.

8.1.3 Community recycling centres

With cuts to resources some local authorities have considered site closures and network rationalisation. One creative way to limit the site closures while at the same time realising savings is changing the function of the waste and recycling centres to recycling and reuse. In Lancashire one of the smaller sites was renamed as a Community Reuse and Recycling Centre and accepts a limited range of materials excluding residual waste, wood, rubble, chemicals and asbestos while retaining the reuse shop onsite.⁸ The Centre, which operates in a different way from the other sites, has a focus on selling recycled items, alongside a limited waste and recycling service.

There are also several innovative operations internationally where the recycling sites' focus has shifted further up the waste hierarchy. An example of this recently has been the Reuse centre in Ljubljana⁹ which operates as a reuse or resource hub where items are repaired and upcycled.

8.2 Site design

Whilst requiring a considerable amount of engineering work, a move from a more traditional site design to the introduction of modular and flexible solutions has been a key innovative design solution. A modular design allows the site to be reconfigured as needed with the minimum of difficulty and expense. One construction firm comments¹⁰:

We offer a prefab concrete modular system for the construction of split-level household waste recycling centres that helps achieving higher recycling rates enhances safety and customer satisfaction and is future proof because of its flexibility. The modular construction can easily be expanded or adapted and could even be relocated. Construction time is very short; only 1-2 weeks, depending on the size of the platform.

Figure 7 below shows the modular HWRC design used in Cardiff. The infrastructure is constructed from prefabricated blocks. Visitors drive up the ramp, park next to the waste bays and deposit materials into skips on the lower level. The site can be expanded by placing additional prefab blocks, or even moved

⁸ <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/recycling-centres/garstang/>

⁹ <https://www.vokasnaga.si/en/reuse-centre>

¹⁰ <https://governmentbusiness.co.uk/company-focus/modulo-beton-modular-hwrc%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%93-construction-conscience>

and/or combined with other sites. The space under the platform can be used for storage; a re-use shop, offices, a tool library, repair shop etc. and the red bins on the top level are linked via chutes to the space below allowing for safe disposal of small waste streams such as batteries.

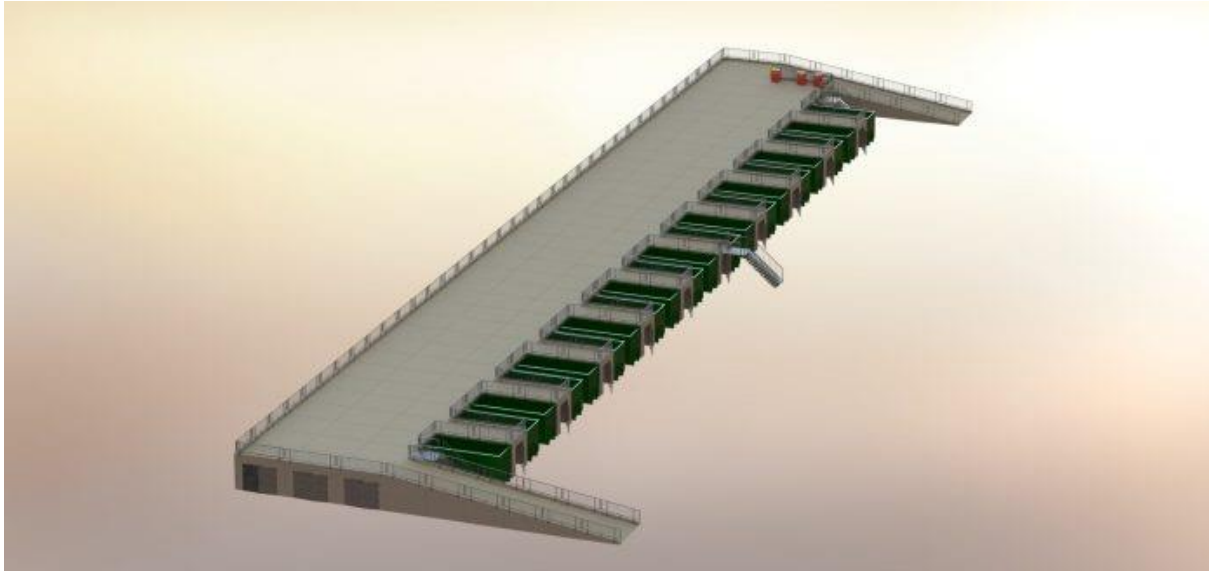


Figure 7: Plan of modular design in Cardiff HWRC¹¹

8.3 Contracts

There are several methods that contracts for operating HWRC sites and networks can be set up to drive efficiency and performance. This includes contract length and size, risk and income sharing, contract incentives and penalties.

Similarly, there are a number of options that the LA can consider in terms of the contract characteristics but the factors behind these decisions are likely to include:

- whether other waste and recycling services are included within the same contract;
- the number of sites within the network and whether they are to be managed as one contract or several;
- investment requirements;
- the local authority's attitude to risk;
- the strategy for contracting with local businesses and third-sector organisations;
- the level of flexibility required.

8.3.1 Contract length and size

The overall contract cost and the structure will often be dependent on the length of the contract. Traditionally the length of the contract would align with the life span of equipment or assets so between 5 and 11 years. This is still common practice in the industry. However, some LAs are entering into much longer-term contracts for example where significant investment is required. For example, Somerset Waste

¹¹ <https://www.modulo-beton-environment.com/realization/uk-united-kingdom/>

Partnership is currently under contract with Viridor which had the initial term of 16 years, recently (2019) extended by 9 years to 2031.

There are a number of options where the contract for operating the HWRC networks have been included within a wider service provision making it a more integral part of the overall waste management solutions within the LA are and generating some potential savings through the economies of scale. This however has to be carefully considered to ensure that all elements of a contract are delivered to the required quality. Drafting of the specification would require significant time and expertise and a transparent way of evaluating the financial viability of the contract would be required during the procurement process. The potential bidders for such a contract would include the large, national and multinational waste management companies.

On the other hand splitting the contract into smaller lots (by location or function such as haulage, site operation, material brokering etc.) may be beneficial if specialist services are required and the LA has a clear procurement strategy that encourages participation of smaller businesses or local third sector organisations. In such instances it would be important to consider the contract interfaces (for example vehicles operated by one contractor needing access to sites that are operated by another contractor) and how the contracts will be coordinated day to day.

8.3.2 Income and risk sharing

The material markets have been significantly affected by international events in recent times, with the likes of China imposing very tight controls on the materials that can enter their economy from abroad and the price of oil falling. Additionally, national policy decisions have a direct impact on how material is traded. For example, the Environment Agency is investigating waste wood to determine whether the material is hazardous or not. The methods will have an impact on the overall wood recyclers market and ultimately price for disposing of the material. Furthermore, there is continuing uncertainty associated with the Resources and Waste Strategy with its risks and opportunities for market development.

It is therefore important for the LA to consider how much risk it is willing to take on the price of the materials as any risk the contractor will need to take will be costed in to the proposed contract during the tender stage.

There are a number of mechanisms that the LA can choose to include during the procurement process these would be up for discussion during the competitive dialogue sessions. These could include: a percentage split of income or cost, additional limits on the maximum costs of income the contractor can claim, open book contracting¹² or set review periods. Such mechanisms should be considered in detail with qualified legal and accounting advisors and should take into account the additional costs and required expertise associated with managing more complex contracting arrangements.¹³

¹² *Open Book Contract Management (OBCM) is a structured process for the sharing and management of charges & costs and operational and performance data between the supplier and the client. The aim is to promote collaborative behaviour between client and supplier through financial transparency. The outcomes should be a fair price for the supplier, value for money for the client and performance improvement for both over the contract life.*

¹³ <https://www.nao.org.uk/naoblog/open-book-contracting/>

8.3.3 Incentives and penalties

There are specific incentives and penalties associated with recycling, diversion and reuse or waste prevention targets. These can generally be described as:

- Specific bonuses or financial penalties for meeting or not meeting specified target or stretch targets or banding
- Incentives or penalties associated with the saving or incurring costs for disposal of the material. It is important to note that if the contractor is responsible for disposal costs any savings are likely to be retained by the contractor
- Specific mechanisms for managing performance and the delivery against Key Performance Indicators (for example the delivery of regular reports and the consequences of non-delivery)

The LA will need to consider the key metrics for the contracts whether that would be focused on the recycling targets, diversion from residual waste or customer service and design the mechanisms to ensure these are met. The design of such mechanisms would require expertise from legal and financial advisors and the complexity of managing such mechanisms would need to be considered for the life of the contract. Specific examples of incentives and penalties focussed on recycling and diversion used by LAs can be found in Appendix D.

9 Assessment of procurement options

CEC's HWRC network is currently operated by HW Martin under a contract which finishes its term in 2023. The contract is managed on behalf of the Council by ANSA Environmental Services, a company wholly owned and controlled by the Council (a Teckal company¹⁴). Additionally, the sites are managed by individual site managers subcontracted to HW Martin. The Council is currently considering the options available to it for how a new contract could be operated. The contract would need to provide improved performance control and flexibility because of the impact, in the medium term, of the Government's Resources and Waste Strategy. The following table explores the issues and questions the Council will need to consider in greater detail ahead of any procurement exercise. This qualitative analysis provides an assessment of the potential impact on the costs of the service and operations of the HWRC network and highlights where each of the service delivery and contracting models has particular benefits or drawbacks. The assessment is based on our broad experience of working with the local authorities and waste operators.

¹⁴ <https://www.cipfa.org/policy-and-guidance/articles/teckal-the-basics-explained>

Table 12 Legend for Table 13



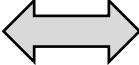





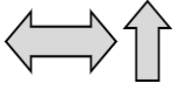









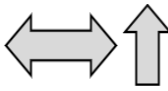
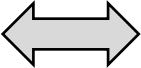


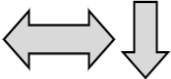


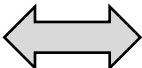


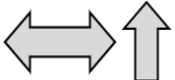
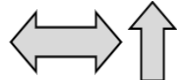
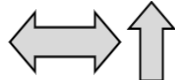
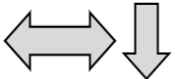


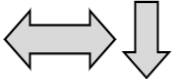


Change	Impact level
Negative impact/ cost increase	
Greater negative impact/ cost increase	
Status quo	
No immediate negative impact/ costs but potential over time	
No immediate positive impact but potential over time	
Positive impact/ reduced costs	
Greater positive impact/ reduced costs	




Table 13 HWRC operating models and the potential benefits and disbenefits

Risk/ Opportunity	Current contract HW Martin and subcontracted site managers	In house operated by ANSA, the Teckal company	Outsourced to a single private contractor	Commentary/ evidence
Emerging policy – local				The current service has limited flexibility to respond to local issues, with ANSA potentially being able to build this into a co-ordinated approach that prioritises local needs. In order to respond to local issues an In house service will need to ensure that it is tuned in to issues locally and can respond accordingly. There may be a danger that out-sourced contracts are less likely to be able to change and adapt.
Emerging policy national –				Reduced ability to respond to the opportunities and impacts posed by EPR/ DRS without an integrated approach and in the bounds of the current contract. A Council owned company would be able to respond to policy requirements as required by the Council. Contract drafting of out-sourced delivery is key to maintaining the ability to respond over time.
Fleet management (vehicles, grapple vehicles etc.)				Benefits of buying in-house potentially balanced by private sector access to wider purchasing agreements – if CEC owns the HWRC service vehicles this is less of an issue.
Vehicle maintenance				Some positive impact likely from integration with the other waste services operated by ANSA. As long as the contracts clearly specify responsibilities the right contractor may benefit from some buying power.

Risk/ Opportunity	Current contract HW Martin and subcontracted site managers	In house operated by ANSA, the Teckal company	Outsourced to a single private contractor	Commentary/ evidence
Infrastructure				The current contractor has access to a well-located waste transfer station which serves CEC and the nearest neighbours. It is unlikely the LA would be able to procure a WTS meaning there may be a need to invest or use the services from the contractor who was not awarded the contract. Any other contractor would have to consider this issue in the response, and it would depend on the local presence and infrastructure they already have in the area. This would be expected to add costs to the contract.
Flexibility and resilience in service delivery				Individual site managers driven only by managing their site with limited involvement in the wider issues and services. Flexibility enhanced by integration. However, the current contractor managed all streams and is able to respond to the demands because of that. In house and outsourced similar on balance – internal flexibility due to greater control balanced against support available from other private-sector contracts / national agreements.
Service consistency				The ability for the in-house company to respond to the priorities of the Council ensuing that these are applied consistently. As long as the specification is well drawn out a private contractor is likely to apply the same approach across the contract. Greater control over staff as opposed to sole agents site managers

Risk/ Opportunity	Current contract HW Martin and subcontracted site managers	In house operated by ANSA, the Teckal company	Outsourced to a single private contractor	Commentary/ evidence
Rationalisation of the HWRC network				Previous rationalisation of the network aligned with the renegotiation of terms which meant the savings were not realised as estimated. A contract that is operating less sites and less waste should theoretically result in savings. However, should radical changes (such as Scenario 1 and 2 in section above) be made capital investment will be required. This would be expected to include significant redevelopment of sites or building of new sites. The less radical scenarios 3 and 4 would require less investment. All site closures may generate income from land sale.
Staffing costs and management costs				The current contract has issues with staffing partially funded by the material sales. Due to market collapse this has been difficult. Potential greater saving with outsourced due to regional/ national management and support functions and potentially reduced pension liability.
Materials value				Private sector service providers are likely to have greater experience in material marketing & greater access to markets. ANSA could already have the skills and staff capable of managing the material to extract the best value.

Risk/ Opportunity	Current contract HW Martin and subcontracted site managers	In house operated by ANSA, the Teckal company	Outsourced to a single private contractor	Commentary/ evidence
Procurement costs	↑	↑↑	↓	Extension of the current contract could save CEC some costs and resources which would be required to go out to open tender. The LA could choose to appoint their wholly owned company to take the contract on with limited procurement costs required. However legal advice would be required and the company is still subject to EU Procurement Regulation.
Buying power	↔	↑	↑↑	Both in house (due to integration with other CEC waste services) and outsourced could have greater buying power - subject to potential market saturation.
Responding to growth	↔↓	↑↑	↑	Limited flexibility in the current contract. An in-house service would enable a cohesive internal response to growth. With an out-sourced service model the contract drafting would be critical.
Commercial waste/ non-HH waste	↔↓	↑	↓	Potential incentive for ANSA to generate more income for the company and support other services. Potentially competitive pricing as the company is Council owned and not profit driven. Out-sourced – contract drafting is important in order to provide incentivisation to grow service.

Risk/ Opportunity	Current contract HW Martin and subcontracted site managers	In house operated by ANSA, the Teckal company	Outsourced to a single private contractor	Commentary/ evidence
Reputation				In-house service has greater ability to enhance reputation through communicating savings and responding to local needs. With out-sourcing careful contract drafting would be required to maintain service standards and good control of communications/ public interface would be required. Protecting CEC's reputation through ensuring any service transfer is as good as possible is very important.

The key consideration throughout this assessment was the balancing of cost savings and the Councils appetite for risk and significantly improving the service alongside retaining the flexibility to accommodate any changes resulting from the 2018 Strategy. One of the first important steps is to start a conversation with ANSA about this contract, as the option to take the service in house would mean significant growth which may or not be within the strategic plan for the company.

Should the outsourced model be preferable, the drafting of the specification and careful negotiation would require concerted effort from Council officers.

9.1 Attractiveness of the contract

The market conditions are an important consideration when tendering any services. Although it is difficult to assess how the waste management market will respond to any contract there are some key elements which may help with understanding the market situation.

It is important to note that the response of the market is dynamic. The response of the market will depend on who is operating other contracts in the region, and when they are up for retendering, the waste management companies and their strategic priorities, waste management companies bidding capacity and how the market perceives the current contract (for example if it is well known that the incumbent has competitive advantages or is a preferred bidder for the services). It is unlikely that the number of sites is a factor in how attractive the contract is to the market. The key considerations now will be connected to the material markets and how this will impact the affordability of the contract. As the prices of the materials are currently lower and are fluctuating the contractor will have to price in the risk associated with trading materials in uncertain conditions. As HWRC contracts tend to be procured through the competitive dialogue process the risk and income sharing mechanisms, as well as any incentives or penalties, will be the key issues discussed. Should the Council wish to close sites, redevelop sites or build new sites during the term of the contract this would have to be clearly stated in the invitation to tender documents and discussed at length during dialogue.

The following table shows the contractors and expected contract terms of the benchmarked authorities which sheds some light on the state of the HWRC contract market.

Table 14 Benchmarked LA and the contract arrangement

Local Authority	Contractor	End of term
Cheshire West and Chester	HW Martin	2023
Staffordshire	Amey	2022
Derbyshire	Renewi	2021
Greater Manchester	Suez	2026
Warrington	EWC	Unknown (last known extension request to Jan 2020)
Shropshire	Veolia	2034
Gloucestershire	Ubico	2026
Monmouthshire	Dragon Waste, contracted through Viridor	under renegotiation as permanent closure of Usk was intended for 31 March

The geographic and demographic neighbours' services are operated by a number of different waste management companies with the major players represented in this sample. It is particularly interesting that CECs closest neighbour, Cheshire West and Chester will be considering its options at the same time. It may be prudent to initiate conversations about partnership working which may result in savings to the operating costs of the contract for both authorities.

It is recommended that the council carries out a soft market testing exercise well in advance of any procurement document being prepared (at least two years in advance of the contract award). This will allow the market to express their views on the attractions of the contract in the comfort of private meetings with Council officers.

10 Concluding remarks

The review presented within this document analyses the current HWRC network provision as well as the potential impacts of the four scenarios for network rationalisation identified by Cheshire East Council.

The analysis shows that any site closures are anticipated to provide some savings in revenue costs associated with the operation of the sites. It will be important to ensure that these are reflected once the contract is retendered. However, the savings are not guaranteed as the contract price will ultimately depend on the conditions on the materials markets and the risks the Council will be willing to take for this contract. As the situation is currently very uncertain (with the prices of the material low and additional uncertainties associated with the changes in the legislation, the UK leaving the EU and Covid-19) the contractors are likely to price these risks in their costs to ensure affordability. It is also clear that in all of the scenarios some improvements will have to be considered to accommodate the redistributed tonnages from the sites. The north east sites, Macclesfield and Bollington, are the ones most likely to be affected by this change.

Table 15 Summary details

Scenario	Proportion of households less than 20 minutes from a site	Potential savings	Investment required	Estimated capital receipt from sale of land
Scenario 1	88%	£406,025	Substantial	£917,063
Scenario 2	93%	£287,634	Substantial	£519,263
Scenario 3	96%	£213,131	Moderate	£219,593
Scenario 4	96%	£143,138	Moderate	£118,422

The analysis identified potential savings through sale of land and the rationalisation of the planned improvement works but for the scenarios with fewer sites remaining, where considerable increases in tonnages are anticipated, there may be a need for the Council to make substantial capital investment in terms of increasing site footprints (purchase of land) and redevelopments. Such major works would need to be carefully planned to manage the impact on site users.

The impact on the residents is considered through the drive time analysis. Currently the residents are enjoying a network which minimises the driving times for them. The rationalisation will have some impact on the drive times to the nearest HWRC however these are not substantial, even for the most radical Scenario 1, with 88% of residents driving less than 20 minutes to the nearest site.

As the Council is considering the opportunities and risks associated with a new contract it will be crucial to build in flexibility to manage the impacts of the changing legislative and government strategy landscape. Drafting contract specification that ensures that the contractor can respond to the changes will be important. Another key consideration will be the situation on the material markets and managing the risks of the commodity price fluctuations. At the time of writing the values of the materials are low, and any contractor would be looking to buffer themselves from the fluctuations, passing these costs onto the Council. However, this may change once the government policies are implemented to develop national material markets and advance the circular economy.

We note from our analysis that limited data on site users is available and we would recommend an on-site user survey to understand the footfall and where the users travel from to access sites. A question to assess the sites the residents would prefer to use, following site closures, could be added to collect further insight. This would enable refinement of the tonnage redistribution analysis as well as the assessment of impact on residents.

Our review includes an assessment of the contract terms and current HWRC operators in neighbouring authorities which will help the Council understand the current market situation. We recommend that the Council carries out soft market testing well in advance of any specification drafting to help inform the decisions.

Appendix A Benchmarking details

A.1 Neighbouring authorities

Warrington Borough Council has three HWRCs in close proximity to Cheshire East; Stockton Heath, Gatewarth and Woolston. Greater Manchester also has three HWRCs close to Cheshire East; Altrincham, Longley Lane and Adswold Road. Staffordshire has two; Biddulph and Newcastle. Cheshire West, Shropshire and Derbyshire all have one HWRC in close proximity to Cheshire East; these are Northwich, Whitchurch and Waterswallows.

Vans and Permits

Most authorities specify a gross vehicle weight limit of 3.5 tonnes and height restriction of 2 metres. Greater Manchester limits the amount of visits allowed to site per year by the type of vehicle; 52 visits for cars and cars with single axle trailers, 18 visits for cars with a double axle trailer or vans under 3.5 tonnes, and any larger vehicles to 12 visits per year. Staffordshire also requires all trailers to be single axle but adds that specifically adapted vehicles for blue badge holders will be accommodated for. Shropshire requires a permit for vans, 4x4s with a goods body or for cars with trailers, while a residents' permit is required for Neston recycling centre in Cheshire West due to its location near the county border.

Warrington's permit system is unlike the others, in that permits are required if residents need to visit more than once in a van to dispose of a larger amount of household waste, or for non-household waste regardless of vehicle. Non-household waste must be listed on the permit prior to visiting, and visits are limited to three per year.

Restrictions on rubble/construction waste

In most cases, authorities do not restrict the number of items or amount of non-household waste but advise that small DIY only will be accepted. All authorities state that they cannot accept trade waste, with Cheshire West and Greater Manchester providing directions to nearby waste transfer stations for these items. Staffordshire is the only other authority to charge per item. This includes a £3 charge per bag or large item of rubble, bricks, soil, concrete, stone, fibreglass and ceramics, and £4 per bag or sheet of plasterboard. Warrington does not issue charges for non-household waste, but items must be listed on a permit prior to the visit. Derbyshire includes a restriction of 50kg plasterboard per visit per week (no whole sheets), 50kg of rubble, concrete or soil.

Asbestos is accepted at Warrington, Derbyshire, the Leek site at Staffordshire, and with prior notice at Shropshire sites. Plasterboard is not accepted at Greater Manchester, or at Cheadle or Newcastle sites in Staffordshire. Derbyshire permits a maximum of either 2x roofing sheets or 2m downpipe of asbestos, while Staffordshire permits either 4 sheets or 4 bags per household every six months.

Opening hours

All authorities provide at least one site which is open seven days a week, and it is only Cheshire West and Staffordshire where the majority of sites are open five days per week. Greater Manchester, Derbyshire, and Shropshire do not state any seasonal variation, with Derbyshire providing the longest opening hours of 8:30am-6pm. The largest seasonal variation can be seen at the Chester, Ellesmere Port and Winsford recycling centres, within Cheshire West, which are open 8am-8pm on weekdays and 8am-6pm on weekends in the summer months, compared to opening hours of 8am-4pm throughout the week in winter.

Materials accepted

Cheshire West and Warrington do not accept gas cylinders or tyres, similarly to CEC; however the other neighbouring authorities seem to do so. Staffordshire accept tyres but implement a charge of £4 each, to a maximum of four. Derbyshire does not accept large items of furniture, nor does it accept any waste resulting from the demolition or replacement of gardens sheds, greenhouses, fencing, or decking, and recommend hiring a skip for garden renovations. Greater Manchester also states that food waste cannot be accepted.

Coronavirus restrictions

Each authority includes detailed information on their website regarding specific site rules due to Coronavirus. In the main, this includes adhering to social distancing measures, avoiding the site for all but essential journeys and having a maximum of one passenger per car. All authority websites state that staff members cannot help to unload vehicles and reminds visitors to behave respectfully and appropriately on site. Derbyshire and Greater Manchester introduced a number plate system to restrict traffic flow on site; however, Greater Manchester has since relaxed this measure. Some materials that are normally accepted have been temporarily suspended, such as asbestos at Staffordshire and Shropshire sites, and clothing, textiles and shoes in Greater Manchester.

Warrington has temporarily closed its Stockton Heath site, while vans are only permitted at its Gatewarth site with 48 hours' notice. A valid form of I.D. is also required at each site.

Table 16 Neighbouring authorities HWRC data from the 2018/19 National HWRC Directory¹⁵

Authority	Authority type	No. HWRCs 2018/19	No. HWRCs per 100,000 population	Land area per HWRC, sq. miles	Average site catchment radius, miles	Total HWRC tonnage throughput		HWRC arisings, kg/hh/yr.			HWRC Recycling Rate including rubble		HWRC Recycling Rate excluding rubble	
						2018/19	Difference with previous year	All HWRC throughput	HWRC residual	HWRC recycling, excluding rubble	2018/19	Difference with previous year	2018/19	Difference with previous year
Cheshire East	UA	8	2.1	56	4.2	30,073	-10,895	180	58	116	67.9%	-6.4%	66.7%	-1.0%
Cheshire West and Chester	UA	7	2.1	51	4.0	39,001	-23	268	83	125	68.8%	-0.1%	60.0%	-0.5%
Warrington Borough Council	UA	3	1.4	23	2.7	15,202	-1,153	166	45	110	73.0%	1.8%	71.0%	2.3%
Greater Manchester WDA (MBC)	WDA	20	0.8	21	2.6	291,653	29,917	276	131	96	52.6%	8.2%	42.3%	2.2%
Derbyshire County Council	WDA	9	1.1	109	5.9	68,309	1,933	196	80	103	59.2%	-6.2%	56.3%	-6.3%
Staffordshire County Council	WDA	14	1.6	72	4.8	65,109	2,810	175	89	78	49.1%	3.8%	46.7%	4.0%
Shropshire	UA	5	1.6	247	8.9	37,950	3,002	276	94	127	66.1%	1.4%	57.5%	1.4%

¹⁵ WRAPs national HWRC directory compiled by Resource Futures and updated in 2020 as part of their series of HWRC guidance documents. Figures used in this data set were returned from Waste Data Flow.

A.2 Similar authorities

Five local authorities were selected for benchmarking based upon their similarity to CEC in terms of certain demographic data. To measure similarity between authorities, ONS uses the squared Euclidean distance (SED), which is based on 59 variables used in the area classification of local authorities. Variables include statistics based on demographic structure, household composition, housing, socio-economic factors and employment. The five authorities chosen were Cheshire West and Chester, Tewkesbury, Stroud, Stafford and Monmouth.

Vans and Permits

Similar to CEC, both Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire require permits for vans. Staffordshire specify small single axle trailers of no more than 6ft x 4ft in size, while Cheshire West and Chester require trailers of fewer than 3.5 metres in length. Monmouthshire do not permit double-axle trailers, and ask that residents only bring what they can unload within a 15 minute period. Gloucestershire specify that vans or pick-ups pulling a trailer may only present waste in either the van or trailer, but not both. All authorities, except for Monmouthshire, impose a 3.5 tonne gross vehicle weight limit.

Restrictions on rubble/construction waste

Rubble and construction waste is accepted at all sites, provided it is not trade waste, but Staffordshire is the only other authority to charge per item. This includes a £3 charge per bag or large item of rubble, bricks, soil, concrete, stone, fibreglass and ceramics, and £4 per bag or sheet of plasterboard. Only Monmouthshire provides an explicit limit on the amount of non-household waste that will be accepted; either five bags or one small car boot load per visit, and no more than two visits per month.

As with CEC, Cheshire West and Monmouthshire do not accept asbestos. Staffordshire restricts the amount to four sheets or bags per household every six months, while Gloucestershire asks that residents pre-book any asbestos disposal.

Opening hours

Opening hours are varied amongst the authorities, but CEC is among those which offer the longest opening periods. Cheshire West has three sites open for seven days a week and four sites open five days a week. Of the sites that are open for seven days, opening hours extend to 8am-8pm during summer weekdays. In winter, all sites are open 8am-4pm. The Stafford site in Staffordshire is open seven days a week between 9am-5pm, with an extra hour added during summer weekdays. Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire sites are open six days per week, with midweek closing, and are open from 9am-5pm and 8am-5pm respectively.

Materials accepted

Gloucestershire and Staffordshire will accept a maximum of four tyres, with the latter charging £4 per tyre. Both authorities include a more comprehensive list of what cannot be brought to site on their websites, including animal carcasses, petrol and diesel. Gloucestershire also specifies that invasive or poisonous plant species are not brought to site. Only Cheshire West and Chester will not accept gas cylinders, similar to CEC. Monmouthshire mention that black bags will not be accepted with food waste or recyclables inside, as these items are covered in the kerbside collection service.

Coronavirus restrictions

Each authority includes detailed information on their website regarding specific site rules due to Coronavirus. These include keeping to social distancing measures, avoiding the site if you or a household

member has symptoms, and practicing good hygiene measures such as washing hands or wearing gloves. Monmouthshire sites at Mitchel Troy and Usk remain closed, while its remaining two sites have an online booking system in place, limiting visits to one per week. Trailers will only be accepted within the 4pm-4:30pm booking slot due space restrictions, while the first hour of each day is reserved for key workers. Gloucestershire also has a pre-book system in place on their website, but limits residents to one visit per day. Staff are unable to help unload cars, except for blue badge holders in Gloucestershire, and there are limits to the number of people in cars, one or driver plus one. Staffordshire and Monmouthshire ask that only one person leave the vehicle to unload, and therefore remind residents that only items that can be carried by a sole person should be brought to site.

