

# Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## Supplementary Agenda

---

**Date:** Thursday, 26th November, 2020

**Time:** 12.30 pm

**Venue:** Virtual Meeting

---

6. **Covid-19 Update** (Pages 3 - 38)

To consider an update report on the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

12. **Pre-Budget Consultation 2021/22 - 2024/25** (Pages 39 - 90)

*In accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman agreed that this item be considered as an item of urgent business that could not practicably or effectively be deferred until the next meeting of the committee on 7 January 2021.*

To consider the Pre-Budget Consultation 2021/22 – 2024/25 in advance of it being agreed by Cabinet and the public consultation period begins.

---

For any apologies or requests for further information, or to give notice of a question to be asked by a member of the public

**Contact:** Joel Hammond-Gant

**Tel:** 01270 686468

**E-Mail:** [joel.hammond-gant@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:joel.hammond-gant@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

This page is intentionally left blank



*Working for a brighter future together*

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

## Cabinet

---

**Date of Meeting:** 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020

**Report Title:** Covid-19 – Update on 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 have received reports in June, July, September, October and November 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 report provides a further update of the work undertaken in response to this national and international public health emergency since the November report.
- 1.3. The report also summarises the latest information on infection rates, the local measures instigated as a result and the second national lockdown.
- 1.4. The financial impact of the pandemic on the council continues to be significant. The report provides a further update, which will also be of interest to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny and the Audit and Governance Committees.
- 1.5. It is important to note that there will 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 notes the issues outlined in the report.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves a Supplementary Revenue Estimate for £880,472, fully funded from the Covid Winter Grant.
- 2.3 That Cabinet provide delegated responsibility to the Executive Director of People to distribute the Covid Winter Grant, to provide assistance to vulnerable households over the winter period, in line with the eligibility criteria outlined within this report.
- 2.4 That Cabinet approves a Supplementary Revenue Estimate for £500,000, fully funded from Covid-19 Emergency Grant, to provide an increase in the 2020/21 management fee payment to Everybody Sport and Recreation Trust to support the continuation of Leisure Services in the Borough.
- 2.5 That Cabinet note that a Supplementary Revenue Estimate was approved by the Chief Executive for the 2020/21 Financial Year, of £15,262,935, to be funded from the Local Restrictions Support Grant. The grant will support businesses affected by measures introduced in the response to Covid-19, in accordance with government guidelines, and in accordance with the Discretionary policies also approved under urgency powers.

## **3. Other Options Considered**

- 3.1. Not applicable.

## **4. Background**

- 4.1. At the time of writing the most recent WHO Weekly Epidemiological Update issued on 15 November showed a continued steep rise with almost 4 million new cases of Covid-19 reported in the previous week (9-15 November).
- 4.2. From 30 December 2019 through 15 November 2020, over 53.7 million COVID-19 cases and 1.3 million deaths have been reported globally. Whilst the European Region reports the highest number of new cases globally (46%), it saw a 10% fall in the previous week following strengthening of public health and social measures. The number of new deaths in Europe has increased substantially with over 29,000 deaths reported in the past week. The Region of the Americas saw a sharp upward trend with a 41% increases in new cases in the past week. The South-East Asia Region reported a decline in the number of new cases and new deaths. (Source WHO)
- 4.3. The latest international, national and local statistics are available from the following data dashboards:

- 4.4. <https://covid19.who.int/>
- 4.5. <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>
- 4.6. In England, the Department of Health and Social Care report that there has been an average of 19,373 new cases over the last seven-day period (as at 17 November) with a high number of cases in Yorkshire and Humber, North East England, West Midlands and the North West.
- 4.7. To counter rising rates of infection and increasing hospital admissions, the UK Government introduced a new set of National Restrictions on 5 November to apply to the whole of England. These restricted day to day contact with others requiring individuals to stay at home, except for specific purposes, avoid mixing with others and the closure of non-essential premises. Schools, colleges and universities have stayed open. Currently, national government is signalling these measures will continue until 2 December. Details of this change are found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november>
- 4.8. The respective administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales have introduced measures that have been tailored to their country's circumstances.
- 4.9. In terms of the daily confirmed cases, in the last full week of data, 732 people in Cheshire East have tested positive (as at 16 November, 2020). This figure compares to the 626 people who in the last Cabinet report were recorded as testing positive. The local infection rate was recorded as 191 cases per 100,000 population. The corresponding rate for England was 241 cases per 100,000.
- 4.10. Within Cheshire East the current data suggest a decline in cases from a rate of 250 per 100,000 seen around 11 November to the current rate of 191 per 100,000. This may indicate the National Restrictions taking effect. However, we have seen well-publicised problems with data in the past few months and we need to be cautious in the interpretation of this potential down turn in cases. It is more realistic to say we have no evidence of cases increasing.
- 4.11. Over the last month case rates for all age groups have increased. This increase remains the highest for the 16-29 age group. Of note, those aged 65 plus have increased from a low of 82 in late October to 139 per 100,000. However in the last few days all groups have seen small decreases in the case rates per 100,000.
- 4.12. Covid-19 infections linked to schools have increased in both staff and pupils. At 11 November, there were 66 pupils and 34 staff with current positive tests making 47 schools with positive cases. There was a small decrease in activity following half term, but current figures show a continued rise.

- 4.13. Care homes continue to be a focus for infection prevention and control and the weekly testing of staff continues and this is helping to detect people who may not have symptoms and as a result reduces the risk of a serious outbreak. Data to 13 November showed outbreaks in 18 care homes.
- 4.14. National testing capacity has improved. This change is due to additional laboratory capacity coming on stream. Whilst access to testing is still controlled nationally our local monitoring of testing demand indicates that local residents are not experiencing the problems of accessing tests locally. A significant factor has been the deployment of a Local Testing site in Crewe that is open seven days a week from 8am-8pm. A second local testing site is under consideration for Macclesfield on the site of a former vehicle depot.
- 4.15. The Government has acknowledged that the national contact tracing system that is coordinated by Serco is not achieving the level of follow up required. Following the introduction of its new Tier system the Government has written to all Tier Two Local Authorities to advise them of the additional funding being made available to them to enhance the local Test and Trace Programme. For High Risk areas such as Cheshire East the allocation is £3 per head of population. This funding is a non-recurrent allocation.
- 4.16. 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. Update on Council Actions**

5.1. Cheshire East Council continues 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 