Table 17 Similar authorities HWRC data from the 2018/19 National HWRC Directory¹⁶

Authority	Authority type	No. HWRCs 2018/19	No. HWRCs per 100,000 population	Land area per HWRC, sq. miles	Average site catchment radius, miles	Total HWRC tonnage throughput		HWRC arisings, kg/hh/yr.			HWRC Recycling Rate including rubble		HWRC Recycling Rate excluding rubble	
						2018/19	Difference with previous year	All HWRC throughput	HWRC residual	HWRC recycling, excluding rubble	2018/19	Difference with previous year	2018/19	Difference with previous year
Cheshire East	UA	8	2.1	56	4.2	30,073	-10,895	180	58	116	67.9%	-6.4%	66.7%	-1.0%
Cheshire West and Chester	UA	7	2.1	51	4.0	39,001	-23	268	83	125	68.8%	-0.1%	60.0%	-0.5%
Gloucestershire County Council (Tewkesbury, Stroud)	WDA	5	1.0	201	8.0	56,233	-5,616	256	112	131	56.3%	-11.4%	54.0%	-9.2%
Staffordshire County Council (Stafford)	WDA	14	1.6	72	4.8	65,109	2,810	175	89	78	49.1%	3.8%	46.7%	4.0%
Monmouthshire County Council	UA Wales	4	4.2	82	5.1	19,534	171	492	184	240	62.6%	0.5%	56.5%	0.9%

¹⁶ WRAPs national HWRC directory compiled by Resource Futures and updated in 2020 as part of their series of HWRC guidance documents. Figures used in this data set were returned from Waste Data Flow.

Appendix B Spatial analysis

The current provision offers the best coverage in terms of the shortest drive times for residents, as indicated in Table 18, however both scenario 3 and 4 offer 96% of all properties less than a 20-minute drive to their nearest HWRC. In scenario 3 and 4, only 4% of households are required to drive for more than 20 minutes to reach their nearest site and in scenario 4, the majority (86%) are able to reach their nearest HWRC within 15 minutes by car.

Table 18 Proportion of households in each of the drive time bands for each scenario

	Proportion of Households				
Scenario	Less than 5 minutes	Less than 10 minutes	Less than 15 minutes	Less than 20 minutes	More than 20 minutes
Current	22%	63%	91%	98%	2%
Scenario 1	11%	37%	68%	88%	12%
Scenario 2	13%	43%	78%	93%	7%
Scenario 3	15%	48%	82%	96%	4%
Scenario 4	17%	52%	86%	96%	4%

The figure below presents the modelled data in terms of cumulative coverage, whereby the proportion of the population served is plotted with each minute driving time from their closest site. The scenario with the left-most cumulative percentage offers the best provision to households and the right-most the least preferable, in terms of drive time. However, it should be noted that the analysis does not account for road works or areas of peak-time congestion.

As can be seen from the graph, the current scenario offers the best provision, followed by scenario 4 and scenario 3. Scenario 1 offers the least provision

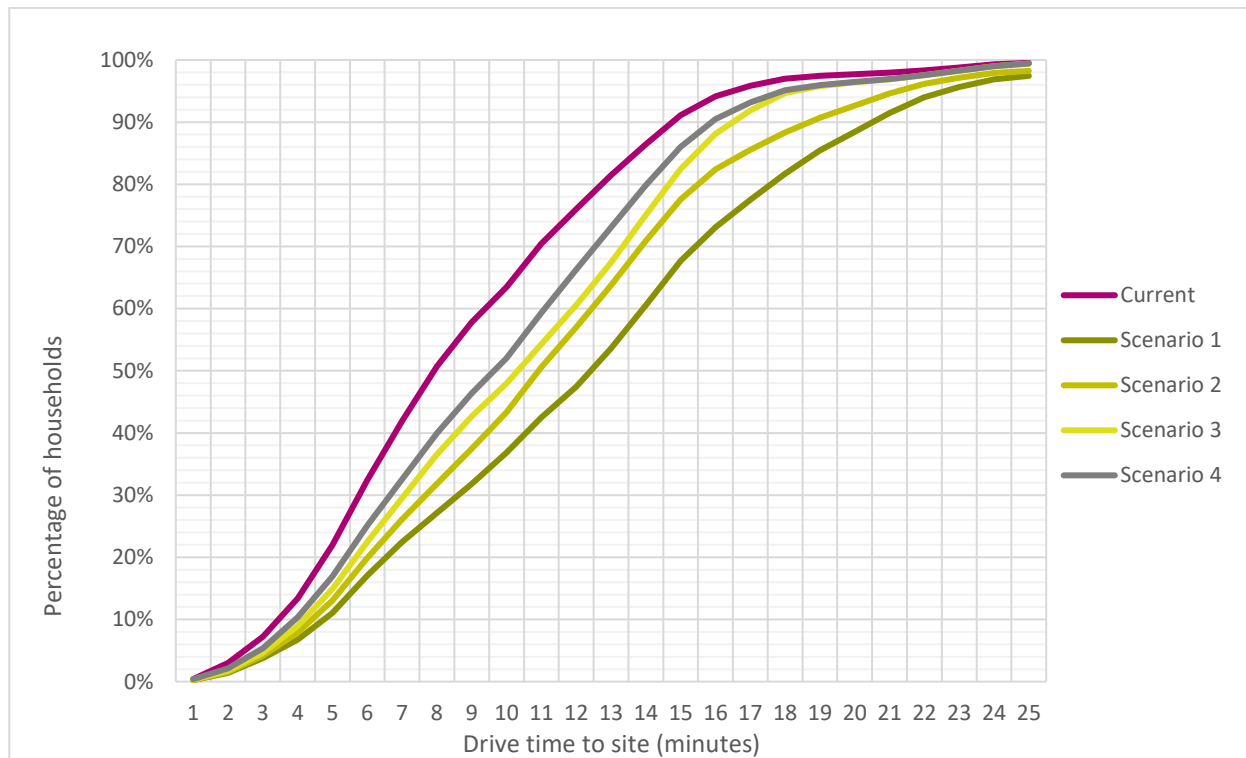


Figure 8 Cumulative drive time for HWRC scenarios

The following table shows the analysis of the distance between residents and their nearest HWRC site. It can be seen that the distance for the majority of residents is less than 8km (equivalent to 5 miles) for three of the four scenarios.

Table 19 Distance from the nearest HWRC

Scenario	Proportion of Households				
	Less than 2 km	2 to 4 km	4 to 6 km	6 to 8 km	More than 8 km
	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5
Current	15%	32%	15%	14%	24%
Scenario 1	7%	18%	13%	8%	54%
Scenario 2	7%	21%	15%	12%	45%
Scenario 3	9%	23%	15%	11%	42%
Scenario 4	11%	25%	15%	13%	36%

Appendix C Detailed legislation assessment

C.1 The Resources and Waste Strategy

The Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS) sets out a broad range of measures that will affect HWRCs and the waste sector in general. The overarching expectation is for a shift to full alignment with the waste hierarchy through prevention and re-use.

The means to deliver this evolution described in the RWS include revised and expanded EPR and minimum requirements through Ecodesign and are expected to fundamentally alter the amount of waste generated, the nature of that waste, and how waste management systems are operated and funded.

Five priority areas are outlined for EPR, three of which will have direct impacts upon HWRCs:

- **Textiles** – Including at least all clothing, as well as other household and commercial textiles such as bed linens;
- **Bulky waste** – Including mattresses, furniture and carpets; and
- **Vehicle tyres** – Including tyres from cars, motorcycles, commercial and goods vehicles, and heavy machinery.

The EU Circular Economy Package sets minimum requirements for EPR schemes specifying, amongst other things, that producers must bear at least 80% of the costs of separate waste collection, transport and treatment necessary to meet EU targets¹⁷. Furthermore, EPR fees will be modulated to incentivise improvements to product durability, reparability, re-usability and recyclability and the presence of hazardous substances, thereby encouraging a life-cycle approach to production. The RWS goes further with regards to packaging, ensuring that producers pay the full net cost of managing the waste at end of life, i.e. 100% of the cost, and that full net cost recovery will underpin the Government framework for EPR as applied to other products. With regards to EPR, the RWS states that the Government will ensure that local authorities are resourced to meet new net costs arising from the policies in the RWS, including upfront transition costs and ongoing operational costs.

While EPR in the forms being debated for consultation and eventual implementation have derived from the EU Circular Economy Package, there may be questions about the likelihood of the UK Government maintaining regulatory alignment with the EU on packaging legislation now that the UK has left the European Union. At this moment, it is envisaged that packaging legislation may well stay aligned (or very closely aligned) as pan-European and global packaging producers operating across the EU will seek this assurance, and UK Ministers have repeatedly indicated their desire to even deliver stronger policy than that of the EU. This will need monitoring throughout the passage of the Environment Bill and in the subsequent detailed consultation on EPR options, expected in the autumn.

EPR reform is likely to:

- Change the amount of waste entering HWRCs vs. other waste systems;
- Create new waste management systems, e.g. takeback schemes, re-use networks, remanufacturing and repair centres, and specialist recycling centres;
- Change the design of products to enable longer product lifetimes, re-use, repair, modularity, and recyclability;
- Change the nature of waste entering HWRCs as product design changes and some end of life products are diverted to new waste management systems;
- Change how waste management is funded as producers will be liable to pay for waste management, presenting a revenue opportunity for Councils managing EPR product waste; and
- Require detailed data management for reporting and cost-recovery purposes on the part of actors managing EPR product waste.

The waste streams relevant to HWRCs that are most likely to be affected first are:

- Textiles
- Bulky waste
- Vehicle tyres
- Packaging

¹⁷ Different rules apply to EPR schemes for ELV, Batteries and WEEE. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018L0851&from=EN>

- WEEE
- Batteries and accumulators

These changes are expected to be implemented by 2023.

Carbon-based targets and natural capital accounting are proposed, moving away from weight-based targets, and inevitably driving different waste management choices. This will undoubtedly be used to support the Government commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050, outlined in the Environment Bill below.

The RWS dedicates Chapter 2 to “Helping consumers take more considered action”, addressing consumption and disposal behaviour with aims to:

- Incentivise consumers to purchase sustainably
- Provide consumers with better information on the sustainability of their purchases
- Ban plastic products where there is a clear case for it and alternatives exist
- Address barriers to re-use
- Support the market for remanufactured goods
- Encourage appropriate disposal of used products
- Lead by example through procurement and the Greening Government Commitments

Specific actions include:

- Addressing barriers to re-use at Household Waste Recycling Centres and consulting on further measures to boost re-use, including reporting and re-use targets;
- Investigating amending the recycling credit system used by two-tier authorities;
- Reviewing the Controlled Waste Regulations and Household Waste Recycling Centres to ensure they are delivering value for money;
- Extending product lifetimes through warranties and disclosure;
- Supporting the market for remanufactured goods, including by developing quality assurance schemes to boost consumer confidence;
- Supporting large-scale re-use and repair through national planning policy;
- Introducing a DRS for single-use drinks containers, subject to consultation;
- Banning the most problematic plastic products, such as plastic drink straws, where there is a clear case for it and alternatives exist; and
- Producing consumer guidance for the recycling, resale, re-use and disposal of consumer internet-connected devices.

These actions reflect the emphasis on re-use, repair and waste prevention that runs throughout the RWS.

The DRS may also provide a potential funding stream for deposit-bearing items collected at HWRCs.

Furthermore, Chapter 4 of the RWS sets out measures to tackle waste crime, which will be supported by sophisticated digital waste tracking systems as mandated in the Environment Bill described below. Recent media exposés of illegal waste sites abroad treating UK exports of municipal waste have caused public outcry. Stricter monitoring of exports and waste supply chains is likely to improve environmental outcomes, potentially closing some treatment routes or increasing costs as a result of avoiding malpractice.

Ecodesign legislation is also discussed, with ambition to exceed the EU’s Ecodesign standards where economically practicable, expanding the scope to cover more resource intensive product groups such as textiles and furniture. The availability of spare parts to facilitate repair, and the presence of harmful chemicals and their impact on recycling are highlighted as key issues.

C.2 The Environment Bill

The Environment Bill¹⁸ currently in Parliament, but temporarily delayed as a result of the COVID-19 emergency, will be subject to scrutiny and amendment at Committee Stage¹⁹ and Third Reading, noting that the Committee Stage was suspended but is now scheduled to report by 29th of September. No further information on scheduling the bill is available at the time of writing but it is important to remember that this flagship legislation will need to be approved by the end of 2020 when the UK leaves the European Union.

It is the legislation that will enact many of the measures outlined in the RWS above. In addition, it sets out:

- A commitment to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050;
- Charges to minimise the use and impacts of single use plastics;
- Mandatory electronic tracking of waste; and
- A new public body, the Office for Environmental Protection, to be an independent watchdog to hold government and other public bodies to account on fulfilling their obligations on the environment.

Waste will be a key policy area in environmental legislation going forwards, particularly in relation to carbon targets due to the considerable amount of emissions associated with waste management and the opportunity to cut emissions through waste prevention, re-use and recycling. The Environment Bill also addresses air quality, which may influence decisions around waste treatment methods, waste transport distances and even HWRC site design and traffic, particularly when sited in urban areas.

C.3 EU Ecodesign implementing Regulations

EU regulations, published on the 1st of October 2019, set out Ecodesign requirements for the following product groups²⁰:

- Household refrigerators
- Light sources
- Electronic displays
- Dishwashers
- Washing machines and washer-driers
- Motors
- External power supplies
- Refrigerators with a direct sales function
- Power transformers
- Welding equipment

A key component of the Ecodesign requirements centres on the 'right to repair'. Specific requirements are set out under resource efficiency detailing spare parts and repair and maintenance information that must be made available to professional repairers and end-users. The regulations intend to support prolonged

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environment-bill-2020/30-january-2020-environment-bill-2020-policy-statement>

¹⁹ Environment Bill 2020 Second Reading, Hansard 26 February 2020 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-02-26/debates/684530F9-0440-45F3-8768-E0E208082739/EnvironmentBill>

²⁰ Regulation laying down ecodesign requirements 1 October 2019, <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/regulation-laying-down-ecodesign-requirements-1-october-2019>

product lifetimes, repair and re-use, thereby reducing consumption and waste. If the market responds accordingly, it may also present opportunities for sale of spare parts from products brought to HWRCs. The new regulations also include requirements for repairability and recyclability, contributing to circular economy objectives by improving the life span, maintenance, re-use, upgrade, recyclability and waste handling of appliances²¹.

C.4 Impact of Covid-19

Local authorities and their waste contractors have responded to the pandemic in creative ways, with very few negative news stories about waste management. The industry's profile has been enhanced and the fact that it is designated "key" has been such an important recognition.

Waste Disposal Authorities and their contractors have managed to respond to varying demands; they have been flexible in the face of staffing shortages, assisting collection authorities through staff re-deployment from Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs); incorporated the changing health and safety guidance into safe systems of work and responded to the change in public expectation of service provision; opening as many services as possible as quickly as possible.

Priorities and planning

The length of time from most HWRCs being closed to most being re-opened has been around a month. Discussions with local authority waste managers have shown that some authorities managed to re-open some HWRC sites *in less than a week from the decision being made*. Those that have managed to re-open in such a short time had been working on plans with their contractors for two or three weeks beforehand and had kept a watching brief on developments at all times.

There are a multitude of aspects to be considered before re-opening, not least the management of demand; so, whilst not discounting the importance of off-take, markets for recyclables and disposal the measures and systems that local authorities have put in place to manage demand effectively whilst also adhering to social distancing guidelines. Examples have included:

1. Prioritising the opening of larger sites, where social distancing can be maintained.
2. Implementing booking systems, with access being through Council websites, call centres and phone apps.
3. Managed queueing systems, with increased communication between site staff and site users.

Booking systems

Authorities have implemented booking systems that can be accessed on-line only or by 'phone and other systems as well. Many authorities have focussed on only allowing domestic vehicles to be booked in, at least initially, to cope with the domestic demand and because they take less time to empty than larger vans and trailers. The booking slots have varied in length, from 15 minutes to an hour. Some allow a longer "window" so that, if the site user is delayed for any reason, they will still have chance to use the site; others are more time-specific. Authorities allow differing number of vehicles on site during those slots depending on the size of the site and the number of site staff. This booking slot can easily be changed to allow increases or decreases in numbers depending on staff availability and even fluctuations in the local severity of the pandemic. Using booking systems, means greater restrictions and control can be applied should

²¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_19_5895

there be upsurges in Covid-19 which could affect site users, those operating the site and associated off-takers and sub-contractors.

The implementation of booking systems has improved the flow of site users within the sites and helped them to use the sites more effectively; this has also prevented site-staff being inundated at peak periods and has enabled much greater communication between the site staff and site users. The add-on benefits have been increased sorting of materials for recycling and re-use and some reported decrease in residual waste. The booking system can also help to reduce abuse of the site from unauthorised use, such as commercial vehicles, and there is less likelihood of abuse towards site staff if users have to register to use the site.

Most authorities spoken to are intending to keep their booking system going forwards, with adaptations made to numbers on site as lockdown lifts, with additional expansion of the booking categories to allow more vans and trailers, giving those vehicles with larger loads to deposit, a longer time slot or having fewer vans and trailers within each time slot.

It has been reported by HWRC staff, both site staff and council officers, that site users have also been positive about the introduction of booking systems, as queueing is reduced and more assistance is available; they seem to be in favour of the system continuing post-Covid.

Limiting the types of materials accepted

Some authorities, at least initially, limited the types of materials they were accepting; firstly allowing excess black bag waste and then expanding the range/size of materials as throughput decreased following the initial rush - some authorities not allowing larger items, such as furniture and white goods or DIY waste, until recently.

The initial control of the type of waste accepted, often in combination with booking systems and other site access systems, has helped authorities to manage off-take and has allowed the off-takers themselves time to restart their own processes. It has been apparent that a difficult area to re-start has been that of re-use, with site re-use facilities and shops and charity off-takers being hard-hit by the pandemic. This has included schemes like Community RePaint, the paint drop-off and collect re-use system. However, recently, re-use has gradually re-started at HWRCs²².

Furloughing has affected all parts of the waste management system and infrastructure, yet careful, staged re-opening has helped local authorities source destinations for all the waste and material streams.

Limiting the types of materials accepted on site may be another control measure that could be quickly adapted should there be any resurgence of the pandemic; priority materials could still be accepted, always taking into account the impact on the waste and recycling chain downstream, such has been the case, with the knock-on effects on supply of wood-waste to biomass and off-take of WEEE.

Controlled queueing

Some authorities were unable to implement booking systems for various reasons. This included those where reciprocal agreements between neighbouring authorities were in place - for allowing each other's residents on site - but where they had different systems, or different demands and where other authorities' sites weren't re-opening. Cross-border site use had to be considered. Others found it difficult to set up a

²² <https://www.letsrecycle.com/news/latest-news/councils-tentative-steps-open-reuse-shops/>

booking system in the time available as they didn't have any existing system in place that they could adapt or add to.

In these cases, queueing systems have been well-managed by local authorities, with few reported incidents of frustration leading to aggression. Authorities have employed traffic control experts and have liaised with local police forces and highway authorities to enable traffic signs, cones and routes to be clearly laid out and well-managed.

Site staff have been only allowing an agreed number of vehicles on site at any one time and have been ensuring good and regular communication along the queue of vehicles – telling people how long they are going to have to wait. At an agreed time prior to site closure, staff or traffic managers have been warning those queueing that they might not have time to access the site and that it's their choice whether to risk staying in the queue and the site closing or leaving and visiting another day.

Now that local authorities have tried and tested ways of introducing managed queueing at sites, this is another form of control that could be re-implemented if necessary.

Benefits of the measures for dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic at HWRCs

The measures implemented to manage HWRC may have many positive aspects, including:

- It allows local authorities and their contractors to control site demand and have a smoother flow of inputs and outputs from the sites.
- It has potential to reduce abuse of staff on site and at access points.
- It has created tried and tested systems to control site use, for if there is a resurgence of the pandemic or other emergency situations.
- It has enabled the collation of increased information and data on site use.
- It is helping with increased segregation of materials for recycling and reuse and reduced residual waste.
- It promotes increased interaction between site staff and site users and can enable increased education opportunities, helping to inform the public, with positive behaviour-change as a result.

Ultimately, users of HWRCs, who have a positive, well-managed experience, might take the time to think more about the stuff they bring and that it might have a value.

Appendix D Contract incentives and penalties examples

Devon County Council: Devon County Council created a residual waste diversion target-based contract with their waste contractor. The contractor is not obliged to meet the target, but a bonus is given when it is achieved, and a penalty awarded if not. The target was introduced around 15 years ago and was increased by a percentage every year (by 0.25%) to boost performance. Once the sites achieved a high-performance level (70-80%) continued increases became unsustainable. At this point the diversion rate was set at 80%, with only 20% going to disposal.

Bonus payments replicated the avoided disposal costs (£100 per tonne). Bonuses were originally based on recycling performance alone but now include recycling and recovery to focus on residual waste reduction. The target is more difficult now as the EA is more restrictive on recycling activities. For example, many uses of recycled wood, such as animal bedding, are no longer permitted and so the only viable option for poor quality wood is biomass. Penalties were set higher at £120 per tonne and provide an important measure to

prevent poor performance. Use of this system rather than a contractual minimum performance targets helps prevent contract breaks and renegotiation or an expensive re-procurement exercise.

A separate re-use target is also written into the waste contract to incentivise re-use. This is set at 0.75% of total site throughput. Re-use revenue is shared evenly between DCC and the contractor. The bonus equates to equally shared revenue from re-use between DCC and Suez. The penalty for not meeting the target is set at £200 per tonne.

Dorset Waste Partnership: A target and bonus system is in place to minimise waste whilst promoting better segregation of materials, based around those material streams the Council pays for (green waste, wood and residual). Where targets are met the Partnership shares 30% of the avoided gate fees as a bonus. The contract also includes a clause that ensures the payment is shared with site staff as further incentive. Whilst this results in a relatively small loss to the contractor it translates to a good incentive for individual members of staff.

If performance falls 5% below the target a contract-default situation is triggered, so that the Partnership is protected if expectations are not met. A default escalator is applied to the recycling target each year to year to drive continued performance. However, targets are agreed annually together to remain realistic.

The two-part incentive system drives high performance, reduced costs and avoids unintended consequences. A recycling rate target alone may not incentivise a contractor to strictly enforce charging for non-household waste streams such as plasterboard that would otherwise inflate recycling figures. The system has flexibility to adapt to external influences that affect waste arisings and recycling rates such as unexpected weather patterns. A recycling target of 71.5% is set across whole HWRC network.

Durham County Council: Durham has 12 HWRCs with an additional one mobile site for rural Upper Weardale. The high-performance rates achieved on these HWRCs are attributed mainly to having had a well-defined and executed procurement process. It ensured that written into the specifications of the contract was a minimum of 70% recycling rate and 90% total diversion of waste from landfill.

The total diversion rate currently sits at 82% including rubble and material sent to RDF. The total recycling rate across all sites excluding rubble was 66% in 2017/18. The diversion rate had been higher but due to the loss of mattress and carpet recycling facilities it has declined in recent years and a new target of 80% (including rubble) was agreed. The effectiveness of the council's relationship with their contractor means that despite these challenges HWRCs are still able to maintain strong recycling rates.

Luton Borough Council: The current contract here is managed through a public-private partnership with a waste contractor until 2021. The partnership is based on a 'unitary' rate, with financial rewards for recycling performance to ensure recycling rates on site continue to increase. A 60% minimum recycling rate is specified in the contract with contractual conditions in place to penalise the waste contractor if the target is not achieved. The target is continually increased and initially started at 45%. The minimum contracted rate has resulted in reduced complaints from the public and a general improvement in recycling rates, with a recycling rate of over 70% currently being achieved.

Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority: Merseyside is under a Waste Management and Recycling Contract which includes operation of 14 HWRCs and two Material Recovery Facilities. The contract recycling rate target is 53%, which due to use continuous improvements and positive incentive mechanisms has been exceeded (70%). The lower contract target reflected the HWRC performance at the time of contracting in 2009. There is a commitment to improve recycling performance and move up the waste hierarchy wherever possible, however it is acknowledged that this becomes more challenging as the easy

wins have been achieved, and due to financial constraints. Waste disposal costs are levied (under the EPA powers) from the Waste Collection Authorities. Levy costs are based on tonnage and population in each council area. An additional 24,000 tonnes were recycled above target in 2017/18, giving savings of circa £150,000 due to cost-effectiveness improvements. 2017/18 was the highest performing year since 2009 despite the highest tonnage throughput.

Nottingham City Council: Nottingham City Council has one HWRC, with an additional four HWRCs run by Nottingham County Council. The City Council currently has the highest HWRC recycling rate in England. The existing contract includes a target and bonus system with financial rewards available where the contractor exceeds an 85% recycling and diversion rate, meaning no more than 15% can be landfilled. Bonuses are linked to the avoided landfill cost currently equating to £69/tonne. The contract includes a bonus scheme to incentivise the contractor and their staff.

A summary of responses to Cheshire East Council's

Household Waste Recycling Centre Consultation

Final: Version 1

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Report produced on 01 February 2021 by the Research and Consultation Team, Cheshire East Council, Email RandC@cheshireeast.gov.uk for further information.

Executive summary and conclusions

Between 23 November 2020 and 4 January 2021 Cheshire East Council consulted on various options for future Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) provision in the borough. The results of which will be used to inform the future design and procurement process of a new provider of the service.

The options presented were based on an independent review commissioned by the Council to assess alternative service scenarios, as the current contract comes to an end within the next 3 years. The options presented as part of the consultation were:

- **Remain with current service:** Replacement of Congleton site
- **Alternative service: Scenario 4:** Closure of Congleton & Poynton
- **Alternative service: Scenario 3:** Closure of Congleton, Middlewich & Poynton
- **Alternative service: Scenario 2:** Closure of Bollington, Congleton, Middlewich & Poynton
- **Alternative service: Scenario 1:** Closure of Alsager, Bollington, Congleton, Middlewich & Poynton

Support was greatest for the option '**Remain with current service**' (59% overall, tend to or strongly support), with opposition increasing in each alternative scenario where a HWRC site was being proposed to close (65% overall, tend to or strongly oppose '**Scenario 4**' increasing to 97% for '**Scenario 1**'). Generally, in each scenario opposition was greatest with the HWRC users whose nearest site was identified, apart from '**Scenario 1**' where opposition was strong across all HWRC users.

The impact of each option, upon stakeholders, followed a similar pattern to that noted above with '**Remain with current service**' reported as having the least impact (51% overall, fairly or very low impact). For '**Scenario 4**', 53% overall, stated that it would have a fairly or very high impact on them personally, increasing to 95% for '**Scenario 1**'. The likely impact again was generally reported as being greatest by those HWRC users whose nearest site(s) were identified as potentially being closed.

74% of respondents stated that they would be willing to travel up to 10 minutes to reach a HWRC site, 24% would be willing to travel 10 to 20 minutes. With the current service it seems that many respondents reside within a 10-minute drive time to their nearest HWRC. However, this would not be the case for many respondents in several of the alternative scenarios.

Within the survey respondents were asked to provide any comments / considerations we may need to be aware of as part of this review. The top themes emerging from the comments were around the environmental impacts closing sites may cause for example, concern about fly tipping, carbon footprint, pollution and congestion, misuse of kerbside bin collections and reduction in recycling rates. Other concerns included the increased time / cost it would take to travel to an alternate site including an increased difficulty for those of an older age/ the disabled and increase in demand due to new houses being built. Some suggestions and general comments were also received. Section 3 of this report provides further insight into the main concerns under each main theme respondents had about closure of HWRC sites.

The Research and Consultation team recommend that the findings in this report are reviewed and considered alongside any other evidence whilst making a decision.

Introduction

Purpose of the consultation

Between 23 November 2020 and 4 January 2021 Cheshire East Council consulted on various options for future Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) provision in the borough.

The options presented were based on an independent review commissioned by the Council to assess alternative service scenarios as the current contract comes to an end within the next 3 years. The full review conducted is available on the [Cheshire East Website](#).

Consultation methodology and number of responses

The consultation was mainly held online (due to the current Covid-19 restrictions) with paper versions being available on request. It was promoted to:

- HWRC Users, via posters at all Cheshire East Council HWRC sites
- The general public, via the council webpage, social media sites and through a press release.

The consultation picked up a lot of interest and was mentioned in numerous news articles. In total, 10,208 consultation responses were received, including:

- 10,173 online survey responses
- 4 paper survey responses
- 31 email responses

We are also aware of 1 petition on change.org 'Save our Congleton Recycling Centre' this petition is currently still ongoing, at the time of writing this report it has received around 1,900 signatures.

A breakdown of demographics for the online & paper survey can be viewed in Appendix 1.

Section 1 – Current use of HWRC sites

As part of the, survey respondents were asked how often approximately, in a typical 12-month period, do they visit each of the current HWRC sites within Cheshire East. This question was asked to gain an insight into respondent usage and doesn't reflect actual usage of the sites in a typical 12-month period.

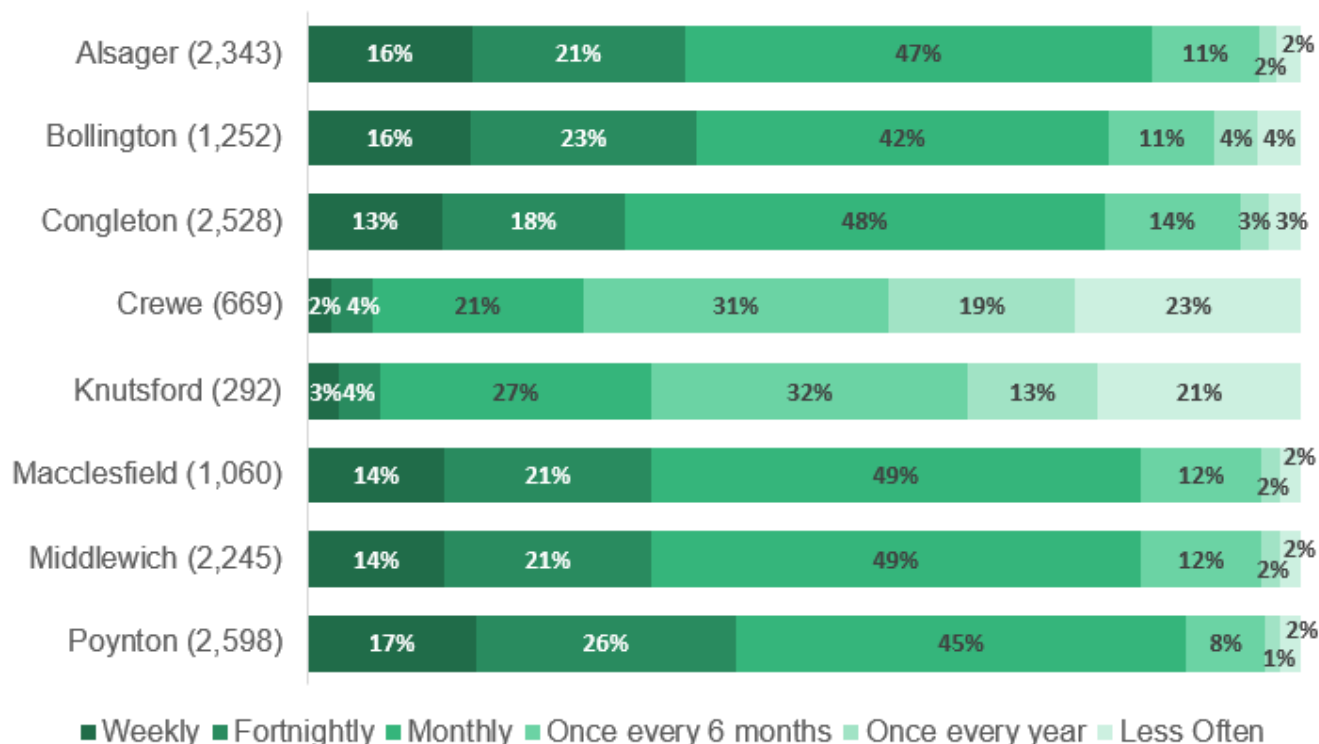
Figure1 shows the breakdown of results, excluding those who stated never. For most of the HWRC site's respondents represent frequent users - typically visiting monthly or more often:

- Alsager, 85% typically visit monthly or more often
- Bollington, 81% typically visit monthly or more often
- Congleton, 80% typically visit monthly or more often
- Macclesfield, 84% typically visit monthly or more often
- Middlewich, 84% typically visit monthly or more often
- Poynton, 88% typically visit monthly or more often

For Crewe and Knutsford HWRC sites however, respondents represented less frequent users visiting once every 6 months or less often:

- Crewe, 72% typically visit once every 6 months or less often
- Knutsford, 65% typically visit once every 6 months or less often

Figure 1: How often respondents visit Cheshire East HWRC sites in a typical 12-month period (excluding those who stated never)



Many respondents (83%) had visited only one Cheshire East HWRC site within a typical 12-month period, 16% had visited two different sites and 5% had visited more than two different sites.

Table 1 below, provides further insight into respondent distribution per HWRC site. Users of Alsager, Congleton, Middlewich and Poynton HWRCs represent around one quarter of the overall response per site. Bollington HWRC users represent 12% of the overall response.

Please note that percentages won't add up to 100 as respondents could indicate that they used more than one HWRC site.

Table 1: User count by HWRC and Percentage of total response

HWRC Site	User Count	Percentage of total respondents
Alsager	2,343	23%
Bollington	1,252	12%
Congleton	2,528	25%
Crewe	669	7%
Knutsford	292	3%
Macclesfield	1,060	10%
Middlewich	2,245	22%
Poynton	2,598	26%
Total Respondents	10,177	

Within section 2 of the report, the results are shown overall and are also broken down by site users (excludes those who stated that they had never visited for each HWRC site).

Section 2 – The options

Respondents were presented with a table providing a summary of the impacts of each option being considered by the Council as part of the review. A further document giving more detail on the impacts of the options was also provided along with a link to the full independent review document.

The options presented were: -

- **Remain with current service:** Replacement of Congleton site
- **Alternative service: Scenario 4:** Closure of Congleton & Poynton
- **Alternative service: Scenario 3:** Closure of Congleton, Middlewich & Poynton
- **Alternative service: Scenario 2:** Closure of Bollington, Congleton, Middlewich & Poynton
- **Alternative service: Scenario 1:** Closure of Alsager, Bollington, Congleton, Middlewich & Poynton

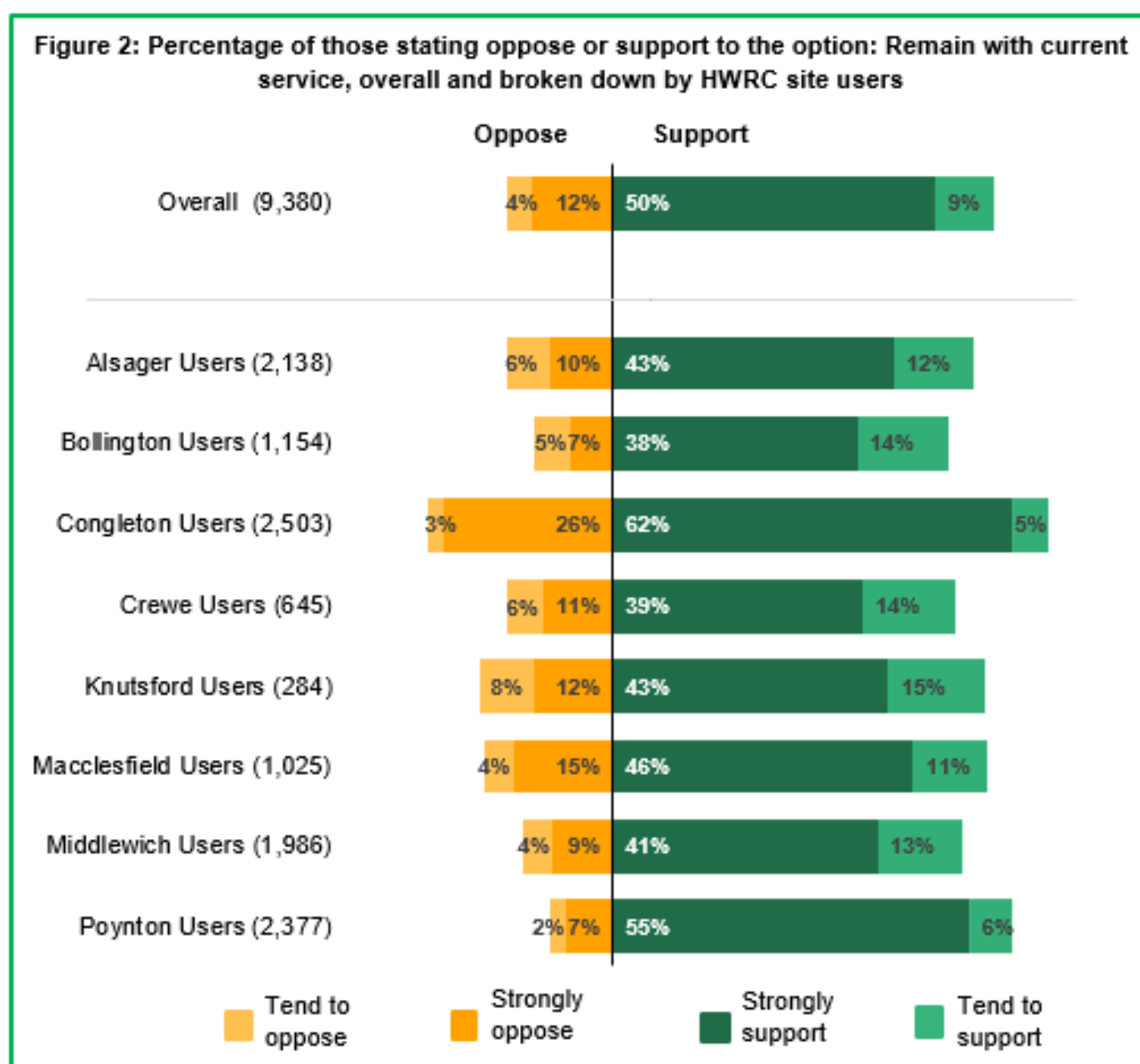
After respondents were asked to review the information, they were asked how strongly they supported or opposed each option as well as what impact each option would have on them personally. The rest of this section reports on the results received for each option in turn.

Please note that 'users' excludes those who stated that they had never visited for each HWRC site.

Remain with current service

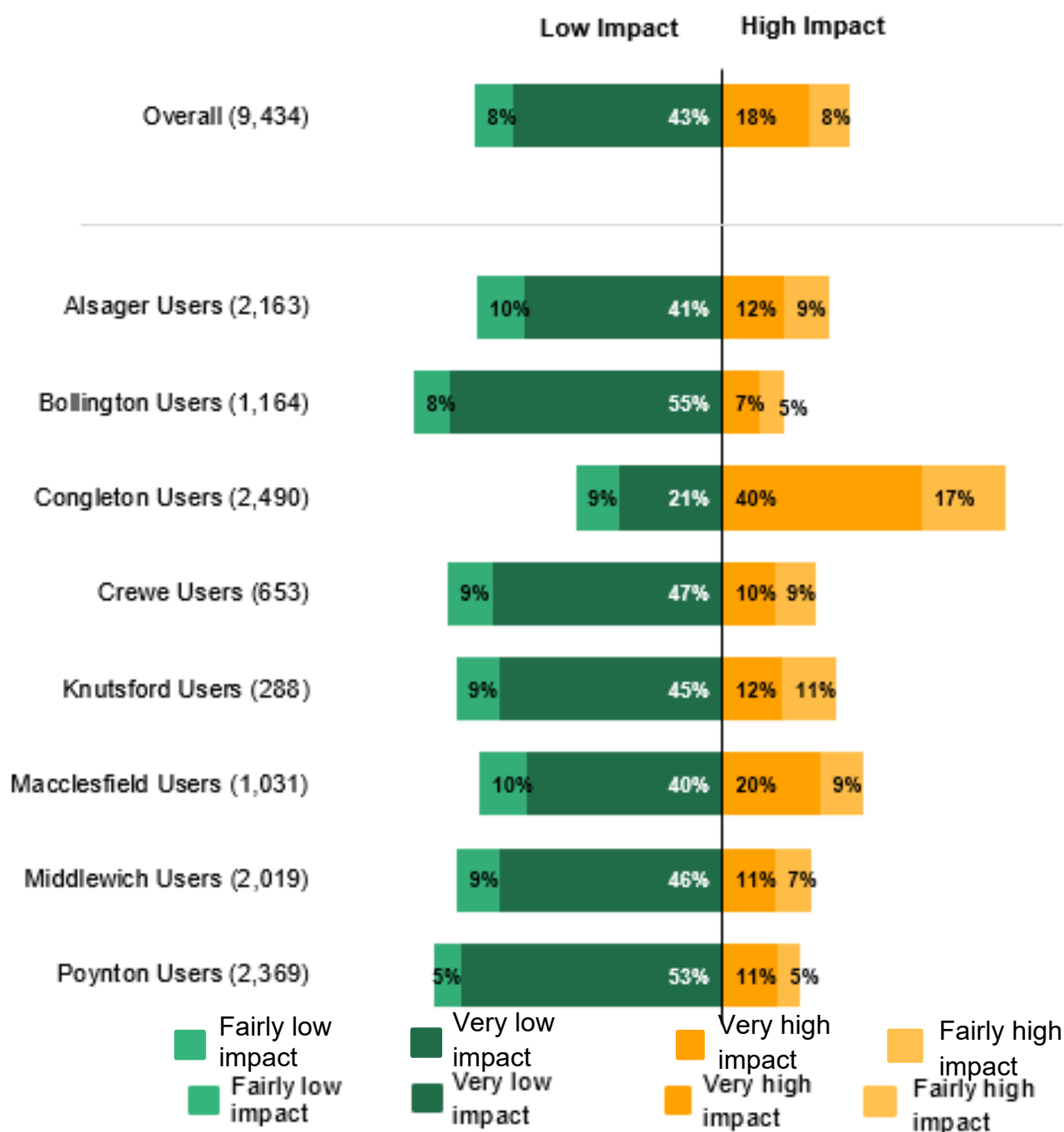
Under this option, Congleton HWRC site would need to be replaced, in order to maintain current levels of service. The current site is not owned by the Council and a long-term lease of this land has not been able to be secured.

Over one half of all respondents (59%) stated that they strongly or tend to support this option overall. Congleton HWRC site users were more likely to strongly support this option compared to other site users (62% strongly support). Correspondingly, they were also more likely to strongly oppose this option (26% strongly oppose). This perhaps represents those who do not want the site to be replaced or to change location and would rather it remain where it is. Figure 2 shows the percentage of those that stated oppose or support broken down by each HWRC site users. The remainder of the respondents (not shown on Figure 2) either selected 'neither support nor oppose' or 'don't know / unsure'.



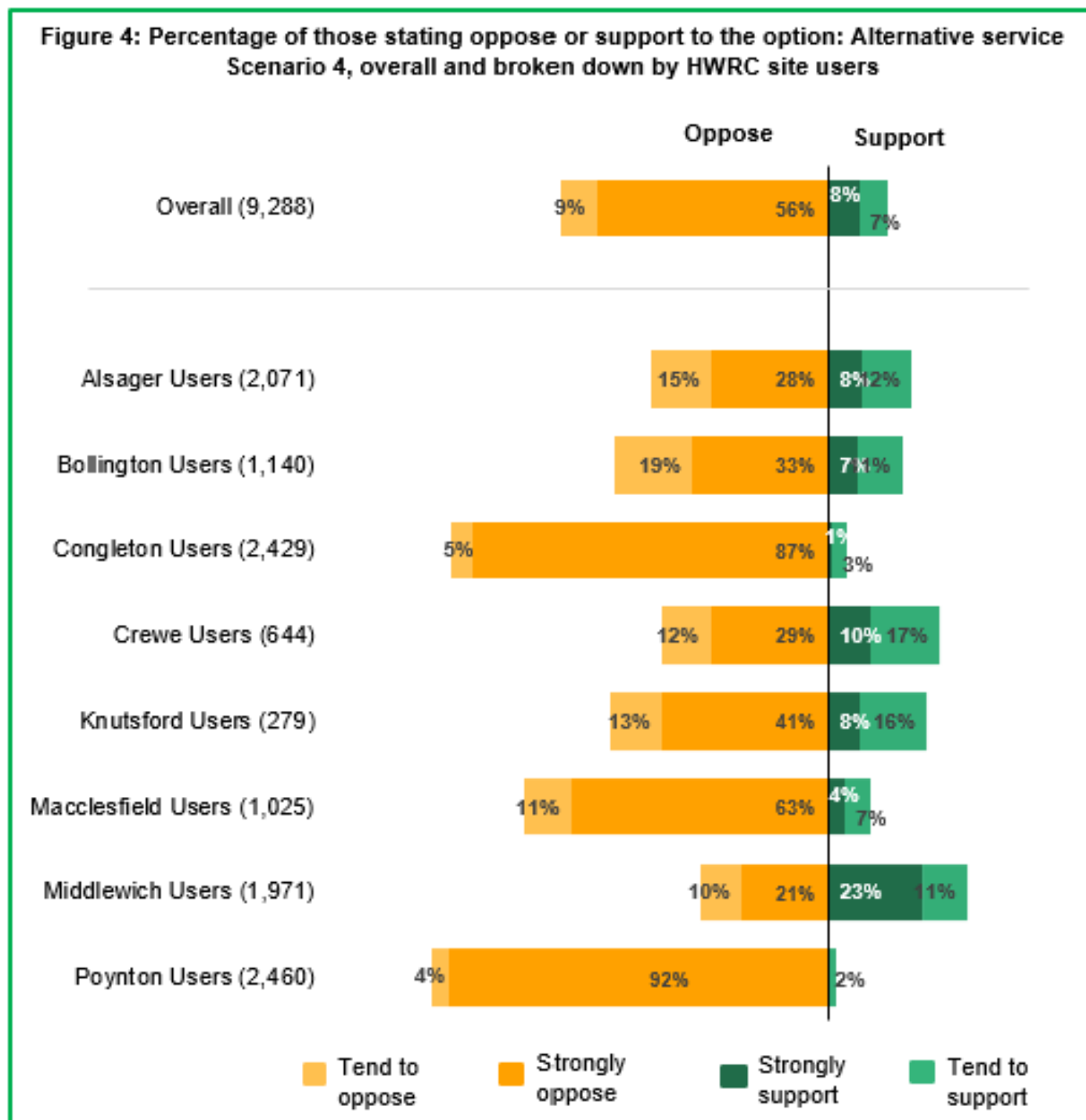
Just over one half of all respondents (51%) stated that this option would have a fairly or very low impact on them personally. Even though Congleton HWRC users were more likely to support this option they were also more likely to state that this option would impact them personally (58% very or fairly high impact compared to 26% Cheshire East overall). This probably reflects those who may feel that a replacement site / change in location to the current site would impact them and their current use.

Figure 3: Percentage of those stating that the option: Remain with current service, would have a low impact or high impact on them personally, overall and broken down by HWRC site users



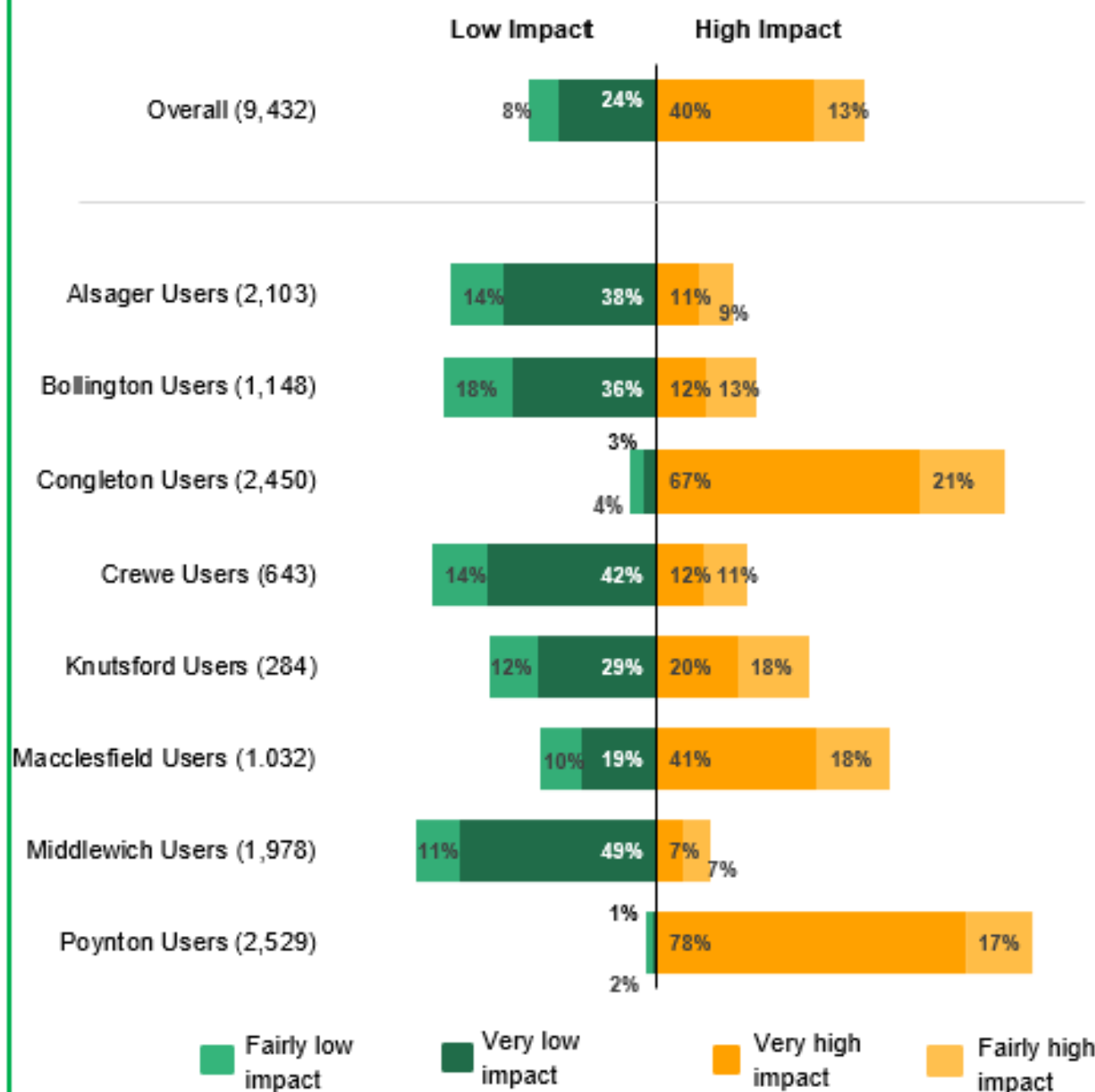
Alternative service: Scenario 4

Most respondents opposed this option, with 65% stating that they tend to or strongly oppose this option overall. Both Congleton and Poynton HWRC would close in this scenario, unsurprisingly users of these sites were more likely to oppose this option, compared to the other HWRC site users (92% and 96% oppose respectively). The remainder of the respondents (not shown on figure 4) either selected 'neither support nor oppose' or 'don't know / unsure'.



Just over one half of all respondents (53%) stated that this option would have a fairly or very high impact on them personally. Congleton and Poynton HWRC users were more likely to state that this option would personally impact them (88% and 95% respectively). Macclesfield HWRC users reported a slightly greater impact compared with the other remaining HWRC users, 59% feeling that this scenario would impact them (see figure 5). This might represent those with a concern that closing Poynton HWRC would mean that this would result in a greater use of the Macclesfield HWRC site as the next closest site.

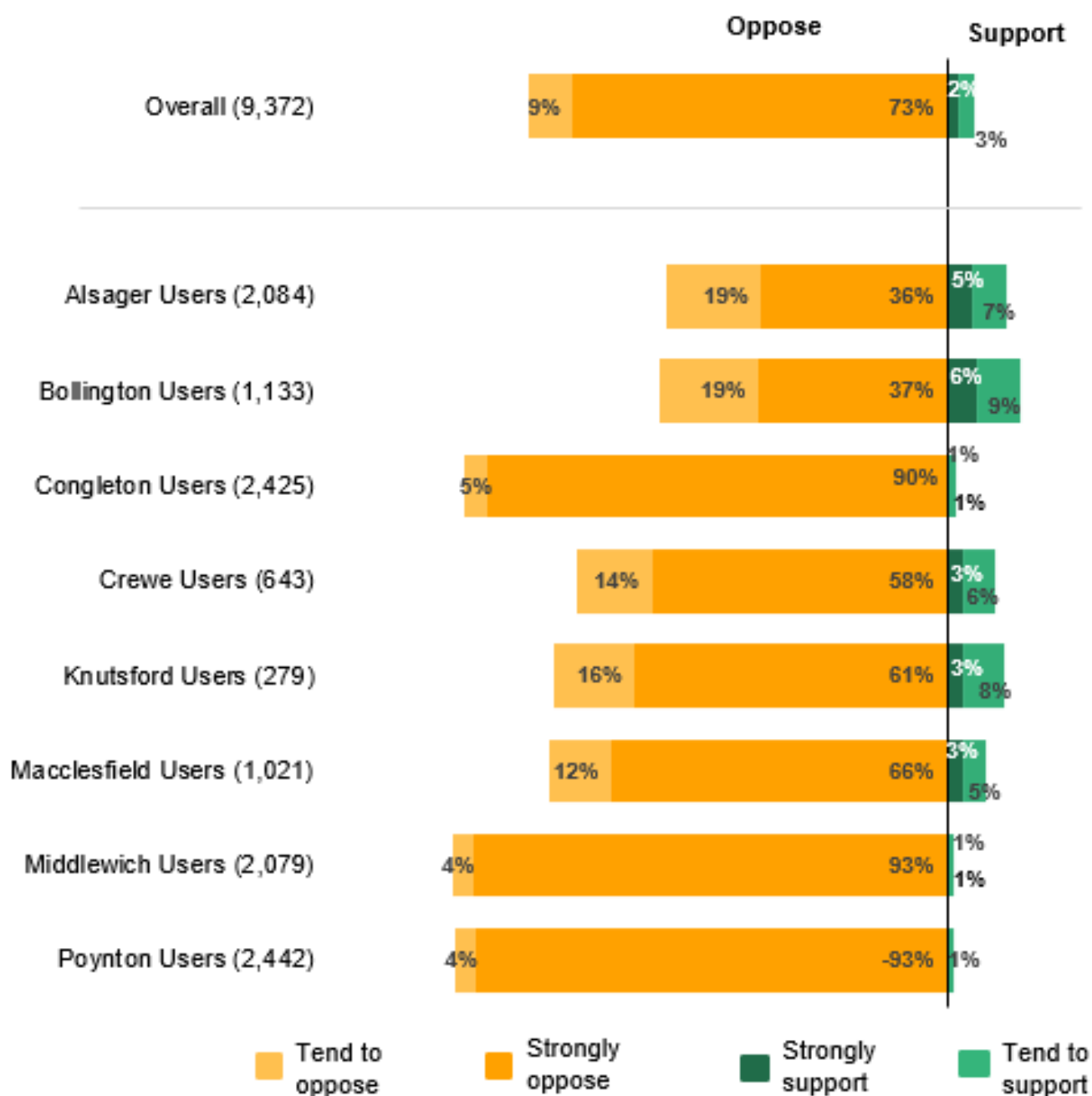
Figure 5: Percentage of those stating that the option: Alternative service Scenario 4, would have a low impact or high impact on them personally, overall and broken down by HWRC site users



Alternative service: Scenario 3

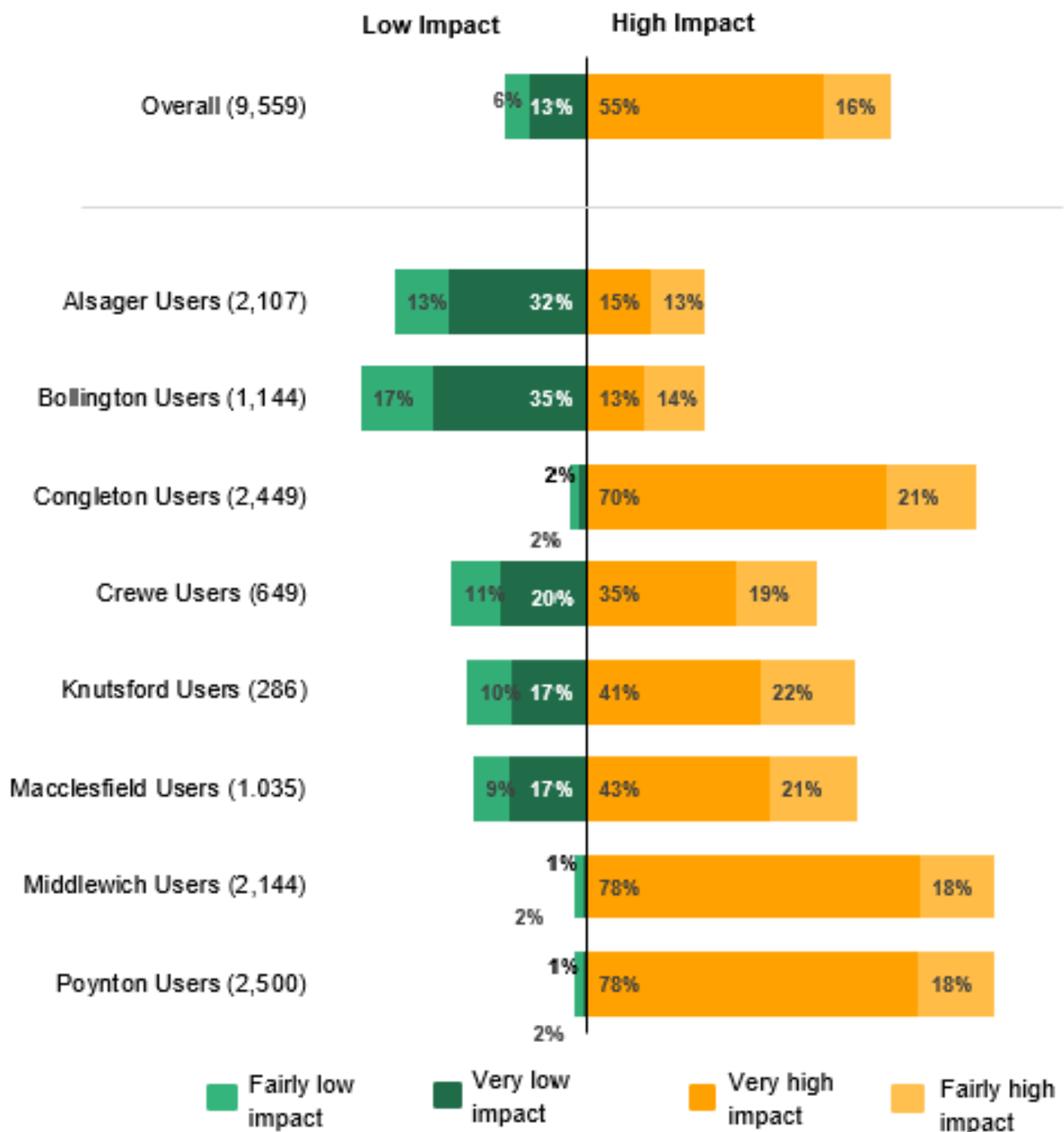
A high majority of respondents opposed this option, with 82% stating that they tend to or strongly oppose this option overall. Congleton, Middlewich and Poynton HWRC sites would close in this scenario. Again, it's the users of those sites at risk who show the greatest opposition compared to other HWRC site users (95%, 97% and 97% respectively) as shown in figure 6. The remainder of the respondents (not shown on figure 6) either selected 'neither support nor oppose' or 'don't know / unsure'.

Figure 6: Percentage of those stating oppose or support to the option: Alternative service Scenario 3, overall and broken down by HWRC site users



Overall, 71% stated that this option would impact them personally. Congleton, Middlewich and Poynton HWRC users were more likely to state that this option would personally impact them (91%, 96% and 95% respectively).

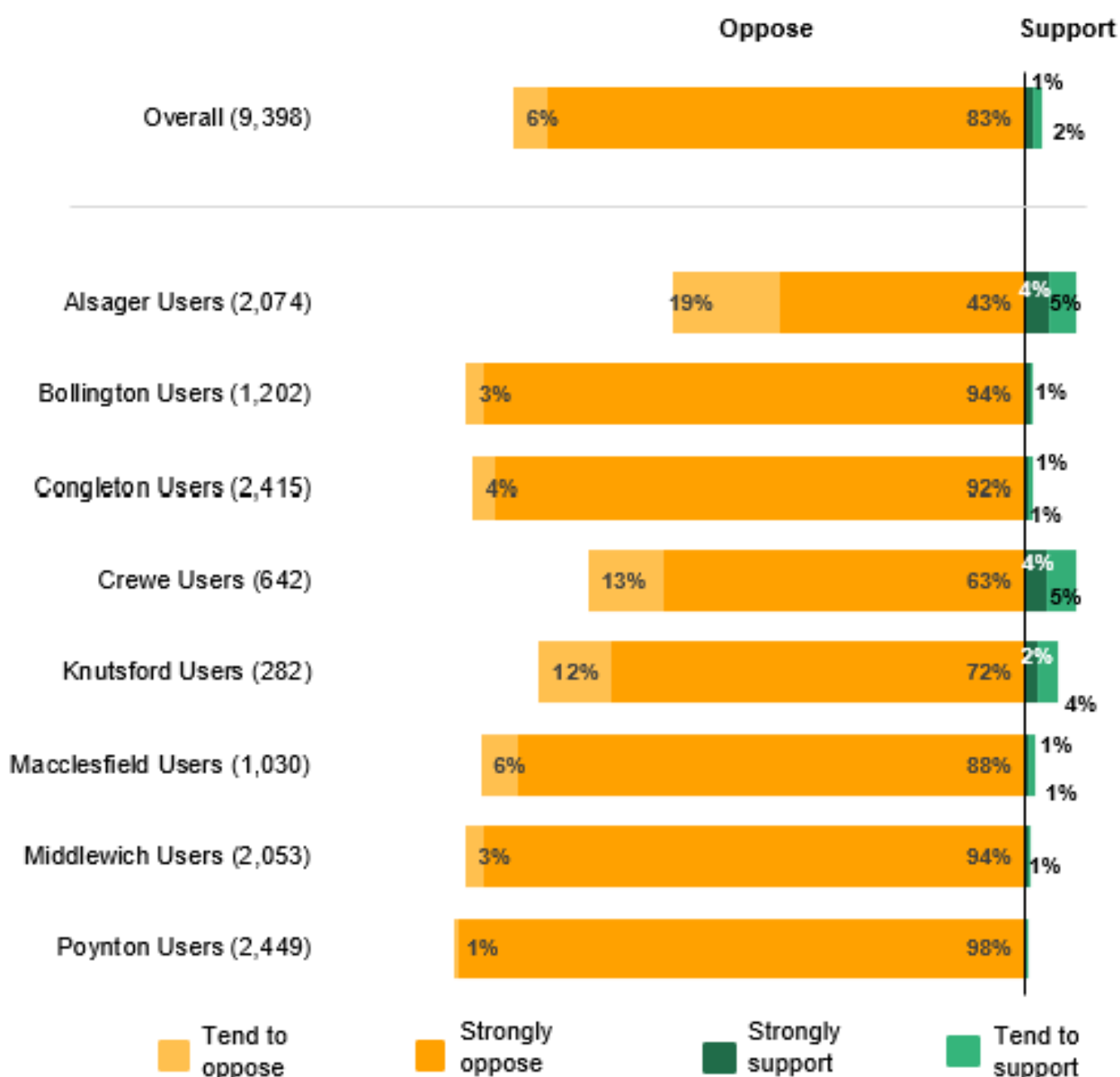
Figure 7: Percentage of those stating that the option: Alternative service Scenario 3, would have a low impact or high impact on them personally, overall and broken down by HWRC site users



Alternative service: Scenario 2

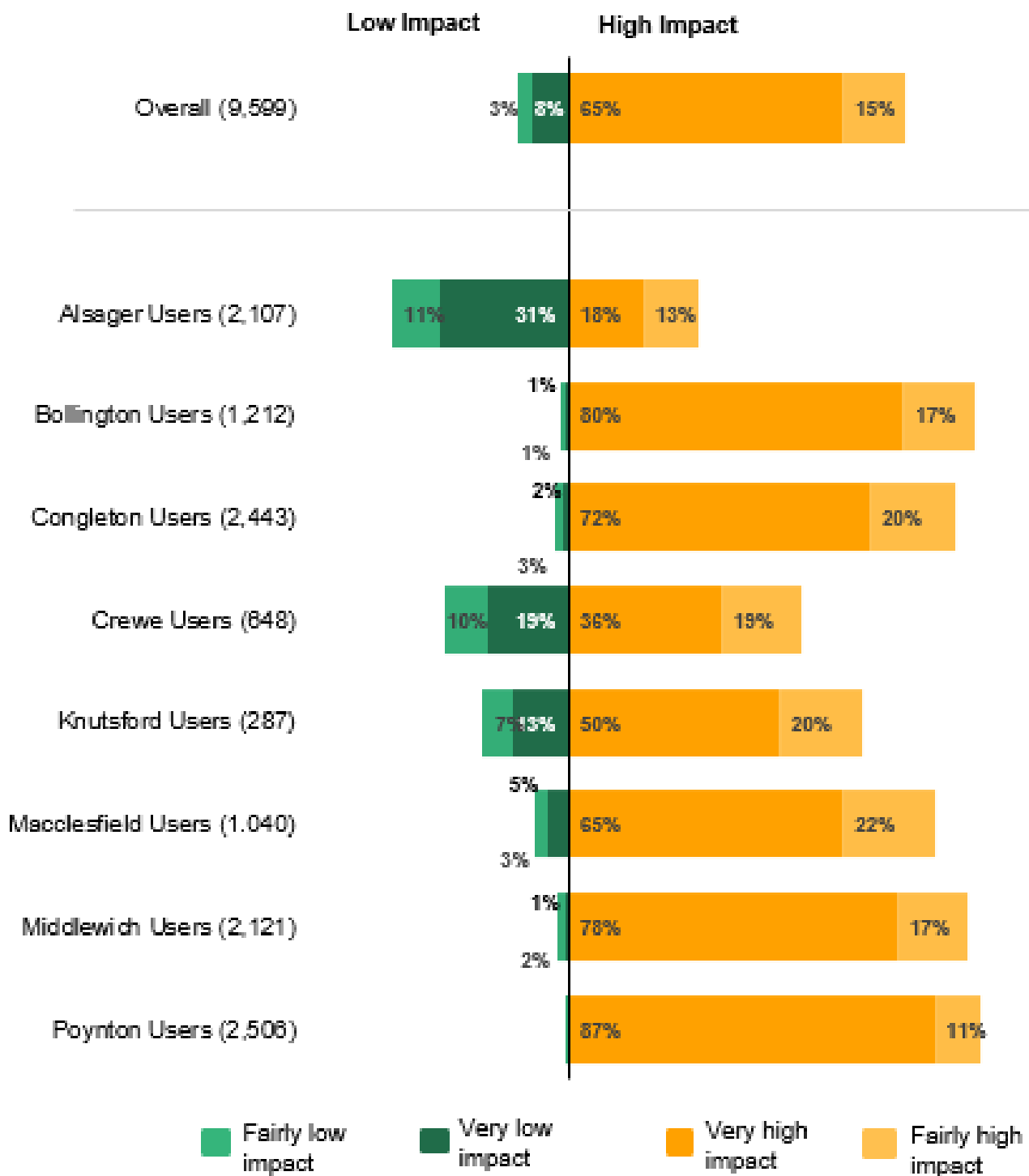
A high majority of respondents opposed this option with 89% stating that they tend to or strongly oppose this option overall. Bollington, Congleton, Middlewich and Poynton HWRC sites would close in this scenario as such it was users of these sites who were more likely to oppose this option compared to other HWRC site users (97%, 96%, 97% and 99% respectively) as shown in figure 8. The remainder of the respondents (not shown on figure 8) either selected 'neither support nor oppose' or 'don't know / unsure'.

Figure 8: Percentage of those stating oppose or support to the option: Alternative service Scenario 2, overall and broken down by HWRC site users



Overall, 80% stated that this option would impact them personally. Bollington, Congleton, Middlewich and Poynton HWRC users were more likely to state that this option would impact them personally (97%, 92%, 95% and 98% respectively) as shown in figure 9.

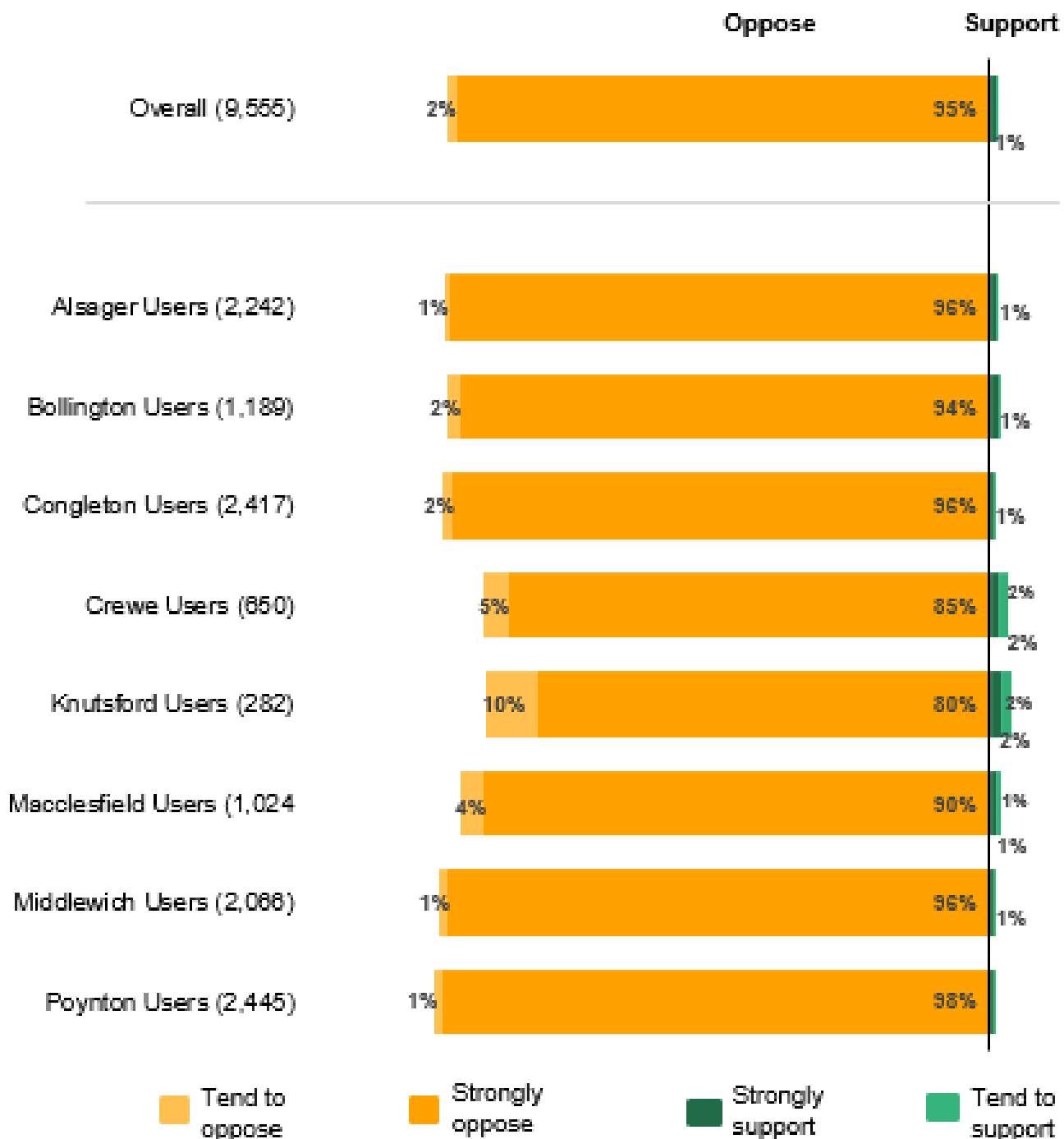
Figure 9: Percentage of those stating that the option: Alternative service Scenario 2, would have a low impact or high impact on them personally, overall and broken down by HWRC site users



Alternative service: Scenario 1

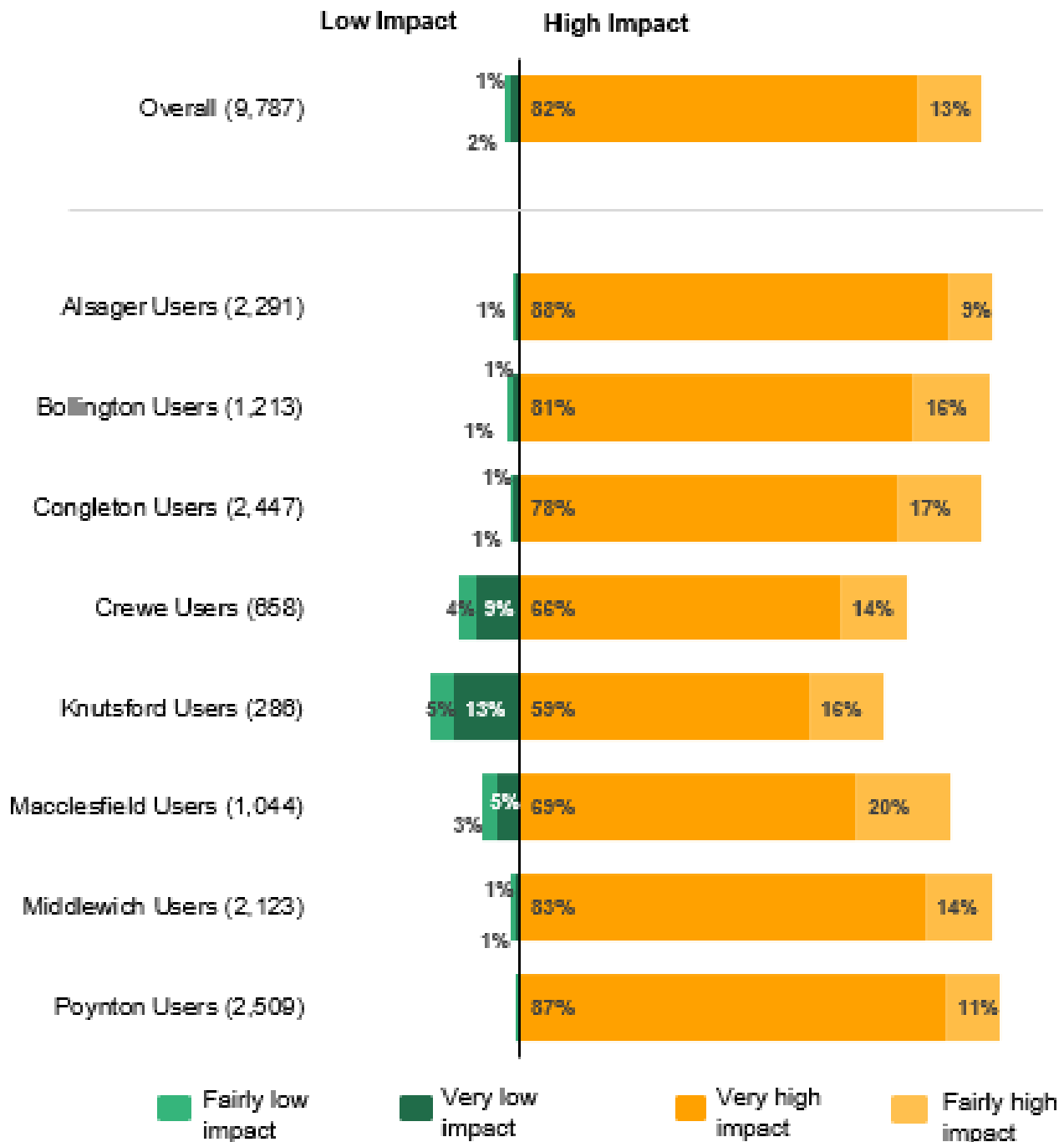
Almost all respondents opposed this option. With 97% indicating that they tend to or strongly oppose this option. Opposition was strong amongst all HWRC site users for this scenario as figure 10 shows. The remainder of the respondents (not shown on figure 10) either selected 'neither support nor oppose' or 'don't know / unsure'.

Figure 10: Percentage of those stating oppose or support to the option: Alternative service Scenario 1, overall and broken down by HWRC site users



Impact was high amongst nearly all HWRC users (95% very or fairly high impact). Crewe and Knutsford HWRC users were slightly less impacted personally compared to the other HWRC site users as figure 11 shows.

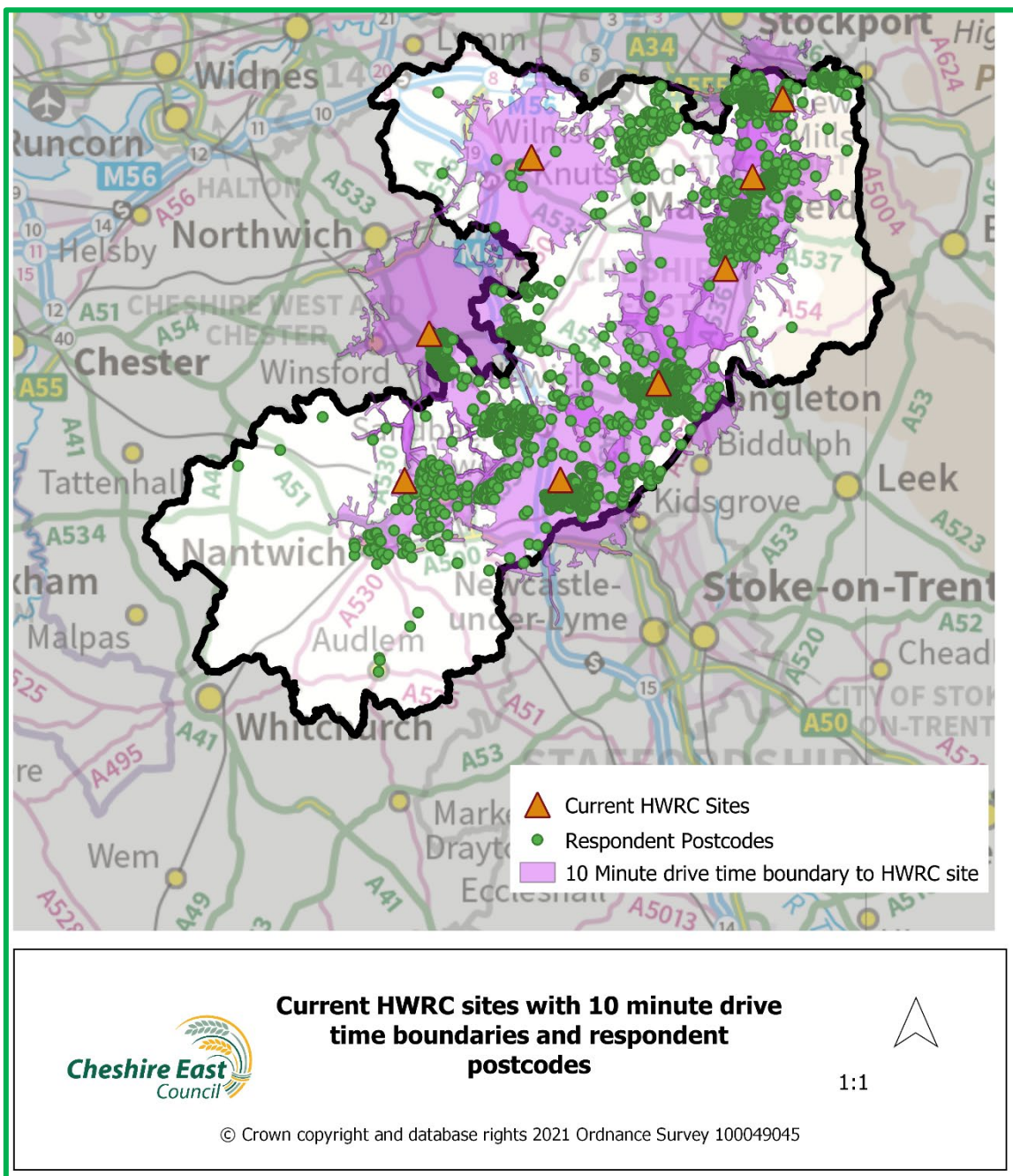
Figure 11: Percentage of those stating that the option: Alternative service Scenario 1, would have a low impact or high impact on them personally, overall and broken down by HWRC site users



How far are respondents willing to travel

74% of respondents stated that they would be willing to travel up to 10 minutes to reach a HWRC site, with 24% willing to travel 10 to 20 minutes. The map below plots respondent postcodes (those that left a valid postcode, 8,822 respondents) against the current HWRC sites and a 10-minute drive time to each site. With the current service, it seems that many respondents live within a 10-minute drive time to their nearest HWRC. However, this would not remain the case for many respondents, for several of the given alternative scenarios.

It is worth noting here, that even though respondent preference is a 10 minute drive time to their nearest HWRC, the Waste and Resources Action Partnership (WRAP) guidance suggests, that there should be a maximum driving time (for the great majority of residents in good traffic conditions) of twenty minutes (30 minutes in very rural areas) - this is looked at in the independent review documentation.



Section 3 - Comments / Considerations

Respondents were asked if they had any comments or considerations on the options presented within the consultation. A total of 6,049 respondents chose to leave a valid comment. The comments received have been coded into themes for the purpose of this report. Comments received through emails (31 responses) have also been included as part of this analysis. E-mail representations were received from Cheshire East residents as well as the Macclesfield MP, Bollington, Congleton and Poynton Town Council, Disley and Holmes Chapel Parish Council and Worth Probus Club.

Theme 1: Keep our HWRC open

Keep Alsager open, 379 references

Alsager is the main waste disposal site in this area, is in a convenient location, is well used and well run with helpful staff. Please do not close.

Keep Bollington open, 150 references

Most of the time we have to queue to get into Bollington tip, it is very busy and well organised with helpful staff. Provides a vital service to the area. Should remain open.

Keep Congleton open, 769 references

Congleton tip is very well run, used frequently and serves a large catchment. There must be lots of sites you can use in Congleton to replace the current facility. Congleton needs a tip.

Keep Middlewich open, 410 references

Middlewich tip is always busy, closing it would be bad for the area. The ANSA waste site is on our doorstep collecting waste from across the borough, bringing in odorous lorries. It would be disrespectful to close the Middlewich tip; can the service be moved to the ANSA site?

Keep Poynton open, 660 references

Please keep Poynton open it is well used, and there is always a queue to get in. Those in Disley felt that their area seems to have been forgotten about with Poynton the only Cheshire East tip available in their area. Some of these respondents queried whether a deal could be agreed with Stockport Council so that Disley and Poynton residents could use the site there to help cut down distance travelled.

Keep all sites open, 212 references

These sites all need to stay open; removal of any sites will have an impact on the local area. Should be building more sites to encourage people to recycle not decreasing them.

Theme 2: Environmental impacts / concerns

Concern about fly tipping, 3,238 references

Many respondents felt that closing HWRC sites would result in an increase in fly tipping as it was thought not everyone would be willing or able to travel the extra miles to dispose of their waste. Some commented that they had already seen the effects of this when sites had to shut due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Respondents wondered whether the savings made by closing HWRC sites would outweigh the costs associated with having to clear up any increase in dumped rubbish. Included in the number above, are 189 references, specifically about rural fly tipping and the effects this would have on the countryside.

Some respondents with a concern about fly tipping offered suggestions on how this could be limited:

- **Increase range / capacity of items accepted at kerbside, 72 references**

Would need to accept a wider range of recycling materials in kerbside collections if removing waste centres (e.g. electrical items, metals, oils). Once a fortnight collection of kerbside waste would be insufficient / bins are too small for extra waste.

- **Reduce charge / review bulky waste collection service, 15 references**

The bulky waste collection service would need to be expanded to cater for increased demand and the charge for this service should be reduced.

- **Promote/ provide more re-use facilities, 6 references**

Encourage more re-use facilities as a way of reducing waste.

Concern about carbon footprint, pollution and congestion, 2,032 references

Respondents questioned what the impact of increased carbon emissions / air pollution would be within each of the scenarios due to people having to travel further to access a HWRC site. There were also concerns about increased traffic, congestion and longer queues at the remaining sites and throughout surrounding areas. People may burn their garden waste more thus adding to the air pollution.

Reduction in recycling rates, 318 references

Closure of tips would see a reduction in recycling rates at a time the council is encouraging people to recycle more. Facilities need to be increased and improved not decreased or taken away. It goes against Cheshire East Council's own environmental strategy.

Misuse of household waste bins, 300 references

Respondents felt that people would simply put more items in their black bins rather than travelling the extra miles to recycle them or dispose of them correctly at an alternate HWRC site.

Theme 3: Time, costs or demand

Impact of new houses and increasing population, 1,166 references

Respondents were concerned that there were a lot of new houses being built in their area which would in turn increase the population and the demand for HWRC services. Breakdown of concern by area is as follows: increase in housing / population in:

- Alsager, 162 references
- Bollington, 15 references
- Congleton, 547 references
- Middlewich, 99 references
- Poynton, 211 references
- General, 132 references

Increased time / cost / inconvenience to travel further, 146 references

Not prepared to travel further, it would be too inconvenient. Next nearest HWRC would be too far to travel in terms of cost and time. It is not worth recycling if having to make such a long journey to do so - the cost would outweigh the benefits.

Disability / age will make it difficult for long travel, 243 references

Those with health and or mobility issues and those of older age would find it difficult / painful to travel the extra miles to an alternative HWRC site to dispose of their waste especially in areas that have an increasing elderly population.

Pay enough Council tax to cover the service, 262 references

Respondents felt that they are paying enough council tax to pay for the service, so it should remain or there should be a reduction in council tax accordingly.

Theme 4: Alternative suggestions

Income generating suggestion

Some respondents gave alternative income generating suggestions, the top suggestions were as follows:

- **Council tax / local rates increase, 28 references**
Would support a small increase in council tax / local rates to maintain current service.
- **Charge for use of the HWRC sites, 15 references**
A small charge, around £1 - £2 per visit, would be better than closure.
- **Sell on items that can be re-used, 9 references**
Set-up a shop / facility which re-sells items that have been left at the tip.
- **Other suggestions included:** Increase fly tipping fines, seek additional funding from the government, advertising sponsorship at HWRC sites.

Alternative scenario suggestion

Others gave alternate scenario suggestions; the top suggestions were as follows:

- **Reduce opening times, 39 references**
If cost savings are essential maybe reduce opening times / amount of day's the sites are open for instead.
- **Close Bollington, 31 references**
Bollington is closer to Macclesfield than Poynton and caters for fewer people so is more suitable for closure.
- **Other suggestions included:** move / build new purpose-built sites in more convenient / centralised locations, close sites based on usage, have un-manned HWRC sites.

Theme 5: General comments / concerns

Comment on consultation process, 69 references

Would like to see more information on the social cost benefits, equality impacts, environmental assessments associated with the proposals or real time data on visits outside of a pandemic year within the documentation. Doesn't seem a fair process when Poynton is on every alternative scenario, should have been able to select each site individually and not have been part of a grouped option. Feel there is insufficient information about the replacement on offer for Congleton to make a decision on this option.

Concern about cross border waste, 15 references

Could do with a system that only allows Cheshire East residents to dispose of their waste at Cheshire East waste sites or come to a deal with bordering authorities. Cross border use was mentioned at Alsager, Middlewich and Poynton.

Need to invest if closing some sites, 13 references

Would need to invest in the remaining sites to cater for the increased demand and traffic, seems like a false economy.

Other general comment, suggestion or statement

Respondents left a general comment on their own personal use/ situation or gave a general statement or suggestion. For example: Pleased that Macclesfield is being retained, staff should wear PPE / social distance at the sites, used site a lot when first moved to a new house, the HWRCs provide a vital service.

Appendix 1 – Demographic breakdowns

Several demographic questions were asked at the end of the survey to ensure there was a wide range of views from across different characteristics. All the questions were optional and therefore won't add up to the total number of responses received.

Table 1: Number of survey respondents by representation	Count	Percent
As an individual (local resident)	9,995	98%
As an elected Cheshire East Ward Councillor, or Town/Parish Councillor	62	< 5%
On behalf of a local business	56	< 5%
On behalf of a group, organisation or club	34	< 5%
Other	46	< 5%
Grand Total	10,153	100%

Table 2: Number of survey respondents by gender	Count	Percent
Male	5,273	54%
Female	4,148	42%
Other gender identity	< 5	< 5%
Prefer not to say	413	< 5%
Grand Total	9,837	100%

Table 3: Number of survey respondents by age group	Count	Percent
16-24	165	< 5%
25-34	1,004	10%
35-44	1,990	20%
45-54	2,307	23%
55-64	2,069	21%
65-74	1,569	16%
75-84	437	< 5%
85 and over	41	< 5%
Prefer not to say	352	< 5%
Grand Total	9,934	100%

Table 4: Number of survey respondents by ethnic origin	Count	Percent
White British / English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / Irish	9,008	92%

Any other White background	79	< 5%
Asian / Asian British	25	< 5%
Black African / Caribbean / Black British	12	< 5%
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean / African / Asian	34	< 5%
Other ethnic origin	29	< 5%
Prefer not to say	614	6%
Grand Total	9,812	100%

Table 5: Number of survey respondents by religious belief	Count	Percent
Christian	4,534	49%
Buddhist	29	< 5%
Muslim	17	< 5%
Hindu	10	< 5%
Jewish	5	< 5%
Sikh	<5	< 5%
Other religious belief	92	< 5%
None	2,954	32%
Prefer not to say	1,598	17%
Grand Total	9,293	100%

Table 6: Number of survey respondents by limited activity due to health problem / disability	Count	Percent
Yes	1,322	14%
No	7,306	77%
Prefer not to say	855	9%
Grand Total	9,483	100%

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

TITLE: Household waste recycling centre new contract service provision

VERSION CONTROL

Date	Version	Author	Description of Changes
	1.0	Andrew Dunstone	
	2.0	Andrew Dunstone	Addition of no change option in consultation
	3.0	Andrew Dunstone	Additional detail
	4.0	Andrew Dunstone	Addressing specific closures
	5.0	Andrew Dunstone	Minor clarifications to age and disability sections

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Stage 1 Description: Fact finding (about your policy / service /

Department	<i>Environment and Neighbourhood Services</i>		Lead officer responsible for assessment		<i>Andrew Dunstone Waste Contracts Manager</i>	
Service	<i>Environmental Services</i>		Other members of team undertaking assessment		<i>State the full title(s) of all person(s) supporting/ completing the assessment.</i>	
Date			Version			
Type of document (mark as appropriate)	Strategy	Plan	Function	Policy	Procedure	Service ✓
Is this a new/ existing/ revision of an existing document (please mark as appropriate)	New		Existing		Revision ✓	
Title and subject of the impact assessment (include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate and how it fits in with the wider aims of the organisation) Please attach a copy of the strategy/ plan/ function/ policy/ procedure/ service	<p>Household Waste Recycling Centre new contract service provision. The current HWRC contract ends in 2023 and therefore to give ample time to prepare for this a review of the service was commissioned. A public consultation was carried out concerning the future shape of the household waste recycling centre (HWRC) contract. The volatility of the recycling market has severely affected the planned income from these materials, and therefore future contracts are expected to incur higher costs.</p> <p>The independent review modelled different scenarios and determined if they were feasible. The study showed that there is a generous supply of household waste sites, when compared with national guidelines, and that a reduction in these numbers was a viable option.</p> <p>The consultation considered the four scenarios from the study (all of which include the potential closure of sites) and a 'no change' option that included a replacement for Congleton household waste recycling centre. The Congleton site is not owned by the Council with the current lease expiring in September 2021, the landlord has refused to extend this term and therefore the site will close then. Following the consultation, the recommendation is to not replace the Congleton site in conjunction with new measures to provide increased local bring bank facilities</p>					

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

	and fairer access to waste disposal services in rural areas of the borough through measures such as a mobile service. The recommendation takes into consideration results of the consultation balanced with the council's need to reduce estimated cost increases from 2023 in a new contract.
Who are the main stakeholders, and have they been engaged with? (e.g. general public, employees, Councillors, partners, specific audiences, residents)	Members, general public, Town and Parish Councils
What consultation method(s) did you use?	Following acceptance at Cabinet a borough wide web-based consultation was commissioned. Due to the ongoing Covid situation the provision of readily available paper copies at our household waste recycling centres was not considered a sensible method of distribution. Similarly, we would usually ensure that all our libraries had copies, but these we closed. In order to ensure their availability, signs were up at each of our sites advertising the consultation and providing a QR code to be scanned – a familiar process for anyone out using the Covid track and trace app. An email address and phone number on the signs was available so that names and addresses could be taken, and a paper copy individually posted. A press statement was released on commencement of the consultation and this should ensure that all local media will pick it up and raise it with their readers. Engagement with the consultation was extensive with over 10,200 responses, of these over 6,000 made comments

Stage 2 Initial Screening

Who is affected and what evidence have you considered to arrive at this analysis? (This may or may not include the stakeholders listed above)	Residents who are users of our sites. Not replacing Congleton in 2021 will have the greatest impact on those residents served by the site. Evidence of this impact comes from the independent report commissioned to review the HWRC service - Residents will need to travel further to dispose of their recycling/waste. In addition to the time that residents would have to travel to more distant sites, the sites they go to would be busier. The spatial analysis forecasts that Macclesfield will see increased use with an estimated 9% more households visiting it. It is worth noting that the existing site in Congleton is challenging for residents with a disability as there are metal steps and gantries that need to be used. The nearest alternative sites are both on a single level and therefore offer much better access for anyone with a mobility issue. In addition, an environmental impact assessment has been carried out.
Who is intended to benefit and how?	The presentation of clear information to potential bidders of the new contract will enable them to determine whether this is a contract worth bidding for. The procurement of a good contract will then ensure that all users of our household waste recycling centres will receive a quality, value for money service.
Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups?	Yes. The option of closure for Congleton will impact all groups that are in the vicinity and the sites that are most likely to receive additional users – Macclesfield and Alsager.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Does it include making decisions based on individual characteristics, needs or circumstances?	No. We feel that this does not affect individual characteristics because all users drive to the sites. In recognition of residents who rely on others to drive, it is expected that the new service provider will explore options to enable mobile units to be deployed.
Are relations between different groups or communities likely to be affected? (e.g. will it favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others?)	Possibly. Depending on the preferred option chosen the communities who may be losing a site could be disappointed that others are not affected in the same way however, all options comply with Waste Resources Action Programme Advice for provision for residents.
Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality? Is there a history of unequal outcomes (do you have enough evidence to prove otherwise)?	The public consultation gave all residents the opportunity to engage with the council and present their views. Proposals being consulted on all comply with general guidance on acceptable levels of provision for our population numbers and acceptable distance to travel to a household waste recycling centre. The new service provider will be required to show consideration of residents who are in more rural areas or with limited means of transport – this may be in the form of mobile units visiting these areas. Residents without access to a vehicle are unable to use the sites currently, whilst those with a car enjoy unlimited access, we are seeking to address this with the new service provider through the mobile units and a fairer use policy. In addition to this we are planning to provide new local bring banks in the area to reduce the need to travel.

Is there an actual or potential negative impact on these specific characteristics? (Please tick)									
Age	Y ✓	N	Marriage & civil partnership	Y	N ✓	Religion & belief	Y	N ✓	
Disability	Y ✓	N	Pregnancy & maternity	Y	N ✓	Sex	Y	N ✓	
Gender reassignment	Y	N ✓	Race	Y	N ✓	Sexual orientation	Y	N ✓	
What evidence do you have to support your findings? (quantitative and qualitative) Please provide additional information that you wish to include as appendices to this document, i.e., graphs, tables, charts								Consultation/ involvement carried out	
								Yes	No
Age	During the consultation 242 respondents raised the issue of age that would impact their ability to drive further to access any household waste recycling centres. The non-replacement of the Congleton site will result in the proportion of residents travelling more than 20 minutes rising from 2% to 4% and those travelling less than 20 minutes dropping from 98% to 96%. This is within national guidelines for the provision of household waste								✓

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

	recycling centres and considered an acceptable coverage. Furthermore, the existing Congleton site contains stepped access to skips and by directing residents to alternative single level sites access for elderly is improved. There are also rural areas of south Cheshire, not currently served by a nearby household waste centre and the existing system requires vehicular access to use so the Council is exploring fairer access to waste disposal for rural areas and areas with lower car availability as part of its procurement of a new contract .			
Disability	During the consultation 242 respondents raised the issue of people with disabilities that would impact their ability to drive further to access any household waste recycling centres. The non-replacement of the Congleton site will result in the proportion of residents travelling more than 20 minutes rising from 2% to 4% and those travelling less than 20 minutes dropping from 98% to 96%. This is within national guidelines for the provision of household waste recycling centres and considered an acceptable coverage. Furthermore, the existing Congleton site contains stepped access to skips and by directing residents to alternative single level sites access for people with disabilities is improved. There are also rural areas of south Cheshire not currently served by a nearby household waste centre and the existing system requires vehicular access to use so the Council is exploring fairer access to waste disposal for rural areas and areas with lower car availability as part of its procurement of a new contract .			✓
Gender reassignment	The possible closure of some sites does not negatively impact this group, all groups are equally impacted.			✓
Marriage & civil partnership	The possible closure of some sites does not negatively impact this group, all groups are equally impacted.			✓
Pregnancy & maternity	The possible closure of some sites does not negatively impact this group, all groups are equally impacted.			✓
Race	The possible closure of some sites does not negatively impact this group, all groups are equally impacted.			✓
Religion & belief	The possible closure of some sites does not negatively impact this group, all groups are equally impacted.			✓
Sex	Currently we do not feel that this impacts negatively.			✓
Sexual orientation	The possible closure of some sites does not negatively impact this group, all groups are equally impacted.			✓
Proceed to full impact assessment? (Please tick)	Yes	No ✓	Date	
Lead officer sign off		Date		

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Head of service sign off		Date	
--------------------------	--	------	--

If yes, please proceed to Stage 3. If no, please publish the initial screening as part of the suite of documents relating to this issue

Stage 3 Identifying impacts and evidence

This section identifies if there are impacts on equality, diversity and cohesion, what evidence there is to support the conclusion and what further action is needed

Protected characteristics	Is the policy (function etc....) likely to have an adverse impact on any of the groups? Please include evidence (qualitative & quantitative) and consultations <i>List what negative impacts were recorded in Stage 1 (Initial Assessment).</i>	Are there any positive impacts of the policy (function etc....) on any of the groups? Please include evidence (qualitative & quantitative) and consultations <i>List what positive impacts were recorded in Stage 1 (Initial Assessment).</i>	Please rate the impact taking into account any measures already in place to reduce the impacts identified <i>High:</i> Significant potential impact; history of complaints; no mitigating measures in place; need for consultation <i>Medium:</i> Some potential impact; some mitigating measures in place, lack of evidence to show effectiveness of measures <i>Low:</i> Little/no identified impacts; heavily legislation-led; limited public facing aspect	Further action (only an outline needs to be included here. A full action plan can be included at Section 4) <i>Once you have assessed the impact of a policy/service, it is important to identify options and alternatives to reduce or eliminate any negative impact. Options considered could be adapting the policy or service, changing the way in which it is implemented or introducing balancing measures to reduce any negative impact. When considering each option you should think about how it will reduce any negative impact, how it might impact on other groups and how it might impact on relationships between groups and overall issues around community cohesion. You should clearly demonstrate how you have considered various options and the impact of these. You must have a detailed rationale behind decisions and a justification for those alternatives that have not been accepted.</i>
Age				
Disability				
Gender reassignment				

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Marriage & civil partnership				
Pregnancy and maternity				
Race				
Religion & belief				
Sex				
Sexual orientation				
Is this change due to be carried out wholly or partly by other providers? If yes, please indicate how you have ensured that the partner organisation complies with equality legislation (e.g. tendering, awards process, contract, monitoring and performance measures)				

Stage 4 Review and Conclusion
ASSESSMENT

Summary: provide a brief overview including impact, changes, improvement, any gaps in evidence and additional data that is needed			
Specific actions to be taken to reduce, justify or remove any adverse impacts	How will this be monitored?	Officer responsible	Target date
Please provide details and link to full action plan for actions			
When will this assessment be reviewed?			
Are there any additional assessments that need to be undertaken in relation to this assessment?			
Lead officer sign off	<i>A. Dunstone</i>	Date	19/04/21
Head of service sign off	<i>R. L. Kemp</i>	Date	20/04/21

Please publish this completed EIA form on the relevant section of the Cheshire East website



Environmental Appraisal of closure of Congleton HWRC

Cheshire East Council
March 2021

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Limitations

This report has been produced by SQ Planning LLP and Resource Futures on behalf of Cheshire East Council. Whilst the authors have taken all due care to interpret and collate the information presented within the report, any third party relying on the results of the analysis shall do so at their own risk and neither Resource Futures, SQ Planning LLP nor Cheshire East Council shall be liable for any loss or damages arising there from.

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Resource Futures working with SQ Planning LLP was commissioned by Cheshire East Council (CEC) to undertake an Environmental Appraisal of the potential impacts of the closure of its Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) at Congleton.

Background

In September 2014, CEC produced a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as part of its Waste Strategy 2030. The SEA assessed the effects of 19 high-level objectives and the waste options contained within the Waste Strategy against 12 key sustainability themes.

The SEA concluded that CEC's Waste Strategy would make a significant positive contribution to sustainable waste management in the Council area because it provided comprehensive and efficient waste management solutions.

For some of the waste options considered, the effects on the environmental and amenity objectives of the SEA were unknown because both the location of the potential new infrastructure and those facilities that would close, were yet to be determined.

This report seeks to review the relevant environmental objectives set out within the SEA Report and provides detailed analysis of the environmental effects associated with the closure of CEC's HWRC located at Congleton.

This assessment should enable CEC to consider the wider sustainability credentials associated with the closure of its existing HWRC at Congleton and its contribution towards the wider delivery of its Waste Strategy.

Impact

This report and environmental assessment found that the majority of the key considerations were unaffected by the proposed closure of the Congleton HWRC. However, it was inevitable that the proposed closure would have some negative impacts that warranted further study and analysis. The table below summarises the findings of the environmental assessment in accordance with the appraisal scoring system contained within the SEA.

Summary of Effect

SEA Objective	Assessment	Impact	Possible Mitigation	Residual Impact
Population & Human Health Material Assets	Transportation	Moderate Adverse	Bring sites. The management of fairer access systems.	Minor Adverse
Air Quality Population & Human Health	Air Quality	Neutral	N/A	Neutral to Minor Beneficial
Climate Factors	Climate Change	Moderate Adverse	Bring sites. Infrastructure Improvements.	Minor Adverse
Population & Human Health	Amenity	Neutral	Signage and CCTV.	Neutral
Employment Social Inclusion	Socio Economic	Minor Adverse	Redeployment and infrastructure improvements.	Neutral
Population & Human Health Material Assets	Future Demand & Recycling	Minor Adverse	Bring sites. The management of fairer access systems. Wider Infrastructure improvements.	Neutral

The table shows that the residual impact of closing the Congleton HWRC is considered to be neutral to moderate adverse, if no mitigation measures are implemented. The table indicates the potential benefits of installing and implementing a range of practical and expedient measures which will reduce the impacts of the closure to **minor beneficial** to **minor adverse**. The adverse impact of the closure focuses on the additional distances that the waste will be transported by residents and the additional carbon that this transportation will generate.

Waste Strategy

The overall impact of the closure must be considered as an integral part of the impacts of the wider Waste Strategy. The **minor adverse** impacts identified by this report will be offset with respect to the following:

- The continued progress of residents to successfully reduce and reuse materials reducing the need to transport them to a HWRC.
- Consideration of onwards travel of the consolidated waste materials from the remaining HWRCs and the economies of scale that bulking of materials generally achieve.
- Optimisation of the existing HWRC sites to ensure they are fully utilised which will avoid increasing the carbon footprint and impacts of local amenity through the provision of a new site.

- The improvement of existing sites leading to an increase in recycling and reuse rates, which would typically have a greater carbon saving than a small additional distance travelled by residents.
- Wider carbon offsetting measures such as the utilisation of hydrogen collection vehicles and Council level carbon offsetting.
- Financial considerations associated with the management and running of the facilities.

Recommendations

This report assesses the worst-case scenario associated with the generation of traffic and usage of the alternate sites after the closure of Congleton. CEC have committed to monitoring the effects of the closure and will investigate the following recommendation measures based on an identified need.

- The provision of signage and CCTV at the Congleton site to deter fly-tipping.
- Investigation into the management of fairer access at the alternate sites such as the extension of opening hours and managed access arrangements.
- The provision of bring sites in locations which are over 8km from a HWRC.
- Investigation into the potential for further upgrades to existing infrastructure.

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1 Introduction

Resource Futures working with SQ Planning LLP has been commissioned by Cheshire East Council (CEC) to undertake an Environmental Appraisal of the potential impacts of the closure of its Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) at Congleton.

1.1 Purpose of this report

In September 2014, CEC produced a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as part of its Waste Strategy 2030. The SEA assessed the effects of 19 high-level objectives and the waste options contained within the Waste Strategy against 12 key sustainability themes which included:

- Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna.
- Population and Human Health.
- Soil.
- Water.
- Air.
- Climatic Factors.
- Material Assets.
- Cultural Heritage.
- Landscape.
- Employment.
- Deliverability.
- Social Inclusion.

The SEA concluded that CEC's Waste Strategy would make a significant positive contribution to sustainable waste management in the Council area because it provided comprehensive and efficient waste management solutions.

For some of the waste options considered, the effects on the environmental and amenity objectives of the SEA were unknown because the location of the potential new infrastructure and those facilities that may close were yet to be determined.

This report seeks to review the relevant environmental objectives set out within the SEA Report to provide a more detailed analysis of the environmental effects associated with the closure of CEC's HWRC located at Congleton.

This assessment should enable CEC to consider the wider sustainability credentials associated with the closure of its existing HWRC at Congleton and its contribution towards the wider delivery of its Waste Strategy.

1.2 Background Context

CEC has a statutory duty to provide HWRCs free-of-charge and that are reasonably accessible to residents, in a controlled and sustainable manner.

The Council currently operates 8 HWRC's. The sites are managed by ANSA Environmental Services, a company wholly owned by the Council. At each HWRC the site operations are undertaken by HW Martin Ltd and subcontracted Site Managers. The current contract for the delivery of these services ends in 2023.

The current facility in Congleton is on a site that is leased by the Council. The owner of the site has informed the Council that they will not consider a renewal of the lease. The current lease at the site will expire in 2021 and as such the facility will be closed.

Whilst there is an extensive body of work currently being undertaken to prepare for the end of the contract with HW Martin, this assessment considers the environmental impact of the closure of the Congleton site at the end of its lease in 2021.

2 Methodology

This chapter outlines the requirements and general approach followed by this Environmental Appraisal.

2.1 Requirements

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 require a SEA to be carried out when developing strategic 'plans and programmes'. SEA's are mandatory where a plan or programme is required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions. Although not required by law, CEC undertook a SEA on the Waste Strategy in line with recommended best practice.

Actions associated with the implementation of a Waste Strategy, be it due to Council decisions or other factors, do not require further assessment under the SEA Regulations.

Notwithstanding this, CEC are committed to assessing the implications of the closure of the HWRC on the environment and local community to inform its wider decision-making process.

The proposal does not include demolition or the development of a new site. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) under the Town and Country Planning Act (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 is therefore not required.

2.2 Consultation

In preparation for a new HWRC contract, Resource Futures were commissioned to undertake a review of the current service provision within CEC and to make recommendations regarding the provision going forward. This research concluded that it would be possible to reduce the number of HWRC's within the Council area without significantly affecting the ability of CEC to provide the required service level.

In November 2020, CEC's Cabinet considered the findings of this review and agreed that a public consultation on the options for the future pattern of provision for HWRC's should be undertaken.

Residents were consulted on the scenarios identified in the review and asked how they felt about the options being considered and what they considered the impact would be on them. Over 10,200 responses were received. Most residents supported the option to keep the current service provision pattern.

Respondents to the consultation were asked to provide comments that the Council ought to consider as part of statutory service provisions. The top themes emerging from the comments concerned the potential risk of adverse environmental impacts caused by the closure of sites, which may increase the incidence of fly tipping, increased carbon emissions from longer journeys, pollution and congestion from queuing to access the other sites in the area, misuse of kerbside bin collections and reduction in recycling rates. Other concerns included the increased time and cost it would take for individuals, especially those of an older age group and the disabled, to travel to an alternate site. It was also perceived that there would be an increase in demand for HWRC facilities due to new houses being built.

These concerns are addressed within this appraisal.

2.3 Existing Baseline

The Council currently operates 8 HWRC's in Alsager, Bollington, Congleton, Crewe, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Middlewich and Poynton.

The subject of this assessment is:

- **Congleton Household Waste Recycling Centre:** Barn Road, off the A536 Congleton to Macclesfield Rd, CW12 1LJ.

The traffic utilising the Congleton HWRC currently access and exit the site via the A34 Clayton bypass.

2.4 Projected Future Scenario

When the HWRC at Congleton closes, the nearest alternative sites for the great majority of the residents will be:

- **Alsager Household Waste Recycling Centre,** Hassall Road, Alsager ST7 2SJ.
- **Macclesfield Household Waste Recycling Centre,** off the A536 Macclesfield to Congleton Rd, Gawsorth, Macclesfield SK11 9QP.

The locations of these sites are identified in Figure 1 below:



Figure 1: HWRC locations

It is assumed that traffic travelling from Congleton to the alternate facilities would be likely to travel via:

- Alsager: A34 Newcastle Road / Congleton Road North; and

- Macclesfield: A536 Congleton Road.

2.5 Timeframes

The key time frames examined within this environmental appraisal have been sub-divided as follows:

- **Short term:** Comprising temporary arrangements made when the Congleton site has been closed.
- **Long Term:** Comprising the permanent arrangement made when the Congleton site has been closed.

Within these broad timeframes, the impact of the changes can be categorised as being direct or indirect as follows:

- **Direct effects** are those that impact on local residents and local businesses.
- **Indirect effects** are those that impact on the remaining HWRC network or wider area.

2.6 Assessment Structure

The SEA for the CEC Waste Strategy 2030 identified key sustainability themes which are relevant to the delivery of the Waste Strategy.

This Environmental Appraisal has identified those themes of relevance and assesses the impact of the closure of the Congleton site against them.

2.6.1 Specific Assessment Criteria

Table 1 below replicates the SEA topics and objectives as established in Table 3.2 in the SEA Report. Some of the SEA topics fall outside the scope of this appraisal as will be identified and justified in section 2.7 of this report.

The table allocates appropriate assessment criteria based on those assessment criteria set out within the SEA, and the comments raised by members of the public outlined in section 2.2 of this report. The environmental assessment of each criterion is presented and discussed in individual chapters under the relevant headings.

Table 1: SEA Framework adaptation

SEA Topic	SEA Objective	Assessment Criteria to establish if the closure of the HWRC at Congleton will:	Report Chapter No
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	To protect and enhance biodiversity, habitats, geo-diversity and important geological features from adverse effects of waste development; with particular care to sites designated internationally, nationally, regionally and locally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - protect or enhance biodiversity? - help protect any species at risk - protect or enhance geo-diversity and geological sites and features - protect or enhance designated sites or species 	Outside the scope of this report

SEA Topic	SEA Objective	Assessment Criteria to establish if the closure of the HWRC at Congleton will:	Report Chapter No
Population and Human Health	To protect the living conditions and amenities of local residents from adverse effects of waste development, including noise, vibration, dust, odour and traffic effects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - effect of noise, vibration, dust or odour. - impact on congestion? - impact on time and cost to travel? 	Outside the scope of this report 3 (Transport)
	To minimise adverse effects of waste management activity on human health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - impact on air quality? 	4 (Air Quality)
	To protect community safety and well-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - impact on fly tipping? - impact on litter? 	6 (Amenity)
	To avoid adverse cumulative environmental effects of waste management and associated development on local communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - impact on future demand in particular from new housing? 	8 (Future demand & Recycling) Cumulative impacts addressed in all chapters
Soil	To protect agricultural resources from waste management activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - seek the protection or enhanced use of the best quality agricultural land? 	Outside the scope of this report
Water	To protect water quality, quantity and manage flood risk in relation to waste management activities within the Council area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - seek the protection of water quality and manage flood risk? 	Outside the scope of this report
Air	To minimise adverse effects of waste management activity on air quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - impact on air quality & pollution? 	4 (Air Quality)
Climatic Factors	To minimise the effect of waste management on climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, in particular carbon dioxide and methane? 	5 (Climate Change)
Material Assets	To reduce the consumption and wasteful use of primary resources and encourage the development of alternatives to primary resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - impact on kerbside collections? 	8 (Future Demand & Recycling)

SEA Topic	SEA Objective	Assessment Criteria to establish if the closure of the HWRC at Congleton will:	Report Chapter No
	To minimise the requirement for energy use and increase the use of energy from renewable sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - encourage the efficient use of energy? - result in energy efficient development? - result in the high-quality design and layout of development? - promote and encourage the use of renewable energy? - incorporate renewable energy technologies? 	Outside the scope of this report
	To secure the sustainable management of waste, minimise its production, and increase re-use, recycling and recovery rates.	- impact on recycling rates?	8 (Future Demand & Recycling)
	To minimise the transport effects of waste management activity.	- maintain or enhance necessary transport infrastructure?	3 (Transport)
Cultural Heritage	To minimise the effects of waste management on places, features and buildings of historic, cultural and archaeological importance.	- protect or enhance the area's internationally, nationally, or locally designated heritage and assess their setting?	Outside the scope of this report
Landscape	To protect the quality, integrity and distinctiveness of the landscape and townscapes from waste management activity, including historic landscapes of cultural significance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - protect or enhance the landscape? Will it protect or enhance the townscape? - protect or enhance the existing built and natural environment, ensuring that the area remains distinctive? 	Outside the scope of this report
Employment	To provide employment opportunities and promote economic wellbeing through waste management activities.	- increase access to jobs and employment opportunities?	7 (Socio Economic)

SEA Topic	SEA Objective	Assessment Criteria to establish if the closure of the HWRC at Congleton will:	Report Chapter No
Deliverability	To provide reliability, deliverability and operational flexibility in waste management solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - positively contribute to the maintenance of reliable waste management solutions - positively contribute to the delivery of waste management solutions - positively contribute to the maintenance of the operational flexibility of waste management solutions? 	Outside the scope of this report
Social Inclusion	To enhance opportunities for public involvement, education and engagement in waste management.	- increase access to education and training opportunities?	Outside the scope of this report
	To promote social inclusion in waste management activities.	- impact on vulnerable or older age groups?	7 (Socio Economic)

2.6.2 Combined Effects

Whilst individual environmental impacts have been considered in individual chapters of this report, there is the potential for environmental subject areas to impact upon others. The potential combined effects are addressed in each of the respective chapters within this report, where relevant.

2.6.3 Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects are those that may interact in an additive or subtractive manner with potential impacts of HWRC's within the network. Such cumulative effects have been addressed in each of the respective chapters within this report, where relevant.

2.6.4 Mitigation of Effects

Where appropriate, potential mitigation measures are suggested to limit or to offset any potential adverse impacts of the closure of the HWRC at Congleton.

2.6.5 Residual Effects

Residual effects are any effects which are likely to remain after mitigation measures have been applied.

2.6.6 Appraisal Scoring System

The appraisal scoring system used in the SEA has been utilised to determine the level of significance that the closure of the Congleton site may have on the identified sustainability objectives. The appraisal scoring system is provided in Table 2 (slight amendments have been made to the definition of the scoring system to provide effective application within this assessment).

Table 2: Appraisal Scoring System

Rating	Meaning	Explanation
++	Moderate beneficial effect	The closure will have a significant positive effect on the achievement of the objective
+	Minor beneficial effect	The closure will have a positive effect on the achievement of the objective.
0	Neutral effect	The closure will have no impact on the achievement of the objective.
-	Minor adverse effect	The closure will have a negative impact on the achievement of the objective.
--	Moderate adverse effect	The closure will have a significant negative impact on the achievement of the objective.
?	Unknown / dependent upon implementation	The impact of the closure on the achievement of the objective is unknown.

2.7 Topics that are outside the scope of this environmental assessment

The closure of the existing HWRC at Congleton does not involve the demolition or the movement of existing site infrastructure to a new location.

The following topics have, therefore, been ‘scoped out’ of this Environmental Appraisal.

- **Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna:** The proposal does not involve demolition or construction work which could have the potential to impact on ecological assets.
- **Noise, Vibration, Dust:** The proposal does not involve demolition or construction work, however, the removal of skip loading/unloading at the site may have a moderate beneficial impact on the local environment.
- **Odour:** The site does not process odorous materials and as such its closure will not have an impact on odour.
- **Soil:** The proposal does not involve demolition or construction work.
- **Water:** The proposal does not involve demolition or construction work.
- **Energy:** The proposal does not involve renewable energy or an energy intensive use.
- **Cultural Heritage:** The proposal does not involve demolition or construction work.
- **Landscape:** The proposal does not involve demolition or construction work; however, the removal of the site may have a moderate beneficial impact on the visual amenity of the area.
- **Deliverability:** This has been assessed as part of other studies commissioned by CEC.
- **Education:** A HWRC can have a beneficial impact on the education of members of the public regarding recycling and waste. The closure of one such facility will not have an impact on the wider education role which HWRC’s provide.

2.8 Limitations

Technical difficulties encountered and limitations of the study include:

- Traffic survey data are based on a postcode search and does not allow for user preferences.
- Travel times do not account for congestion.
- Traffic data is based on a worst-case scenario and does not allow for residents’ behavioural changes resulting from the closure.
- The assessment of air quality and carbon production does not account for congestion.
- Business users are not considered as part of this assessment.
- This assessment does not include an assessment of effects on the Waste Strategy and associated SEA.

3 Transport

3.1 Introduction

This chapter assesses the potential impact of the closure of Congleton HWRC on traffic and transportation.

3.2 Aims and Objectives

Its aims and objectives are to determine the impact of the closure on distance and travel times.

3.3 Methodology

This assessment has been based on data generated from distances of residential postcodes to their nearest HWRC's.

The assessment of significance has been derived from The Waste and Resources Action Partnership (WRAP) published HWRC Guide (2012). The guidance recommended that the distribution of HWRCs should enable driving times to be up to 20 mins for the great majority of households in good traffic conditions. Travel times might be up to about 30 minutes in very rural areas.

3.4 Baseline assessment

As indicated within the limitations section of this report, limited real time traffic data is available. The data below is based on a postcode survey which distributes potential usage according to proximity to the nearest HWRC in travel time.

The number of households which potentially utilise each of the HWRC sites at the current time within the CEC area are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Household usage per site

Site	Current Number of households and % (approx.)
Alsager	21,756
	12%
Bollington	17,944
	9%
Congleton	17,761
	9%
Crewe	59,678
	32%
Knutsford	21,609
	11%
Macclesfield	23,692
	13%
Middlewich	14,349
	8%
Poynton	12,300
	7%

The current distances travelled by users of HWRCs in the Council area are shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Distance travelled (proportion of households)

	Less than 2 km	2 to 4 km	4 to 6 km	6 to 8 km	More than 8 km
No	28,448	59,858	29,196	26,257	45,330
%	15%	32%	15%	14%	24%

The current time taken to travel by users of HWRCs in the Council area set out in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Time travelled (proportion of households)

	Less than 5 minutes	5 to 10 minutes	10 to 15 minutes	15 to 20 minutes	More than 20 minutes
No	41,511	78,480	52,241	12,499	4,358
% (approx.)	22%	42%	28%	7%	2%

In addition to the public usage at the Congleton site, it also receives 13 service vehicles per week which averages at approximately 2 per day.

The data indicates that the local road network often becomes congested during peak times around the site in late morning and early afternoon.

3.5 Timeframe

The closure of the Congleton HWRC is to be permanent and the effects, therefore, will extend over the long-term.

The effects will be of both a direct and indirect nature, affecting both the existing site area and alternate HWRC sites.

3.6 Assessment of effect

The environmental impact of the Congleton closure is likely to re-distributed trips to either to Alsager or Macclesfield as these are the closest. Whilst it is likely that the number of overall trips will reduce because of the closure, with residents making fewer trips with a larger quantity of material, this assessment is based on the worst-case scenario of a complete re-distribution of trips on the network.

The assumed redistribution of trips based on travel time is shown in Table 6:

Table 6: Assumed trip redistribution (per no of households)

Site	Current	After Site Closure
Alsager	21,756	24,173
	12%	13%
Bollington	17,944	17,939
	9%	9%
Congleton	17,761	
	9%	
Crewe	59,678	59,678
	32%	32%
Knutsford	21,609	21,609
	11%	11%
Macclesfield	23,692	38,698
	13%	20%
Middlewich	14,349	14,693
	8%	8%
Poynton	12,300	12,300
	7%	7%

The impact on both distance and time travelled on users of the wider HWRC network with the closure of the Congleton HWRC is provided in Tables 7 and 8 below.

Table 7: Impact of closure on distance travelled (proportion of households)

	Less than 2 km	2 to 4 km	4 to 6 km	6 to 8 km	More than 8 km
No	22,262	51,240	28,452	25,915	61,220
%	12%	27%	15%	14%	32%

Table 8: Impact of closure on time travelled (proportion of households)

	Less than 5 minutes	5 to 10 minutes	10 to 15 minutes	15 to 20 minutes	More than 20 minutes
No	33,958	70,827	62,754	17,171	4,379
% (approx.)	18%	37%	33%	9%	2%

The data indicates that there is a fall in the number of people travelling in all categories under 8km, with a 35% increase in the number of households required to travel more than 8km when the Congleton HWRC closes. This equates to a **moderate adverse impact** on residents in distance travelled.

However, when assessed against time travelled, the data show that:

- There is an 18% fall in the number of people who might travel for less than 5 minutes.
- There is a 10% fall in the number of people who might travel between 5 to 10 minutes.
- There is an increase of 20% in the number of people who might travel between 10 to 15 minutes.
- There is an increase of 37% in the number of people who might travel between 15 to 20 minutes.
- There is no change to those households who might travel over 20 minutes.

This analysis therefore suggests that because of the closure of Congleton most people will travel between 5 and 10 minutes longer to reach a HWRC, with no increase in the numbers of residents who might travel over 20 minutes to reach a facility.

In accordance with the WRAP HWRC Guidance published in 2012, this equates to a **neutral impact** on time travelled to a HWRC within the Council area. However, it is recognised that the additional time would be considered to have a **minor adverse impact** on users of the services.

The closure of the HWRC at Congleton should have a **moderate beneficial impact** on road congestion and the number of HGV/Roll on Roll off (RORO) vehicles operating in the local area.

3.7 Assessment of combined and cumulative effects

The cumulative effects of the proposal include the wider impacts on the alternate HWRCs in particular Alsager and Macclesfield. Without mitigation measures, the closure could increase the potential for congestion at these sites having a **moderate adverse effect**.

Although the assessment has assumed that an equal amount of waste that is disposed currently at the Congleton site will be transferred to the facilities at Alsager and Macclesfield, it is considered that the number of service vehicles travelling may not increase relatively due to the potential to achieve economies of scale at Alsager and Macclesfield. It is concluded, therefore, that the cumulative effects of service vehicles at the alternative sites could have a **minor beneficial impact** through the reduction of these vehicles on the local road network.

The combined effects of traffic on air quality are considered in chapter 4 of this report.

3.8 Mitigation measures

Future improvements to waste management infrastructure and continued improvements in reuse has the potential to reduce the need to travel to HWRCs.

In addition, the possibility of additional bring sites should be investigated in locations which are over 8km from a HWRC. These measures may reduce the total travel time and distance travelled by residents to **minor adverse** if the overall number of trips is reduced.

To mitigate potential queuing traffic and congestion at other HWRC sites, fairer access management should be investigated, this could include the extension of opening times of Alsager and Macclesfield and a number plate access option (amongst others). These measures may reduce the cumulative impact of the scheme to **neutral**.

3.9 Residual Impacts

A summary of residual effects is provided in Table 9 below:

Table 9: Summary of Residual Effects

	Nature of effect	Duration	Significance	Possible Mitigation	Residual
Travel Distance	Direct	Permanent	Moderate Adverse	Bring sites	Minor Adverse
Travel Time	Direct	Permanent	Minor Adverse	Bring sites	Minor Adverse
Congestion	Indirect	Permanent	Moderate Beneficial	n/a	Moderate Beneficial
Service Vehicles	Direct	Permanent	Minor Beneficial	n/a	Minor Beneficial
Cumulative Impact	Indirect	Permanent	Moderate Adverse	Fairer access management systems	Neutral
Overall	Direct	Permanent	Moderate Adverse	As above	Minor Adverse

4 Air Quality

4.1 Introduction

This chapter assesses the potential impact of the closure of Congleton HWRC on local air quality and pollution.

4.2 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this assessment is to review the impact of the closure on local air quality and air pollution through the consideration of traffic routing and the associated impacts on Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA).

4.3 Methodology

CEC have published a list which represents a non-exhaustive indication of when an Air Quality Impact Assessment may be required.

1. Any development within an AQMA, or within 500m of existing Air Quality Management Areas
2. food retail development >0.2Ha (1000m² gross floor space)
3. office development >0.8Ha (2500m² gross floor space)
4. housing development >1.0 Ha or >80 units
5. development likely to lead to an increase of >60 vehicle movements per hour
6. development likely to result in increased traffic, congestion, or changes to vehicle speeds (new junctions, roundabouts etc)
7. development likely to significantly change the traffic composition
8. development significantly increasing car parking provision (>300 spaces or 25% increase)
9. development in close proximity (<100m) to busy roads / junctions
10. development likely to result in a significant change in air quality, or development of residential properties in an area of already poor air quality
11. poultry establishments > 400,000 birds (mechanical ventilation) or 200,000 (natural ventilation) or > 100,00 (Turkeys) and with relevant exposure within 100m of the unit; and,
12. biomass / CHP / Industrial Installation (see guidance under the biomass and clean air act pages).

In accordance with points 1 and 7 above, this assessment considers the re-routing of traffic caused by the closure and investigates how these routes impact on local AQMAs.

4.4 Baseline assessment

The Cheshire East Council Annual Status Report 2020 (June 2020) provides details of all the air quality management areas (AQMA) within its administrative area. The three locations of interest are considered below.

- **Congleton:** There are 3 AQMAs with the potential to be affected by existing and future traffic movements associated with the Congleton HWRC.
- **Alsager:** There are no AQMAs located in Alsager.
- **Macclesfield:** There are no AQMAs located between Congleton and the Macclesfield Household Waste Recycling Centre.

The locations of the Congleton AQMA's are presented in Figure 2 below.

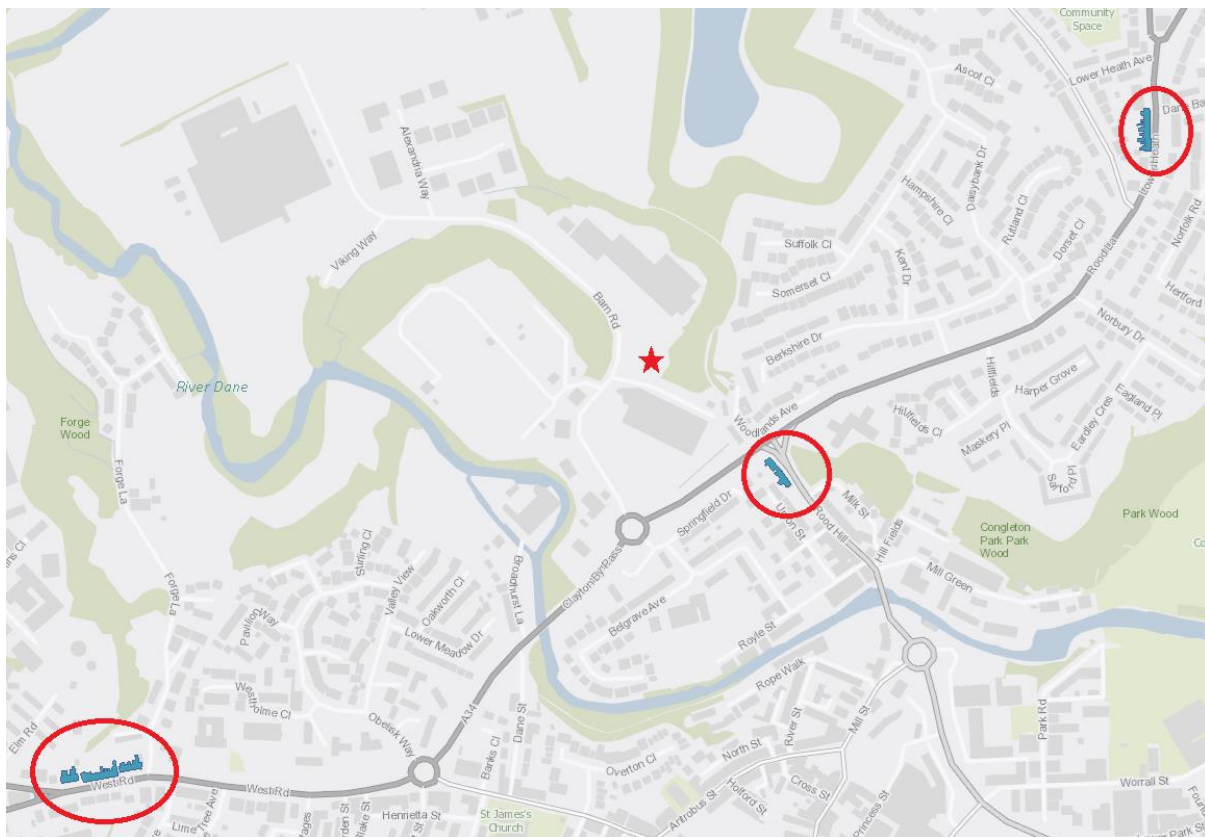


Figure 2: Congleton AQMA

The plan shows that the existing Congleton HWRC is not located within any of the AQMA's however traffic using the facility which travel along the A34 / A54 does have the potential to travel through them.

Cheshire East Council monitors levels of Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) within its administrative area, including within the 3 Congleton AQMA's. The Council ASR 2020 shows the following monitoring locations within the Lower Heath AQMA.



Figure 3: Lower Heath AQMA monitoring locations.

The 2019 monitoring results for these locations are as follows:

- CE115 1 Lower Heath: 22.33 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
- CE114 28 Lower Heath: 47.44 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
- CE110 Lights outside 99 Lower Heath: 28.05 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

Of these monitoring locations, only the CE114 28 Lower Heath result is above the annual average limit of 40.0 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

The Council ASR 2020 shows the following monitoring locations within the Rood Hill AQMA:



Figure 4: Rood Hill AQMA monitoring locations

The 2019 monitoring results for these locations are as follows:

- CE116 68 Rood Hill: 33.42 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
- CE117 Rood Hill takeaway 62/64: 35.92 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

Of these monitoring locations, neither result is above the annual average limit of 40.0 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

The Council ASR 2020 shows the following monitoring locations within the West Road AQMA:

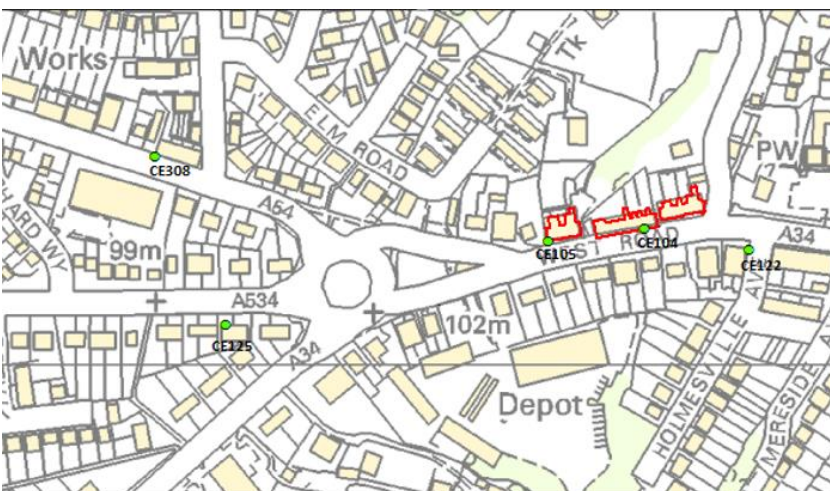


Figure 5: West Road AQMA Monitoring locations

The 2019 monitoring results for these locations are as follows:

- CE105 35 West Road: 25.31 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
- CE104 13 West Road: 43.59 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

Of these monitoring locations, only the CE104 13 West Road result is above the annual average limit of 40.0 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

4.5 Timeframe

The closure of the Congleton HWRC is to be permanent and the effects, therefore, will extend over the long-term.

The impacts associated with air quality are considered to be indirect as they relate to emissions generated by users and not activities on the site itself.

4.6 Assessment of effect

As stated earlier within this chapter, the impact of the closure of the Congleton HWRC on air quality is linked to traffic and their associated flows.

The Congleton HWRC serves approximately 17,761 households. Traffic flow data shows that the Annual Average Daily traffic (AADT) for the 3 HWRCs is currently as follows:

- Alsager: 289
- Congleton: 243; and
- Macclesfield: 406.

As would be expected the peak flows coincide with weekends when users have the time to visit the HWRC. Closing the Congleton HWRC would therefore immediately remove 243 AADT trips from the network in the immediate vicinity of the HWRC.

Detailed trip routing is currently not available however it is considered that the most likely options for the resulting displacement are:

1. A proportion of traffic from West Heath which currently travels to the Congleton HWRC would continue to pass through the West Road AQMA and would now pass-through Congleton through the Lower Heath AQMA.
2. A proportion of traffic from West Heath which currently travels to the Congleton HWRC would now use the Alsager HWRC. All existing flows would cease to pass through the West Road AQMA.
3. Traffic accessing the Congleton HWRC from the A54 Rood Hill (from Congleton Centre) would continue to do this, however traffic would then pass through either the West Road AQMA if visiting the Alsager HWRC or Lower Heath AQMA if visiting the Macclesfield AQMA.
4. Traffic from Eaton would use the Macclesfield HWRC and would not pass through the Lower Heath AQMA.
5. Traffic from Lower Heath would use the Macclesfield HWRC and would not pass through the Lower Heath AQMA.

The total AADT using the Congleton HWRC is 243 and it is assumed that all of these trips would be distributed across the network (as the worst-case scenario), particularly the A34 and A54 to the south, north and east of the HWRC. This assessment has therefore assumed that the number of vehicles on the network would not materially change, however there is likely to be a redistribution.

For the users who are to the south and north of Congleton, the diversion to the Alsager and Macclesfield HWRCs respectively may result in a **minor beneficial impact** (i.e. reduction in traffic through the 2 AQMAs at Lower Heath and West Road respectively). For the users in Congleton, there is expected to be no change in numbers through the Rood Hill AQMA, however these would now travel north or south on the A34 through the Lower Heath and West Road AQMAs. As such this may result in a **minor adverse impact**.

In overall terms, based on the information available, it is considered unlikely that there will be any material difference in the concentration of traffic pollution (nitrogen dioxide) in the AQMAs as a result of this traffic redistribution. It is therefore concluded that the closure would have a **neutral effect** on local air quality.

As a result of the closure of the HWRC, 2 HGV collections per day would no longer be required. Whilst in theory these movements will take place elsewhere, as material is diverted by residents to other sites, it is considered that economies of scale would be achieved through bulking up of material into larger vehicles for collection from these sites, and as such there would be a **minor beneficial impact** associated with the closure of the facility.

4.7 Assessment of combined and cumulative effects

There should be no cumulative effect because the closure of a site will not generate additional vehicle movements on the local road network.

4.8 Mitigation measures

The proposed development will not result in any adverse impact on local air quality and as such no mitigation measures are proposed.

4.9 Residual Impacts

A summary of residual effects is provided in table 10 below.

Table 10: Summary of Residual Effects

	Nature of effect	Duration	Significance	Possible Mitigation	Residual
Impact on AQMA	Indirect	Permanent	Neutral	N/A	Neutral to minor beneficial

5 Climate Change

5.1 Introduction

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. They provide regular assessments of the scientific basis of climate change, its impact and future risks, and options for adaption and mitigation.

The IPCC has published five comprehensive assessment reports reviewing the latest climate science, along with several special reports on specific topics. The Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) is the latest key report, finalised in 2014. These reports recognise that reduction in carbon emissions is key to reducing climate change.

This chapter assesses the closure of the facility on carbon emissions and as such its impact on climate change.

5.2 Aims and Objectives

The scope of the assessment is primarily focused on carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions associated with transport, specifically the consideration of increases (or decreases) in distances that local residents are required to travel in order to access their closest HWRC, and the resultant changes in carbon dioxide emissions.

Changes in frequencies/patterns of waste collection vehicles removing material from the HWRC is also briefly considered.

The effect that the closure of the HWRC will have on recycling rates and/or the volume of material collected by the system, and the carbon implications of those effects, is not considered. It is assumed that the waste will be diverted to other facilities in similar volumes and that onward processing continues with the same technologies or methods.

5.3 Methodology

For the purposes of this assessment, traffic data and analysis has been utilised. The information includes postcodes for all residents for whom the Congleton facility is their closest HWRC. Distances from these postcodes to the HWRC is provided in km.

The assessment has assumed a complete re-distribution of trips across the network as a worst case, in reality (prior to any mitigation measures being employed) the number of trips is likely to reduce with residents making fewer trips but with larger quantities of materials.

From this information, the additional distance each resident would theoretically be required to travel to access their closest HWRC can be calculated. Based on the average number of daily and weekly visits by local residents to the HWRC an estimate can be made as to the additional distance in km that residents will be required to travel as a result of the closure.

This assessment has utilised available figures for the average carbon emissions per km from road vehicles registered in the UK. The carbon intensity per km of road vehicles has been falling significantly over the last 20 years and the most recent data (second quarter of 2015 - April to June) puts the average carbon dioxide

emissions of cars at 122.1 grams of carbon dioxide per kilometre. Given the number of electric vehicles now on the road in the UK, alongside numerous older, more carbon intensive vehicles, the figure above is considered reasonably accurate for the purposes of this assessment.

Figures are also available for a range of heavy goods vehicles. For the purposes of this assessment, waste collection vehicles have been assumed to comprise 14-20 tonne rigid HGVs at Euro VI standard. The average carbon dioxide emissions of these vehicles is 540gCO₂/km.

Based on the parameters above, estimates are made of the annual CO₂ changes as a result of the closure of the HWRC.

There is no established threshold for assessing the significance of individual project's contributions to climate change. However, IEMA guidance on considering Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions within EIAs states that *'...it might be considered that all GHG emissions are significant and an EIA should ensure the project addresses their occurrence by taking mitigation action...'*

Appendix C of the above guidance states that *'When evaluating significance, all new GHG emissions contribute to a significant negative environmental effect; however, some projects will replace existing development that have higher GHG profiles. The significance of a project's emissions should therefore be based on its net impact, which may be positive or negative. Where GHG emissions cannot be avoided, the EIA should aim to reduce the residual significance of a project's emissions at all stages. Where GHG emissions remain significant but cannot be further reduced... approaches to compensate the project's remaining emissions should be considered.'*

5.4 Baseline assessment

Based on the six-week reporting period there was an average of 243 visits to Congleton HWRC per day. Whilst it was generally higher at the weekend and on specific weekdays, this figure is considered the most suitable to consider annual carbon emissions contributions. Based on the facility being open for 365 days a year, this equates to 88,695 visits.

The average distance that local residents (for whom the Congleton site is their closest HWRC) are required to travel is 3.2 km. This would mean a 6.4km round trip on average for each visit. Based on the annual number of visits above, this equates to 567,848km travelled per annum by local residents to and from the HWRC.

Assuming that residents are travelling in the average modern passenger car, 122.1gCO₂ would be emitted for every km driven, equating to an annual contribution of 69,309,820g CO₂, or 69.3 tonnes a year.

5.5 Timescales

The closure of the Congleton HWRC is to be indirect and permanent extending over the long-term.

5.6 Assessment of effect

The most significant potential for effects on climate change from the closure of Congleton HWRC are from changing journey distances, as local residents are required to travel further to an alternative HWRC. The average distance for local residents to their next closest HWRC is 10.9km, which equates to an average increase in journey distance of 7.7km for each resident.

Based on the annual total trips of 88,695 and an average round trip of 15.4km, this equates to an additional 1,365,903 km driven per annum by local residents. Using the figure above of 122.1gCO₂/km this equates to approximately 166.7 tonnes CO₂ per annum.

As a result of the closure of the HWRC, 2 HGV collections per day would no longer be required. Whilst in theory these movements will take place elsewhere, as material is diverted by residents to other sites, it is considered that economies of scale would be achieved through bulking up of material into larger vehicles for collection from these sites, and as such there would be some CO₂ savings. Based on an assumed round trip for waste collection vehicles of 20km this saving equates to 7.88 tonnes (540g CO₂/km x (365 x 2 x 20)).

This gives a net CO₂ increase of 158.8 tonnes per annum.

Overall, the development will have a **moderate adverse effect** as it will result in higher carbon emissions associated with transport emissions than if the HWRC remained open.

5.7 Assessment of combined and cumulative effects

Climate Change is a global concern and as such the cumulative effects of the scheme have been considered as part of the assessment above.

5.8 Mitigation measures

Further consideration into improvements to existing waste management sites and possibilities of introducing bring sites in areas which are in locations of 8km or more is further assessed in chapter 8 of this report. This may reduce the number of trips that residents require to take and will therefore reduce the trip rates and with it, carbon emissions.

This will reduce the impact on climate change to **minor adverse**.

5.9 Residual Impacts

A summary of residual effects is provided in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Summary of Residual Effects

	Nature of effect	Duration	Significance	Possible Mitigation	Residual
Climate Change	Indirect	Permanent	Moderate Adverse	Provision of bring sites. Infrastructure Improvements.	Minor Adverse

6 Amenity

6.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the potential for the closure of the facility to cause environmental nuisance.

6.2 Aims and Objectives

This assessment will review the impacts of the closure on noise, fly tipping and litter.

6.3 Methodology

There is no specific methodology set down to determine the amenity value of a HWRC. This chapter identifies the potential impacts of the closure of the HWRC on the local communities at and around the existing site and determines the significance of any impact on local receptors.

6.4 Baseline assessment

Due to effective on-site management, the area is not subject to a high or significant proportion of fly tipping, littering and vermin.

The material deposited at the site is not odorous and the area has not been subject to complaints about unpleasant smells and noxious odours.

The operation of the site causes noise at times, which is associated with depositing material into the skips and vehicles entering and moving around the site. Noise is also generated from the service vehicles and the associated changeover of RORO (roll on – roll off) containers.

6.5 Timescales

It is anticipated that there could be some short-term, temporary effects following the closure of Congleton's HWRC if members of the public are not prepared to drive to the alternative facilities at Alsager and Macclesfield.

Over the long term, any temporary effects will be mitigated by custom and practice of using the alternative sites and there should be no permanent effects subject to any proposed re-use of use of the site by the leaseholder and approval by CEC.

6.6 Assessment of effect

The removal of the site will remove the existing noise source which will result in a **minor beneficial effect** on the local area.

There is no evidence to suggest that the closure of a household waste recycling centre leads to an increase in litter and fly-tipping. A **minor adverse effect** has been assumed in the short term if members of the public drive to Congleton find the site closed, fly tipping instead of travelling to an alternate site.

6.7 Assessment of combined and cumulative effects

The impacts associated with litter and fly tipping are associated with the immediate area and as such wider impacts on the remaining HWRC network is not considered likely.

The redistribution of traffic will have a combined impact on amenity. The impacts of the closure of traffic are considered in chapters 3 and 4 of this report.

6.8 Mitigation measures

It is recommended that signage of the closure, location of alternative facility and information on penalties for unlawful entry onto the site is erected at the site gates.

It would be prudent to install CCTV at the site entrance to deter potential fly tippers in the short term. These measures will reduce the impact to **neutral**.

6.9 Residual Impacts

A summary of residual effects is provided in Table 12 below.

Table 12: Summary of Residual Effects

	Nature of effect	Duration	Significance	Possible Mitigation	Residual
Noise	Direct	Permanent	Minor Beneficial	N/A	Minor Beneficial
Fly tipping and litter	Indirect	Temporary	Minor Adverse	Signage & CCTV	Neutral
Overall	Both	Both	Neutral	As above	Neutral

7 Socio Economic

7.1 Introduction

This chapter assesses the potential impact of the closure of the Congleton HWRC on socio-economic factors.

7.2 Aims and Objectives

This assessment will review the impacts of the closure of the HWRC on local employment opportunities and on vulnerable or older age groups who have made use of the existing site.

7.3 Methodology

There is currently no formal guidance or regulation setting out the preferred method or content for an assessment of potential economic and social impacts. This chapter identifies the potential impacts on socio-economic factors and determines the significance of this impact on local receptors.

7.4 Baseline assessment

The existing site currently consists of 6 central skips with a number of smaller collection units. The site employs 4 members of staff at any one time. Staff work in shifts, 2x5 day shifts, 1x3 day shift and 1x1 day shift.

In addition, the site employs one service vehicle driver, who is part of a wider fleet that service the wider HWRC network.

7.5 Nature of effect

Due to the closure of the Congleton HWRC any effects are direct, long term and permanent.

7.6 Assessment of effect

The closure of the Congleton HWRC will not impact on employees associated with the service vehicles (or wider management) as they will still be required to service the remaining HWRC network.

However, the site closure will necessitate the loss of 4 jobs which is considered to give rise to a **moderate adverse impact**.

The existing site is not considered to be user friendly for residents who are vulnerable or elderly, requiring a member of the public to transfer materials into their car, drive, unload and return home. Owing to the constraints of the site, it was not feasible to improve the working arrangements at the site significantly within the operational service life of the facility.

As identified in Chapter 3, the impacts of the proposal will result in an additional drive time of approximately 5 to 10 minutes from many locations. This is considered not to introduce an impediment to users of the site who already drive and load/unload their vehicles. The closure is therefore considered to have a **neutral** impact on these users of the HWRC.

7.7 Assessment of combined and cumulative effects

Cumulative or combined effects on the wider HWRC network are considered unlikely.

7.8 Mitigation measures

Opportunities for redeployment of staff members should be identified, possible extension to opening hours at Alsager and Macclesfield (as recommended in Chapter 3) and a possible re-use shop at Macclesfield may provide opportunities. Should redeployment be achieved, this will lead to a **minor adverse to neutral impact** on jobs and the local economy.

Further consideration into the possibilities of future infrastructure improvements and for bring sites in areas which are in locations of 8km or more from a HWRC site are further assessed in chapter 8 of this report. This may reduce the need to utilise the HWRC sites for vulnerable and older age groups leading to a **minor beneficial impact** for these groups of residents.

7.9 Residual Impacts

A summary of residual effects is provided in Table 13 below:

Table 13: Summary of Residual Effects

	Nature of effect	Duration	Significance	Possible Mitigation	Residual
Employment	Direct	Permanent	Moderate Adverse	Redeployment.	Minor Adverse to Neutral
Vulnerable and elderly groups	Direct	Permanent	Neutral	Bring sites. Infrastructure improvements.	Minor Beneficial
Overall	Direct	Permanent	Minor Adverse	As above	Neutral

8 Future Demand & Recycling

8.1 Introduction

This chapter assesses the potential impact of the closure of the Congleton HWRC on recycling and future demand for HWRC sites generated by new developments in the area.

8.2 Aims and Objectives

The assessment of future demand and the impact on the Waste Management Strategy is subject to assessment as part of CEC assessment of the wider HWRC provision. This is outside the remit of this report.

This chapter focuses on the prime concerns expressed by members of the public as part of the consultation procedure undertaken by CEC in the last quarter of 2020. Those were that:

1. The closure would increase the risk of the misuse of kerbside collections.
2. The closure would have an adverse impact on recycling rates.
3. The impact of future housing/commercial growth ought to be investigated.

8.3 Methodology

There is currently no formal guidance or regulation setting out the preferred method or content for an assessment of this nature. This chapter reviews the amount and type of waste received at the Congleton site, identifies where this waste is likely to be redirected and qualitatively assesses the impact of this and any projected future growth.

8.4 Baseline assessment

The latest data (2019 to 2020) on tonnages received and managed by the Congleton HWRC is provided in the Table 14 below:

Table 14: Tonnages received at Congleton HWRC in 2019 to 2020

Waste Type	Tonnages	Percentage
Disposal (tonnes):		
Civic Amenity Waste to Energy	658.19	23.61
Civic Amenity Waste to Landfill	238.69	8.56
Green Waste (tonnes):		
Green Waste for composting	438.70	15.74%
Inert (tonnes):		
Hardcore	99.84	3.58%
Recyclables (tonnes):		
Batteries - Automotive	6.07	0.22%
Batteries - Domestic	1.52	0.05%
Hard Plastic	-	
Card	123.72	4.44%

Waste Type	Tonnages	Percentage
Chipboard or Mixed Wood/Chipboard	287.15	10.30%
Ferrous Metal	153.93	5.52%
Non-Ferrous Metal	93.96	3.37%
Glass	17.33	0.62%
Cooking Oil	0.62	0.02%
Engine Oil	5.22	0.19%
Paper	47.34	1.70%
Plastic Bottles	2.13	0.08%
Wood	246.07	8.83%
Textiles	63.40	2.27%
Waste Paint / Chemicals - Recycled	0.99	0.04%
Fridges & Freezers	32.74	1.17%
Small WEEE (SDA)	92.86	3.33%
Large WEEE (LDA)	32.68	1.17%
TVs/CRTs	28.98	1.04%
Tubes	0.27	0.01%
Reuse (tonnes):		
Bric-a-Brac (Re-use)	115.16	4.13%
Total	2787.57	100%

The waste types which made up the majority of waste at the HWRC during 2019 to 2020 included:

- 32.17% of waste taken to the Congleton HWRC is taken for final disposal (or energy recovery).
- 15.74% of waste is green waste for composting.
- 10.30% of waste is made up of Chipboard or mixed wood/chipboard.
- 8.83% is made up of wood.

8.5 Timescales

Due to the closure of the Congleton HWRC any effects will be direct, long term and permanent.

8.6 Assessment of effect

As identified in section 8.4, the largest proportion of materials taken to the HWRC at Congleton includes residual waste, wood waste and garden waste. Due to the bulky nature of these materials, and the provision of green waste doorstep services by CEC during summer months, the closure of the Congleton HWRC is unlikely to result in these materials being disposed of as part of the residual 'black bag' waste by the residents in significant quantities.

With regards to smaller items such as metals, glass, textiles, it is possible that these may be disposed of within black bags/bins for collection. However, these materials can be disposed of locally within existing bring sites which includes glass and textiles.

With regards to electrical items and bric-a-brac, charity shops and the proposed re-use centre at Macclesfield will provide a more sustainable solution to managing this type of waste and increase re-use in line with the waste hierarchy. This will offer an improvement on the current services.

It can therefore be concluded that the closure of the facility may result in a **minor adverse effect** at worst on recycling rates should residents add one or two items to the residual waste bin from time to time.

For new developments, the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy adopted in 2017 and the validation checklist (for housing over 50 units) requires that all developments must consider sustainable waste management methods (such as internal and external storage) as an integral feature in design. Consideration of the impact of the waste generated from the proposals should be considered at the planning stage and planned for as part of CEC's wider waste management strategy.

As referred to previously, the Waste and Resources Action Partnership (WRAP) published HWRC Guide (2012) recommended that distribution of centres should enable driving times to HWRCs to be up to 20 minutes for the great majority of households in good traffic conditions and 30 minutes in very rural areas). As identified in Chapter 3, the remaining HWRC centres provide this coverage which allows the waste authority to ensure that all new developments are serviced in accordance with guidelines.

It is concluded, therefore, that the proposed closure would have a **neutral impact** on future demand.

8.7 Assessment of combined and cumulative effects

The closure of the HWRC is likely to result in greater tonnages of waste being transported to Alsager and Macclesfield, which could result in an in-direct impact on recycling rates at these sites should they already be at (or close to) maximum.

This could also give rise to increased levels of congestion at the alternative sites if they become congested due to the additional users.

The combined and cumulative effects of the closure on recycling rates and congestion at alternative sites is therefore considered to be **moderate adverse**.

8.8 Mitigation measures

To enable residents to easily access recycling for some waste types, it is recommended that CEC investigates options to provide bring sites in the area which are outside a 15-minute travel time.

A geographical illustration which identifies the required area is provided within the figure 6 below.

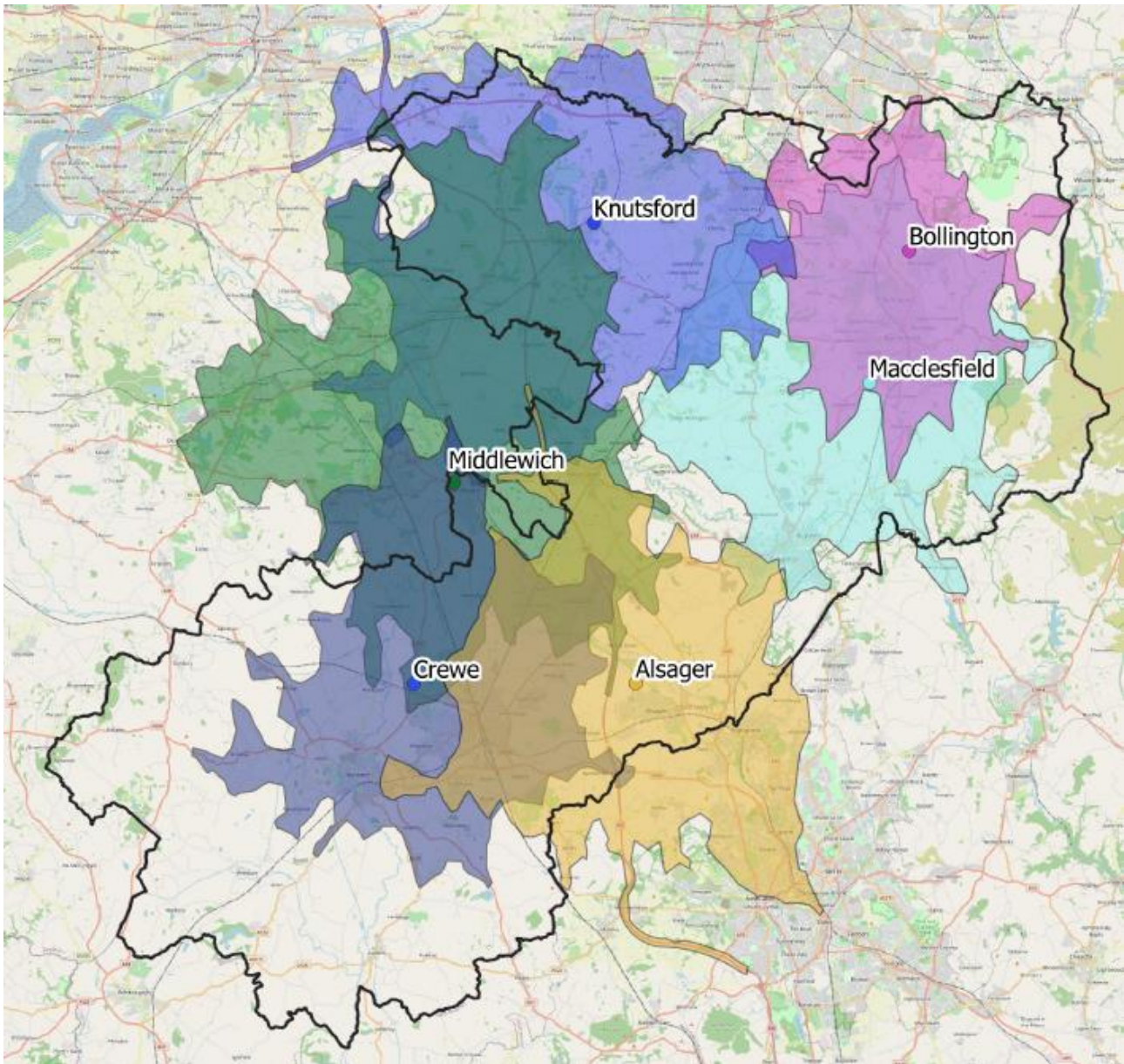


Figure 6: 15 Minute Travel Time.

This boundary covers an area to the West of Congleton, which runs between the River Dane and the A54. This area encompasses the villages of Somerford, Brereton Heath, Davenport, Sandlow and Swettenham to Twemlow Green.

An investigation of potential sites/options for 'bring' facilities within these locations such as supermarket or council car parks should be undertaken.

Although it is not possible to provide bring bank facilities for wood or green waste, the following items are possible:

- Glass
- Card
- Paper and,
- Textiles.

This may reduce the proportion of these wastes being taken to an alternate HWRC reducing some of the 9.03% of these wastes, which are currently being taken to the Congleton site. This will reduce the impact of the closure of Congleton HWRC to **neutral** and potentially to **minor beneficial** as such bring sites will encourage greater local recycling.

To insure against cumulative impacts associated with the pressure on alternate HWRC sites, the efficiency of the operations should be optimised. In addition, further investigation regarding the potential of fairer access such as extended operating hours and managed access systems could reduce congestion at these sites. With the implementation of these measures, cumulative impacts of the closure could reduce to **neutral**.

In addition to mitigating potential effects associated with recycling rates, these mitigation measures may provide a beneficial impact on:

- Traffic: The provision of bring sites will reduce the need to travel to a HWRC.
- Congestion: The provision of a managing fairer access will reduce congestion at the alternate sites.
- Journey times: The provision of longer opening hours may serve to reduce congestion.
- Vulnerable People and the Elderly: The provision of bring sites will increase accessibility for the recycling of these materials.
- Employment: The provision of longer opening hours and the need to service the 'bring' sites may provide redeployment opportunities.

8.9 Residual Impacts

A summary of residual effects is provided in Table 15 below:

Table 15: Summary of Residual Effects

	Nature of effect	Duration	Significance	Possible Mitigation	Residual
Recycling Rates	Direct	Permanent	Minor Adverse	Bring Sites & Infrastructure improvements	Minor Beneficial
Future Demand	Direct	Permanent	Neutral	n/a	Neutral
Cumulative effects on recycling provision at alternate sites	Indirect	Permanent	Moderate Adverse	Bring Sites The management of fairer access systems. Wider infrastructure improvements.	Neutral
Overall	Direct	Permanent	Minor Adverse	As above	Neutral

9 Conclusions

Table 16 below summarises the findings of the environmental appraisal in accordance with the appraisal scoring system contained within the SEA.

Table 16: Summary of Effect

SEA Objective	Assessment	Impact	Possible Mitigation	Residual Impact
Population & Human Health Material Assets	Transportation	Moderate Adverse	Bring sites. The management of fairer access systems.	Minor Adverse
Air Quality Population & Human Health	Air Quality	Neutral	N/A	Neutral to Minor Beneficial
Climate Factors	Climate Change	Moderate Adverse	Bring sites. Infrastructure Improvements.	Minor Adverse
Population & Human Health	Amenity	Neutral	Signage and CCTV	Neutral
Employment Social Inclusion	Socio Economic	Minor Adverse	Redeployment and infrastructure improvements.	Neutral
Population & Human Health Material Assets	Future Demand & Recycling	Minor Adverse	Bring sites. The management of fairer access systems. Wider infrastructure improvements.	Neutral

As indicated in Table 1 and section 2.7 of this report, the SEA objectives associated with the closure of the Congleton HWRC generally have the potential to offer the local area a benefit due to the removal of the existing site or are not applicable.

This assessment has identified that there are several areas where the proposal has a neutral to moderate adverse impact before mitigation measures are applied, these are summarised in Table 16 above.

Following implementation of the recommended mitigation measures summarised above, the residual impact of closing the Congleton HWRC ranges between **minor beneficial to minor adverse**. The adverse impact on the closure focuses on the additional distances that the waste will be transported by residents and the additional carbon that this transportation will generate.

The minor adverse impact is likely to be offset by improvements in the sustainability of the existing facilities network CEC's Waste Management Strategy. These include:

- The continued progress of residents to successfully reduce and reuse materials reducing the need to transport them to a HWRC.
- Consideration of onwards travel of the consolidated waste materials from the remaining HWRCs and the economies of scale that bulking of materials generally achieve.
- Optimisation of the existing HWRC sites to ensure they are fully utilised which will avoid increasing the carbon footprint and impacts of local amenity through the provision of a new site.
- The improvement of existing sites leading to an increase in recycling and reuse rates, which would typically have a greater carbon saving than a small additional distance travelled by residents.
- Wider carbon offsetting measures such as the utilisation of hydrogen collection vehicles and Borough level carbon offsetting.
- Financial considerations associated with the management and running of the facilities.

10 Recommendations

This report assesses the worst-case scenario associated with the generation of traffic and usage of the alternate sites after the closure of Congleton. CEC will need to monitor the effects of the closure and investigate the following recommendation measures based on need.

The following mitigation measures are recommended to limit the potential impacts of closing the Congleton HWRC.

- The provision of signage and CCTV at the Congleton site to deter fly-tipping.
- Investigation into the management of fairer access at the alternate sites such as the extension of opening hours and managed access arrangements.
- The provision of bring sites in locations which are over 8km from a HWRC.
- Investigation into the potential for further upgrades to existing infrastructure.

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Working for a brighter future together

Key Decision; N

Date First
Published: N/A

Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 04 May 2021

Report Title: Carbon Neutral Programme – Progress Report

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Nick Mannion, Environment and Regeneration

Senior Officer: Frank Jordan, Executive Director Place

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. In May 2019 Cheshire East Council approved its Carbon Action Plan which included the aim of becoming carbon neutral by 2025. It also included the aim of influencing Carbon reduction across the Borough.
- 1.2. The Carbon Action Plan provides a blended solution of reducing energy use and moving to cleaner forms of energy, whilst offsetting residual emissions by creating carbon capture projects within the Borough.
- 1.3. The primary focus is on reducing the impact of our energy use, reducing waste and water usage. This is alongside capturing carbon through tree planting and other nature-based *insetting*, developing renewable energy system and securing green energy supply.
- 1.4. During the last year the Council has made significant progress in delivering the Carbon Action Plan and laid the groundwork for continued carbon reduction through to 2025. Highlights include 5.8 hectares of tree planting, securing a £2.4million grant to improve our buildings and development of the first hydrogen refuelling station in the North West to power two refuse collection vehicles with hydrogen.
- 1.5. To date the council has projects in the development stage to reduce 5,217.16 tonnes of the carbon used by the authority for its own operations. This represents 34% of the 2020 baseline against the 46% reduction that will be needed to meet the 2025 target. Additionally the council has carbon *insetting* projects in development to inset 6,254.6 tonnes of Carbon, 40% of the 60%

target. This report recommends future decisions that will be needed to complete the reductions to meet the 2025 target.

2. Recommendations

2.1. That Cabinet:

- 2.1.1. Note the progress made to date on the agreed Carbon Action Plan.
- 2.1.2. Note a supplementary estimate decision may be necessary to accept up to £3,000,000 of additional funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund. And that this may be decided under urgency provisions due to the timescales associated with this funding.
- 2.1.3. Invite the appropriate Committees to consider further decisions required to achieve the carbon neutral by 2025 target. Especially:
 - 2.1.3.1. The inclusion of carbon budgeting and accounting in the Council's business planning process and Medium-Term Financial Strategy
 - 2.1.3.2. The results of the building decarbonisation plan to further decarbonise the heating of Council buildings.
 - 2.1.3.3. Future business proposals for the implementation of council vehicle charging infrastructure to complement the planned electrification of the council's vehicle fleet.
 - 2.1.3.4. Consideration of the future land assessment report and the allocation of sufficient land to complete the council's nature based and sustainable energy inset projects necessary to achieve carbon neutrality.
 - 2.1.3.5. Consideration of investment opportunities in association with heat network and green energy proposals forming a green investment programme as projects come forwards.
 - 2.1.3.6. The adoption of a Cheshire East low carbon standard for new build and refurbished buildings in addition to the reductions planned as part of the council's estates transformation project.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. The above recommendations will all lead to the embedding of carbon reduction as a goal throughout the authority.
- 3.2. The decarbonisation of fleet and heat are recognised as the most challenging areas. Work has commenced to develop decarbonisation strategies that will assess these areas of challenge and look for viable alternatives to ensure the ambition of the council is to be achieved

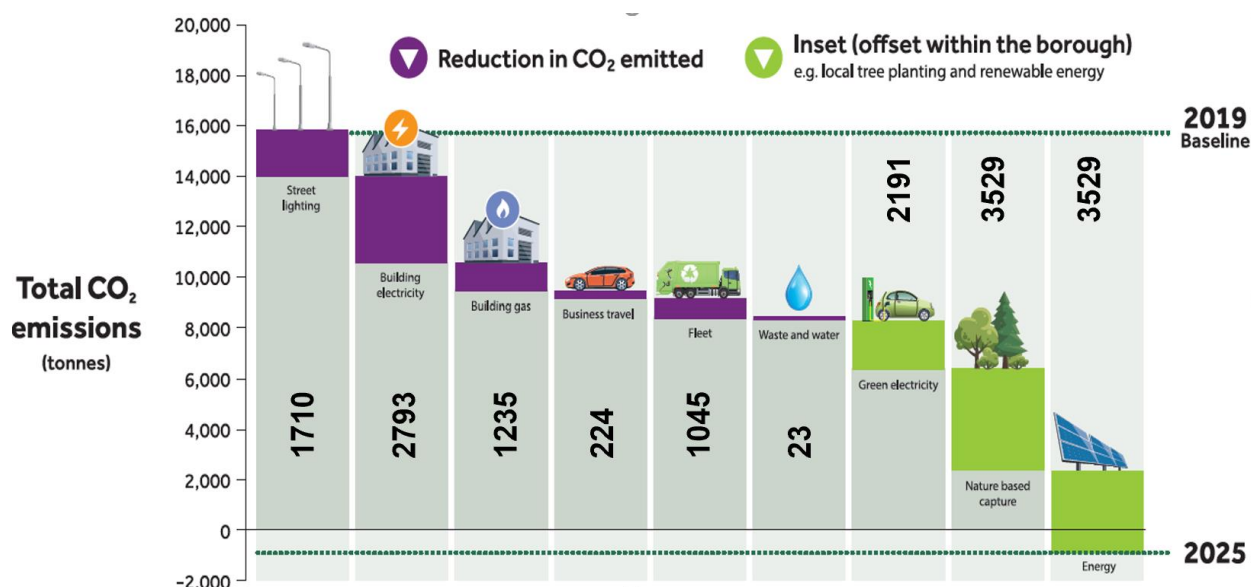
- 3.3. As part of our approach to carbon neutrality, the Council has approved the use of inseting locally through additional energy generation and carbon storage, primarily through tree planting. In order to facilitate this, the Council could utilise its own land holdings to maximise the benefits locally, so an assessment of the use of these land holdings has commenced to establish whether there are any appropriate options.
- 3.4. Cabinet approved the adoption of a standard equivalent to BREEAM (Building Research Establishment, Environmental Assessment Method) for new and refurbished council building projects. Since then new guidance has been received which outlines that standards like BREEAM are not always appropriate for the types of projects undertaken by the public sector. As a result, equivalent standards have been developed by various public sector bodies including Manchester City Council and the Government Property Agency, and it is the intention of the authority to replicate these to produce a bespoke standard that builds on best practice elsewhere
- 3.5. It has come to our attention that additional funding is likely to be made available to support the council relating to our carbon neutral objectives through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme in 2021/22 therefore a decision will be sought to accept this should an acceptable offer be received.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. There is an option to do nothing however this would severely curtail the council's ability to meet its declared target of being carbon neutral for its own operations by 2025.
- 4.2. There is an option to adopt externally created policies, this is not recommended as these policies may not be suitable for use in a Cheshire East context.
- 4.3. The Council has the option to purchase registered carbon offsets. This is not recommended as the offsets would be outside of the borough leading to the value being lost and also the loss of the extensive co-benefits of carbon reduction to the residents of Cheshire East.

5. Background

- 5.1. The carbon neutral action plan set carbon budgets against different areas of the council's operations, illustrated below. These were intended to outline the scale of the reduction required against each area and would be reviewed annually depending upon progress and as and when new opportunities or technologies emerge. Where targets were not being met it is intended that other areas may be able to compensate through additional action.



5.2. An assessment of progress against each area is summarised below and then shown in more detail. This takes into account the impact of projects and policies which have either been put in place and funded to date, or are at a high level of development which provides confidence that the carbon reductions identified will be delivered by 2025/26.

5.3. Projects at concept stage only are shown in the summary table and included on the related graph but are not shown in the individual package tables to give clarity over the level of certainty of the estimated carbon savings in each area. This does not mean that areas which have identified lower carbon savings are not able to achieve the proposed carbon targets, simply that those projects are at a less developed stage.

5.4. Summary Table

	Figures in tonnes of CO ₂	All percentages relate to baseline figure.
2019 Baseline CO₂	15,446.66	100%
2025 Reduction Target	7,030	46%
Estimated carbon reduction (developed projects)	5,217.16	34%
Estimated carbon reduction (including concepts)	5,550.24	36%
Carbon reductions to be developed	1479.76	10%
2025 Insetting Target	9,249	60%
Estimated Insetting (developed projects)	6,254.6	40%
Estimated Insetting (including concepts)	9,172.81	59%
Insetting to be developed	76.19	0.5%

- 5.5. As can be seen above there is a sufficient scope of projects to give us a high degree of confidence that Cheshire East Council will be able to achieve its ambition to be carbon neutral by 2025, however the speed of project development will need to be maintained, and our assumptions over changes to service delivery and policies will need to be delivered.
- 5.6. In the following sections we have taken the elements of the waterfall diagram shown above and broken them down to show where progress has been made and where there are gaps on which we need to focus.
- 5.7. It should be noted the authority is now using a green sustainably produced electricity tariff. In line with established good practice however it is still necessary to first look to reduce electricity usage and to decarbonise through schemes such as solar before the remainder is then off set by the green electricity tariff.

5.8. **Street Lighting**

2019 Baseline (tCO2)	2555.911	100%
2025 Target (tCO2)	845.911	33%
Cumulative Change (tCO2)	1710	Reduction of 67%
Estimated reduction – developed projects (tCO2)	1509	59%
To be developed (tCO2)	201	8%

- 5.8.1. An LED conversion programme has been ongoing for some time and has already transitioned the majority of street lighting columns within the borough.
- 5.8.2. A further scheme is currently within the approvals process to continue this work by transitioning other street furniture e.g. lit signs. This project will produce both cost and carbon savings and is expected to begin delivery within this financial year.
- 5.8.3. Coupled with the reduction of the energy used for streetlighting the council has engaged a supplier to provide green electricity backed by the Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO) scheme.
- 5.8.4. In addition to this work street lighting will benefit from the national decarbonisation of the electricity network.

5.9. **Building electricity**

2019 Baseline (tCO2)	3910.714	100%
2025 Target (tCO2)	1117.714	29%
Cumulative Change (tCO2)	2793	Reduction of 71%
Estimated reduction – developed projects (tCO2)	1964	50%
To be developed (tCO2)	829	21%

- 5.9.1. To build upon this, funding has been secured from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to reduce electricity demand and increase renewable energy supply in buildings with a high demand, including an estimated 1 megawatts of additional solar panels on an anticipated 14 Council buildings including the Environmental Hub, leisure centres, and Highways depots. This is the equivalent of around 300 houses. We are also carrying out a full LED retrofit programme with smart lighting controls and upgrading building management systems.
- 5.9.2. We note that the demands on electricity within our estate will increase as we move away from gas for heating and as more of our fleet becomes electrified and requires charging, however this is somewhat balanced by the national drive to decarbonise the electricity grid.
- 5.9.3. Electricity is currently priced in excess of gas reinforcing the need to reduce the amount of energy used not simply transition to a cleaner fuel.

5.10. Building Gas

2019 Baseline (tCO2)	4409.757	100%
2025 Target (tCO2)	3174.757	72%
Cumulative Change (tCO2)	1235	Reduction of 28%
Estimated reduction – developed projects (tCO2)	606.41	13.8%
To be developed (tCO2)	628.59	14.2%

- 5.10.1. To reduce the gas consumption of our buildings will be a challenge, as it will be nationally, given the UK's historic reliance on natural gas for space and water heating. There will be the potential to purchase Green gas where the use cannot be reduced to zero.
- 5.10.2. As an initial step there is a developed project to improve the efficiency of both the boilers themselves and the buildings being heated. This includes planning for alternative fuel sources where possible and reviewing building insulation.
- 5.10.3. Where it is economically possible to do so we will be investigating the potential for district heat networks to provide a more efficient and reduced carbon solution for heating public buildings. A network has been designed and planned for Crewe town centre with the potential to provide a decarbonised heat solution for the Lifestyle Centre, Municipal Buildings, Lyceum Theatre and the proposed Cheshire Archives.

- 5.10.4. Funding has been approved through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to provide the authority's first air source heat pump, proposed to be sited at a library to decarbonise the buildings heating.

5.11. Business Travel

2019 Baseline (tCO2)	883.831	100%
2025 Target (tCO2)	659.831	75%
Cumulative Change (tCO2)	224	Reduction of 25%
Estimated reduction – developed projects (tCO2)	422.07	48%
To be developed (tCO2)	0	Well developed

- 5.11.1. Business travel has strong potential for reduction in two ways, firstly by reducing the miles travelled and then by reducing the carbon impact of each mile.
- 5.11.2. In terms of reducing miles travelled we are investigating new ways of working and amendments to policies, in particular the increased use of IT to reduce the need to travel.
- 5.11.3. To reduce the per mile carbon impact of each journey a project is in the approval process to implement a pool car strategy incorporating electric vehicles and a review of re-introducing a car loan scheme to facilitate the ability of staff to own an ultra-low emission vehicle.
- 5.11.4. Underpinning all of these actions is a need to hold appropriate and complete data of the vehicles being used and the mileage they are driving. We are also seeking to adapt our reporting of business mileage to add the detail needed to understand the use of private vehicles for business mileage and the carbon impact of these journeys. This need has been highlighted during a review by the Energy Savings Trust of our fleet usage as an authority.
- 5.11.5. Both business travel and fleet carbon reductions are underpinned by the need to electrify our driving and will therefore require an improvement to our local charging infrastructure. The Council is developing an electric vehicle charging strategy to ensure that the provision of this infrastructure keeps pace with the move to electric vehicles.

5.12. Fleet

2019 Baseline (tCO2)	3542.708	100%
2025 Target (tCO2)	2497.708	70%
Cumulative Change (tCO2)	1045	Reduction of 30%
Estimated reduction – developed projects (tCO2)	703.68	20%
To be developed (tCO2)	341.32	10%

- 5.12.1. The Council has a robust approach to fleet management and has commissioned a review by the Energy Saving Trust to assist with the development of portfolio of projects to reduce mileage and use low carbon solutions.
- 5.12.2. We are at the forefront of adopting hydrogen for our larger fleet, with Project Vanguard delivering the first hydrogen refuelling station in North West England to power two converted refuse collection vehicles (RCVs) with green hydrogen.
- 5.12.3. In addition, our waste company Ansa are trialling RCVs with electric bin lifts and replacing E5 standard vehicles with E6, this upgrade will provide a significant carbon reduction across the council's largest fleet of vehicles. Ansa are also exploring the viability for electric RCVs.
- 5.12.4. We are also rolling out electric vehicles and charging points for service delivery, including their use by the Highways service and the Community Wardens.

5.13. Waste and Water

2019 Baseline (tCO2)	143.739	100%
2025 Target (tCO2)	120.739	84%
Cumulative Change (tCO2)	23	Reduction of 16%
Estimated reduction – developed projects (tCO2)	12	8.3%
To be developed (tCO2)	11	7.7%

- 5.13.1. Water metering is being implemented across the estate to drive efficiencies.
- 5.13.2. The approach to reducing waste across the estate is to raise awareness amongst all staff, this will remain a continuous approach moving forwards.

5.14. Green Electricity

2025 Target (tCO2)	2191	100%
Estimated reduction – developed projects (tCO2)	Due to the purchase of green electricity this figure will equal the residual electricity use once all other measures are considered.	100%
To be developed (tCO2)	N/A	N/A

5.14.1. All council buildings are now being supplied with green electricity backed by the Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO) scheme which offsets a significant proportion of the emissions meaning all assets at CEC under our financial control consume 100 % green electricity. This includes Leisure centres and Streetlighting. Since 2019, Schools under CEC energy framework benefit also from 100% green electricity.

5.14.2. It is recognised that the purchase of green electricity, while important, should not negate the need to reduce consumption.

5.15. Nature Based Capture

2025 Target (tCO2)	3529	100%
Estimated reduction – developed projects (tCO2)	191.2	5%
To be developed (tCO2)	3337.8	95%

5.15.1. Nature based capture is currently focusing on projects that include planting trees or hedgerows and restoring peat moss.

5.15.2. Working with representatives of The Mersey Forest, Cheshire Wildlife Trust and Ansa many projects have been assessed and are being progressed as part of the plan for 2021/22. Planting has been planned in existing parks and natural areas such as Tatton Park but also to deliver additional planting to complement new infrastructure projects such as Congleton Link Road. In addition an area of moss land is being restored and a pipeline of future projects is being developed.

5.15.3. Planting is also being explored around natural assets such as the River Bollin, Crewe Valley Brook and potentially using former land fill sites. Additional bio-diversity net gain will also be located close to new energy projects, the proposed solar array at Leighton Grange will encompass approximately 7ha of this nature-based scheme.

5.15.4. Nature-based projects are an area that the community is able to help with and support, enabling community, school and volunteer led projects to form a key part of nature-based projects in Cheshire East going forward.

5.15.5. However, much of the natural based capture is still to be identified and it should be noted that the Council will need to allocate a significant parcel of Council land for tree planting and nature based inset to achieve the target. To assist in this decision a land assessment has been

commissioned to take a broader view of the land assets owned by Cheshire East Council and to understand which are the most appropriate to use to meet our carbon objectives. Many areas will continue with their current use, but it is anticipated that some landholdings, or parts of them, may be suitable for nature-based sequestration projects and some for energy projects. If this does not deliver sufficient suitable land, the case for land acquisition may need to be considered in relevant circumstances. There may also be opportunities for investment in other nature based carbon capture projects within the Borough.

5.16. **Energy**

2025 Target (tCO₂)	3529	100%
Estimated reduction – developed projects (tCO ₂)	2282.4	65%
To be developed (tCO ₂)	1246.6	35%

- 5.16.1. Energy projects can deliver a substantial amount of the insetting required, but they also have significant development risks and require substantial capital investment to proceed.
- 5.16.2. The Council has approved the development of a significant solar project at Leighton Grange which, subject to connections and approvals, would generate the equivalent energy for 1,000 homes. We are also looking for further sites where solar would be appropriate.
- 5.16.3. We are progressing the development of a potential district heating scheme to heat the homes of the North Cheshire Garden Village at Handforth and working to decarbonise the heat network at Alderley Park which is partially owned by the Council. (Crewe heat network is also under development but contributes directly to Council building gas reduction, referred to in section 5.7above).

5.17. **Behaviour Change**

- 5.17.1. It is understood that a main aspect of reducing the carbon footprint of any organisation is educating the members of that organisation.
- 5.17.2. A new e-learning module has been created to provide guidance to all members of Cheshire East staff to understand the Council Climate change commitment and to think about how they can reduce carbon in their area of work for the Council.

- 5.17.3. Several officers and members have been certified as Carbon Literate following training in December 2020, more such training is anticipated.
- 5.17.4. Low carbon champions have also been briefed and a toolkit is being developed to allow them to feed out information to their teams.
- 5.17.5. A carbon assessment process is being developed to work in tandem with the current business planning cycle to ensure that all proposed projects take account of their carbon impact alongside their financial impact.

5.18. Wider Borough

- 5.18.1. A strong part of the ambition for low carbon is the council using its influence to reduce the carbon footprint of the borough as a whole.
- 5.18.2. Cheshire East Council have developed a toolkit for town and parish councils and provided this to allow each area to take ownership of its own carbon future.
- 5.18.3. A Communications strategy has been developed to engage with schools and local groups around the borough. This will complement existing environmental communication campaigns to reduce waste and improve air quality. For example, a new Air Quality campaign was launched on Clean Air Day in 2020 – *Show the Air You Care* - to inspire people to reduce air pollution by walking, cycling or using public transport more often, reducing engine idling, and by going electric. These actions will help reduce carbon emissions from private vehicles.
- 5.18.4. The council is also working with key partners such as Mersey Forest and Cheshire Wildlife Trust to identify other areas where they can support our wider Environment Strategy, including bio-diversity net gain and habitat improvement.
- 5.18.5. Through our responsibility as the Local Planning Authority, the Council is able to influence the carbon footprint of new development. Two recent applications which form part of the strategic allocation for delivery of over 1200 homes and associated infrastructure in North West Crewe includes conditions for electric vehicle charging points, ultra-low emission boilers and also a positive net gain on site for biodiversity. Additional tree planting and design codes will form part of the future detailed schemes.
- 5.18.6. Part 2 of the Council's Local Plan, the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document, will strengthen our influence as it includes detailed policies on climate change mitigation and adaptation, energy efficiency, and renewable and low carbon energy sources. The plan is due to be examined by the Secretary of State this year and if approved will be adopted in early 2022.

- 5.18.7. The council also recognises the opportunities that are presented within this area. These include:
- 5.18.7.1. Government initiatives to assist with the retrofit of older houses and buildings.
 - 5.18.7.2. Being in a position to influence government policy through platforms such as the LEP Net Zero group, The Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (ADEPT) and the Cheshire Leaders Board.
 - 5.18.7.3. To work with partners in our farming communities to deliver environmental and carbon improvements through developments such as biodiversity net gain and potential initiatives such as the anaerobic digestion of cattle slurry.
 - 5.18.7.4. To build on local policies and the carbon reduction priorities, for example the waste strategy and the strategic sites and housing framework.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. Legal Implications

- 6.1.1. The Carbon Action Plan has been produced in response to parliamentary request as noted at the start of the plan. Whilst the Council works to evolve its approach to decarbonisation and further develops the plan; it should be born in mind that until the plan is finalised it is not possible to make any substantive comment on the legal implications of the same. As and when the decarbonisation policy is fully developed legal can consider the implications more fully and comment at that juncture on any specific initiatives that are identified.

6.2. Finance Implications

- 6.2.1. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2021-25, as approved by the Council on 17th February 2021, includes an existing Environmental Strategy and Carbon Neutrality revenue budget. The MTFS also includes several carbon neutral related capital schemes within the Addendum to the Capital Programme, including the Multi Site PV Scheme and Carbon Offset Investment.
- 6.2.2. Future proposed budget changes relating to the Carbon Neutral programme will be fed into the Council's business planning process which are likely to involve an Electric Vehicle Charging scheme for Council fleet and further green investment opportunities associated with solar farms and heat networks.

6.3. Policy Implications

- 6.3.1. The recommendations within this report are reflective of the priorities within the council's approved Corporate Plan as adopted at Council in February 2021.

6.4. Equality Implications

- 6.4.1. An outline equality impact assessment has been undertaken as part of the Environment Strategy of which the Carbon Neutral Action Plan forms a key element.
- 6.4.2. The EIA is a live document and will be updated as individual project proposals are brought forwards.

6.5. Human Resources Implications

- 6.5.1. Policy changes may have HR implications and will be thoroughly consulted on before they are implemented.

6.6. Risk Management Implications

- 6.6.1. A programme risk register has been developed and is actively maintained.
- 6.6.2. Individual projects also maintain their own risk register and individual risks are managed or mitigated.

6.7. Rural Communities Implications

- 6.7.1. It is understood that requirements for land use may have an impact on rural communities. Part of the land assessment will be to review the competing priorities for different land parcels and give a rounded view.
- 6.7.2. Land use for bio-diversity net gain is also likely to be required however the net gains will provide other benefits in rural areas.
- 6.7.3. It is recognised that rural communities have different needs with regards to issues such as transport and will require particular solutions.

6.8. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

- 6.8.1. As part of the wider communications strategy, plans are in place to engage with children and young people through various channels.

6.9. Public Health Implications

- 6.9.1. It is expected that reductions in green house gasses and associated pollution will have a positive impact on public health.

6.10. Climate Change Implications

- 6.10.1. The matters within this report are concerned with reducing the council's carbon footprint.

7. Ward Members Affected

- 7.1. The measures within this report will affect all wards.

8. Consultation & Engagement

- 8.1. Consultation was carried out for the Environment Strategy from 29th November 2019, the results of which were presented to Cabinet in May 2020.

9. Access to Information

- 9.1. <https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/environment/carbon-neutral-council/environment-strategy.aspx>
- 9.2. <https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/environment/carbon-neutral-council/carbon-neutral-council.aspx>

10. Contact Information

- 10.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Ralph Kemp

Job Title: Head of Environmental Services



Working for a brighter future together

Key Decision: N

Date First
Published: N/A

Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 4th May 2021

Report Title: Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group – Members’ Facilities, Accommodation and Culture Recommendations

Report Author: Joel Hammond-Gant, Scrutiny Officer

Senior Officer: Jane Burns, Executive Director of Corporate Services

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report introduces the findings, conclusions and recommendations made by the overview and scrutiny task and finish group, set up by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review Members’ Facilities, Accommodation and Culture.
- 1.2. The original remit of the task and finish group has been overtaken by time and events. However, members’ views on the issues raised remain important and can be taken into consideration as the council plans its recovery from Covid restrictions, as they relate to members’ facilities.
- 1.3. The report is presented to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as the “parent” overview and scrutiny committee, to comment on the findings and advise on the way forward.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the report of the Members’ Facilities, Accommodation and Culture Task and Finish Group be received.

3. Recommendations from the Task and Finish Group

- 3.1. In light of the decision taken by Council on 19 November 2020 to move to a committee system form of governance from May 2021, the group would ask that as part of the council’s various workstreams put in place to achieve a

successful governance transition, consideration is given to the points raised in this report when determining how the council may re-arrange and re-use its members' facilities within the committee system.

- 3.2. Although there is no appetite to reserve certain rooms exclusively for member meetings, the group felt that prioritisation arrangements should be considered.
- 3.3. That consideration be given to determine any economical and affordable ways that the council could increase and improve the public display of the civic history, culture and heritage of Cheshire East Council and its three former authorities (Congleton Borough Council, Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council, and Macclesfield Borough Council).
- 3.4. The group would ask that the Council gives consideration to the longer-term goal of constructing its own purpose-built council chamber, to both improve the delivery of Council meetings and introduce a space within which the heritage and culture of Cheshire East and its three former authorities can be proudly displayed.
- 3.5. That as part of the preparatory work for implementing the committee system from May 2021, consideration be given to the availability of car parking spaces on busier meeting days i.e. when full Council is held, and that council determines if any priority parking arrangements should be put in place.
- 3.6. That the council continues to build on the great strides it made through 2020/21 – successfully completing its Digital Refresh Programme and transforming how it delivers its work and meetings – by ensuring that continued IT training is made available to support continued effective remote working and virtual meeting delivery.
- 3.7. That, in light of the rollout of laptops and IT equipment to all elected members and officers, Council considers making a committed pledge to reducing the authority's use of paper, both in day-to-day work activities and for documentation for meetings.
- 3.8. That the council continues to periodically review the use of its facilities and accommodation, to make certain that cost and resource-efficacy is achieved.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1. The recommendations made in this report aim to help Cheshire East Council to continue to review and improve the efficient, effective use of its facilities, accommodation and ICT equipment, and to improve its public display of the rich history, heritage and culture of Cheshire East, Congleton, Crewe and Nantwich, and Macclesfield.

5. Other Options Considered

5.1. No alternative options were considered.

6. Background

6.1. The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee initially established this task and finish group in December 2016, with the purpose of reviewing whether the facilities, accommodation and cultural arrangements of Cheshire East Council were fit for purpose for the council's increased elected membership following the merging of the former Cheshire authorities (Congleton Borough Council, Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council and Macclesfield Borough Council) into the current unitary authority in 2009.

6.2. The work of the group was paused on two occasions, which led to the delay in the production of this final report. The two remaining members of the task and finish group (Councillors M Simon and A Moran) with the support of officers, reconvened this piece of work in November 2019 and produced the appended report.

6.3. The final report of the task and finish group (Appendix 1) was updated to ensure that the group's findings, conclusions and recommendations reflected the significant changes undertaken by the council both in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and in preparation for the change in governance arrangements in May 2021.

7. Implications of the Recommendations

7.1. Legal Implications

7.1.1. There are no legal implications associated to the report and recommendations at this stage, however, there may be legal implications associated with the implication of any approved recommendations.

7.2. Finance Implications

7.2.1. The recommendations have not yet been financially assessed. Further work would be required to capture the specific financial implications of any approved recommendations.

7.3. Policy Implications

7.3.1. There are no policy implications at this stage, however, the approval of any recommendations may result in policy changes.

7.4. Equality Implications

7.4.1. There are no equality implications associated to this report.

7.5. Human Resources Implications

7.5.1. There are no human resources implications associated to this report.

7.6. Risk Management Implications

7.6.1. There are no risk management implications associated to this report.

7.7. Rural Communities Implications

7.7.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

7.8. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

7.8.1. There are no direct implications for children and young people.

7.9. Public Health Implications

7.9.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

7.10. Climate Change Implications

7.10.1. Some of the recommendations would have wider benefits in relation to potentially reducing vehicle emissions, as well as paper, printing and ink usage, which would help the council to achieve the objectives of the Cheshire East Carbon Action Plan, and to respond to its declaration of “an environment and climate emergency”.

8. Ward Members Affected

8.1. No ward members are directly affected.

9. Consultation & Engagement

9.1. No formal consultation and engagement was required.

10. Access to Information

10.1. The following documentation was used to support the development of the review.

10.1.1. [The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels \(Coronavirus\) \(Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2020](#)

10.1.2. [Minutes of the virtual meeting of \(Cheshire East\) Council held on Thursday, 19th November, 2020](#) (regarding the resolution to introduce a committee system form of governance from May 2021)

- 10.1.3. [Minutes of the virtual meeting of \(Cheshire East Council\) Cabinet held on Tuesday, 5th May, 2020](#) (regarding the approval of the Cheshire East Carbon Action Plan)
- 10.1.4. [Minutes of the meeting of \(Cheshire East\) Council held on Wednesday, 22nd May, 2019](#) (regarding the council's declaration of “an environment and climate emergency”)

11. Contact Information

- 11.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Joel Hammond-Gant

Job Title: Scrutiny Officer

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Members' Facilities, Accommodation and Culture Task and Finish Group

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1. Chairman's Foreword

Dear Colleagues,

This task and finish group began in December 2016. Although I have been its Chairman since its inception, the group has seen a number of changes to its membership and to the council officers who have supported it. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those officers who have worked with us throughout its duration and also those who have been involved in producing this final report.

The group felt that, although there is scope for this work to continue as the council's moves into its committee system in May 2021, it was timely to produce this report for wider consideration by the council. As the last two remaining members of the group, Councillor A Moran and I would hope to be invited to participate in any work undertaken by the council to take this group's recommendations forward.

I would finally like to give thanks to the membership of this task and finish group, all of whom have been enthusiastic throughout the duration of the review; bringing a wealth of knowledge and wide range of experience to it also. Each and every member of the group who undertook this piece of work was committed to improving members' facilities, accommodation and culture, with the aspiration of helping to make Cheshire East Council a place with its own strong heritage and culture that people can identify with.

I hope that you will enjoy reading our report.



Councillor Margaret Simon, Chairman of the Task and Finish Group

2. Introduction

- 2.1. This review commenced in December 2016 and has been carried out over a period of more than four years. Since May 2019, the council has undertaken significant work to prepare for moving to a committee system form of governance, which has fundamentally changed some of the assumptions and motivations which formed the basis of the task and finish group's considerations.
- 2.2. The work carried out by this group was in response to council's cabinet system. Although this is referenced throughout the report, the Cabinet and cabinet model of decision-making will no longer apply to the authority from May 2021, however, some of the issues raised and brought forward by the group may still be relevant to the incumbent committee system.
- 2.3. In order to produce a report that both reflects and highlights the work that has been completed by the task and finish group, as well as the recent implications brought about by the council's change in governance arrangements and Covid-19 pandemic, key officers have suggested appropriate and consequential amendments to ensure that the content of the report reflects where the council will be moving to from May 2021.

3. Background

Rationale for the review

- 3.1. Cheshire East Council was formed in April 2009, following the joining-up of the three former local authorities: Crewe & Nantwich Borough Council, Macclesfield Borough Council and Congleton Borough Council. The main headquarters for the new unitary authority is Westfields, Sandbach, formerly the headquarters of Congleton Borough Council, with additional offices in Crewe and Macclesfield.
- 3.2. Westfields had provided modest facilities for the 48 elected members of the former Congleton Borough Council, however, did not necessarily sufficiently support the needs of the increased elected membership (82 councillors) of Cheshire East Council.
- 3.3. There was also a perception that the layout at Westfields – with facilities for non-executive and executive members being separated on different floors – had contributed to less effective communication and interaction between members.
- 3.4. The council's Members' Room is located on the ground floor of Westfields, but is unable to accommodate more than a small number of members comfortably; the group contended that this room was inadequate for the long term needs of the council's elected members.

- 3.5. Several members that had previously served the demised authorities had expressed a desire to improve the facilities at Cheshire East to provide conditions which would allow greater opportunities for daily informal interaction with colleagues across all political parties and with the council's executive.

Membership

- 3.6. When this task and finish group was initiated in December 2016, it comprised four councillors, with two additional councillors later joining in September 2018.
- 3.7. Further changes have been imposed to the membership of the group since this date, with Councillors M Simon and A Moran remaining as the only two members of the task and finish group in 2021. As such, this report and the finalisation of the task and finish work has been concluded and signed off by these two members.

The membership of the group when originally formed is set out below.



From left to right: Councillors Davenport*, Flude, Grant, Moran*, Simon and Wells-Bradshaw

*joined in September 2018

Methodology

- 3.8. The group carried out a scoping exercise to develop its objectives and project plan. The group decided to limit its review to facilities at Westfields only, as this was because it was council's main headquarters where the majority of formal committee meetings took place, and was therefore the most likely place that members would gather in significant numbers day to day.
- 3.9. The group acknowledged that, whilst existing member facilities in Macclesfield Town Hall and Crewe Municipal Buildings could undoubtedly be improved, they were both superior to the facilities at Westfields, and the wider aim of this review was to address issues such as culture and civic pride at the council's headquarters.
- 3.10. The group met with the council leader and various officers, including; the Chief Executive; Head of Governance and Democratic Services; Manager of the Chief Executive's Office; Facilities Manager; and Interim Chief Executive (following the departure of the former Chief Executive, Mike Suarez, in July 2018.)
- 3.11. Over the course of these meetings, the group considered a range of information and evidence, including the maps and blueprints of the council's three major office sites, as well as floorplans for various potential options for how some of the meeting rooms could be revised and changed for different uses.
- 3.12. Upon undertaking this review, the group ensured that its work was underpinned by a pragmatic and sensitive attitude in respect of the challenging financial climate for local authorities; there was no justification in this economic climate to incur significant expenditure. However, through this piece of work, it was hoped that the group could produce some workable recommendations and solutions that would deliver appropriate and sustainable improvements to members' facilities in Cheshire East.
- 3.13. The group agreed that its final recommendations within this report be expressed as aspirations, and therefore have not been fully costed.

Objectives

- 3.14. Upon initiating this project, the group agreed to the following key objectives:
 - To provide a shared space for all elected members on the second floor of Westfields, as close to the Cabinet meeting room and executive officers as possible.
 - To create a civic identity by displaying civic regalia and artefacts and other objects, and artwork displays, significant to the history of

Cheshire East and its former authorities, on the ground floor at Westfields.

- To introduce standardised use of technology for members leading to largely paperless meetings and standardised layout for meetings.

3.15. Following a lengthy break in the middle of this review, the remaining two group members met in December 2019 to review the work previously completed by the group. In addition to agreeing that steps should be taken to close the review and produce a final report, members felt that the report should also incorporate the growing concern of members regarding the availability of car parking spaces for members at Westfields; a more recent, yet important issue to members of the council.

4. Findings

- 4.1. Following the group's first phase of meetings (through to approximately December 2017), it produced a number of recommendations in relation to members' facilities and accommodation, meeting rooms, car parking and IT equipment.
- 4.2. After the group reconvened and resumed its work on this project from November 2019, it made a conscious effort to contextualise its findings and reflect how some of these original recommendations may have already been addressed, or have been influenced by the council's decision to change to a committee system form of governance, or the Covid-19 pandemic.

Meeting Rooms, Members' Room and Cabinet Office

- 4.3. The group examined the adequacy of meeting rooms available at Westfields for formal meetings to which the public have access. Local authority meeting rooms are an integral part of the visitor experience of a civic headquarters, and are often the only part of the building that members of the public see and experience.
- 4.4. Of Cheshire East Council's newly elected membership after 2009, a considerable proportion had previously been elected to the council's three former authorities, including some of the members of this task and finish group. Arrangements had been made by some of these former local authorities to provide meeting rooms for both the leader of the council and leader of the opposition which, in addition to Members' Rooms provided more space for councillors to meet and/or carry out their work.
- 4.5. The Committee Suites at Westfields were – prior to the Covid-19 pandemic – often fully booked each day, consequently meaning that there is little

flexibility to allow for additional meetings to be held which are not in the annually-approved schedule of council committee meetings.

- 4.6. The group considered whether the booking arrangements for the Committee Suites should be reviewed; although there is no appetite to reserve these rooms exclusively for member meetings, there is a case for consideration to be given to the introduction of a formal prioritisation arrangement for meetings which are open to the public. This could be achieved by means of adding an advisory note to all confirmed bookings of the Committee Suites to the effect that if a meeting involving members open to public is organised subsequent to a booking already made, the meeting involving members will take precedence, should suitable alternatives at Crewe Municipal Buildings and Macclesfield Town Hall be unavailable.
- 4.7. As the group's original work was based on the assumption relating to the continuation of the work of Cabinet, it identified a few different options as to how facilities for non-executive members could be improved without impacting the facilities for Cabinet.
- 4.8. After considering the practical and financial implications of reconfiguring the use of the Cabinet Office, S10 and Members' Room in Westfields, the group acknowledged that the desired improvements could not be achieved without sacrificing available meeting room space, or incurring additional costs. The group agreed that any such reconfiguration of the above meeting rooms should not come at a cost to the council, and therefore was discounted, with the caveat that other options be looked at in the future should the need arise.

What has changed since the review began?

- 4.9. Since this review began and the floorplans were considered, the Members' Room was moved from its previous location to a slightly larger room also on the ground floor of Westfields. This group contended that, due to the still continued small size of the current Members' Room, some of the councillors may not view it as a suitable location to meet or carry out work in. A larger meeting room was felt to improve the number of councillors using it, which would in turn support more effective cross-party communication amongst the non-executive members of the council.
- 4.10. Further to this, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 led to the speedy introduction of legislation to allow for remote, virtual decision-making local authority meetings to take place. By April 2020, the council had put in place provisions to enable decision-making meetings to be held virtually and remotely.

- 4.11. The council has monitored and maintained compliance with the social distancing guidelines and workplace guidance in all of its corporate buildings, since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 4.12. At the time of concluding this piece of work, it was not known how the pandemic will impact how councils hold meetings in the long-term and whether future legislation will allow local authorities the flexibility to hold in-person, hybrid and virtual decision-making meetings. When future legislation and guidance is released on this, it will be important for the council to review how it can use its meeting rooms and virtual meeting technology to ensure that its business is carried out in the most resource-efficient and environmentally-friendly way.
- 4.13. The group noted that accommodation is a costly commodity especially if left empty. As such, whatever potential change was to be made to the council's meeting room arrangements and prioritisation, it would be important to ensure that meeting rooms are being maximised for cost-efficiency.
- 4.14. On 19 November 2020, Cheshire East Council voted in favour of changing its form of governance from the existing cabinet/leader model to a committee system form of decision-making, with effect from May 2021. This will bring about a change to the authority's decision-making processes, and a potentially changed demand upon the need for Member facilities. As the new arrangements become established, consideration will need to be given by the authority upon how and when its meeting rooms and facilities will be required for formal, informal and briefing meetings under the forthcoming committee system.
- 4.15. Further to this, the council will continue to manage and ensure the safe use of its meeting rooms and facilities to continue to comply with all Covid-19 social distancing and workplace guidance issued by government.

Council Chamber and Full Council Meetings

- 4.16. The group felt that one of the major downsides to the council's facilities and meeting rooms was that it could not facilitate full Council meetings; these meetings have had to be held at alternative venues including Sandbach Town Hall, with the venue hire being an additional cost to the council.
- 4.17. Although beyond the scope of this review, the group agreed that the council should have a long-term goal of having its own council chamber within the borough – either on its own or as a shared arrangement (with Cheshire West and Chester Council) – within the borough, which could easily accommodate all 82 elected members, officers, and members of the press and public.
- 4.18. The development of a new council chamber would need to be cost effective to the council and be a space that it can make regular use of, whether that

be through the creation of a multi-purpose room made available for external hire when not in use by the council.

Car Parking for Members

- 4.19. Another concern raised by the group during this review was the difficulty that some members had experienced when trying to find a car parking space when attending Westfields for a committee meeting, either in the private car park (for council staff and elected members only,) or the public car park next to it.
- 4.20. Members of the group noted that that in general it was most difficult to find a parking space on Monday through Thursday; the private car park was the most difficult to find a parking space in. In some instances, members had reported having to park further afield at the Chapel Street Car Park.
- 4.21. The group acknowledged that potential solutions to the car parking issues experienced by members included car-sharing, carpooling and public transport, all of which would also support the council's commitments and efforts to reduce its carbon outputs and achieve carbon neutrality by 2025.

What has changed since the review began?

- 4.22. Since March 2020, when the Government introduced restrictions in response to the Covid-19 public health emergency, the council's elected members and staff have predominantly worked remotely, including holding meetings virtually. This has significantly reduced the need for car parking spaces.
- 4.23. Depending on the content of future legislation in relation to local authority meetings/virtual meetings, and the council's approach to flexible homeworking arrangements, it is conceivable that more virtual meetings will result in a reduced demand on meeting rooms. If this is a long-term trend then it is possible that there will also be reduced demand on car parking spaces at Westfields.

Civic Pride and Image

- 4.24. Establishing and maintaining a sense of time and place, and civic identity, that are unique to Cheshire East is important to members, particularly as each of the three former authorities had their own longstanding civic identities and culture. Cheshire East has inherited these rich heritages and in its first 12 years has used these to develop its own civic culture.
- 4.25. Since its inception, this council has become a major contributor to many economic and cultural successes in the borough. Members, officers and the public should feel proud of its progress to date and the successes it has had. One of the key suggestions made by the group was that the council

should, where cost-effective and appropriate, utilise the reception area at Westfields to outwardly display and celebrate this council's heritage and its positive impact on the Cheshire East area.

- 4.26. The group agreed that any display area should be held principally in the reception area, to allow it to be most visible to the public, but that the corridor adjacent to the Committee Suites could be used as well. The group believe that some of the major companies based within the borough should be approached to ascertain whether they would be willing to provide displays.
- 4.27. The group discovered during its investigations that only a small number of artefacts from the former authorities have remained in possession of the council. This was largely because many items had been transferred to the new town councils in Crewe and Macclesfield. Nevertheless, there are some items that have been retained, particularly in connection with the Mayoralty, such as the mace, mayoral robes and tricorne that could be put on public display when not in use by the Mayor.
- 4.28. The displaying of such items could incur further cost to the council through insurance costs which, if explored by the council in the future, should be considered and cost analysed against the estimated numbers of public that would attend Westfields and experience these.
- 4.29. Elsewhere, the Council has won numerous awards since its inception and has been presented with many gifts from within the UK and abroad. The group believes that these awards and gifts should also form part of a public display at Westfields.
- 4.30. Many authorities display honours boards for Honorary Alderman and Freedom of the Borough. Whilst it is accepted by the group that an old fashioned wooden display board would be incongruous in the modern setting of a building like Westfields, there are other means available to put on public display these prestigious civic awards. The group's favoured option would be to provide an illuminated book which would list Honorary Aldermen and Freemen to be put on display in the reception area at Westfields. The group does, however, contend that a modern display board should be considered for the listing of the Mayor of Cheshire East.

What has changed since the review began?

- 4.31. Since this review began, changes have been made in the Reception area of Westfields: a cabinet has been provided for the purpose of displaying regalia, artefacts, awards and other such items relating to Cheshire East's historical and civic image. To date, there have not been many items brought forward to be displayed in this.

- 4.32. Considering how the council's corporate buildings may be used differently following the Covid-19 pandemic, the group felt that another way the council could raise awareness and appreciation for its own (and inherited) cultural heritage, by updating its public website to display images or information on key aspects of the borough's history and culture.

Improved Technology

- 4.33. Immediately following the outbreak of Covid-19 and sudden national lockdown restrictions, the council quickly responded to the challenge of transforming the use of its IT in order that officers can work remotely and meetings (public decision-making meetings and informal meetings) can be conducted through virtual meeting software. Prior to this, all councillors and officers attended all meetings in person at the council's corporate buildings.
- 4.34. The pandemic placed an acute pressure on the council to quickly complete the rollout of its Digital Refresh Programme and provide officers with laptops and other equipment necessary for elected members and officers to be able to work efficiently and effectively at home and away from the office.
- 4.35. As at the time of developing this report and finalising this piece of work, the legislation enabling legal virtual council meetings is due to expire on 6 May 2021. Whether, or to what extent, this legislation is extended after this date, the newfound experience in using virtual meeting technology will potentially afford the council greater flexibility in how it conducts its business, for example, for non-decision making meetings to take place remotely, which will help the council to manage the use of its meeting rooms for the future.
- 4.36. In addition to the group's ambition that elected members and officers would have improved use of, and accessibility to, IT equipment, it was hoped that this would help the council to reduce its use of paper and ink. This arguably became a matter of greater importance following the council's decision to declare an environment and climate emergency (Cheshire East Council, Council meeting, 22 May 2019), in addition to the commitment within its Environment Strategy to be carbon neutral by 2025 (Cheshire East Council, Cabinet, 5 May 2020).
- 4.37. In order to achieve the status of a paperless council, it is important that both members and officers receive the necessary support and training on how their IT equipment can be used in place of using paper, for example, reading and annotating meeting agendas, and making notes.
- 4.38. The group concedes that it would be difficult for some committee meetings, especially the planning committees, to be administrated without the use of paper as there is greater reliance on the use of paper plans and maps, which can sometimes be difficult to read on relatively small tablet or

computer screens. In addition, consideration would have to be given to how facilities would be provided for members of the public at meetings.

- 4.39. One innovation the group felt might help to support reduced reliance on paper copies of agendas and other supporting documentation (e.g. maps and plans), would be to make use of its existing projectors and large TV screens in meeting rooms as a central viewing point for members of the committee and public to follow during the meeting. This equipment could also enable the council to support flexible, virtual and/or hybrid meeting arrangements.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1. Since its inception in April 2009, Cheshire East Council has not established a significant display exhibiting the broad civic history, culture and heritage of itself, as well as its three former authorities (Congleton Borough Council, Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council, and Macclesfield Borough Council).
- 5.2. Before Covid-19, all formal and informal council meetings were held in person in the council's corporate buildings. In order to respond to the challenge presented by the pandemic and ensure business could continue in an efficient manner, the council's Digital Refresh Programme was quickly rolled out to provide elected members and officers with access to laptops and other equipment to support remote working.
- 5.3. It is not known at the time of writing this report whether the present legislation enabling virtual meetings will be extended beyond its planned 6 May 2021 end date. Following the completion of its Digital Refresh Programme, the council is now equipped and upskilled to support in-situ and remote meetings and working. This will afford the council greater flexibility in how it manages the use of its meeting rooms.
- 5.4. The group found that, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was difficult at times to flexibly or easily rearrange formal, public committee meetings at the Committee Suites, Westfields, which would usually lead to senior officers and members travelling between the council's three corporate buildings (Crewe Municipal Buildings, Macclesfield Town Hall and Westfields) to attend meetings. If such meetings were more easily arranged and/or rearranged to continue to be held at Westfields, this could reduce both the amount of officer time spent away from work, and the emissions associated with the increased travel.
- 5.5. With new and improved IT available to both officers and members, as well as the experience of conducting council business through online virtual meetings, the council has the IT infrastructure in place to support a move towards becoming a paperless authority, which would also help it to achieve its ambitious carbon reduction and carbon neutrality targets.

- 5.6. One of the key drivers for this review was that the Members' Room was not sufficient for a council with 82 elected members, and that it was situated on the ground floor of Westfields at a distance from the Cabinet Office on the second floor, which the group felt inhibited effective communication between the council's executive and non-executive members. From May 2021, however, when the council formally transitions to a committee system form of governance, it will no longer have a Cabinet and consideration can be given to how the former Cabinet Office will be used.
- 5.7. The group felt that if the council were to have its own dedicated council chamber, it would be easier to arrange and deliver Council meetings, and such a room would provide the council with another means to display its heritage and culture.
- 5.8. The majority of member meetings, including some full Council meetings, are held in Sandbach (at Westfields and Sandbach Town Hall), which in addition to being the main headquarters for officers, means that most weekdays both the private staff/member car park and adjacent public car park at Westfields are full. This has created issues for members when trying to find a parking space to be able to attend their meetings.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1. That consideration be given to economical and affordable ways by which the council could improve its public display of the civic history and cultural heritage, and 'placemaking', of Cheshire East Council and its three former authorities (Congleton Borough Council, Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council, and Macclesfield Borough Council).
- 6.2. That the council reviews its elected member and staff facilities – following the authority's transition to a committee system form of governance in May 2021, and in light of the virtual meeting legislation and remote working arrangements put in place due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 6.3. Although there is no appetite to reserve certain rooms exclusively for member meetings, the group would ask that, as part of any review of the council's facilities and accommodation, consideration be given to prioritising certain meeting rooms for elected members and member meetings.
- 6.4. That, in light of the changes and impacts brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, virtual meeting legislation and successful deployment of virtual meeting technology, the council reviews its elected member and staff facilities, and gives consideration to the necessity of the longer-term aspiration of having its own, or shared (with Cheshire West and Chester), purpose-built council chamber.

- 6.5. That consideration be given to how the availability of car parking spaces at the private (elected member and staff) car park at Westfields could be managed so that on busier meeting days such as when full Council is held, elected members have no issue obtaining a car parking space.
- 6.6. That the council continues to build on the great strides it made through 2020/21 – successfully completing its Digital Refresh Programme and transforming how it delivers its work and meetings – by ensuring that continued IT training is made available to support effective remote working and virtual meeting delivery.
- 6.7. That, following Digital Refresh Programme, the council considers making a committed pledge to reducing its use of paper and printing ink, both from day-to-day work activities and documentation for council committee meetings.
- 6.8. That the council gives consideration to making use of its existing TV screen and projector equipment in meeting rooms and how this could support hybrid (in-person and virtual) meetings and provide members and officers with greater flexibility for how the authority can use its meeting rooms and facilities most efficiently and effectively.

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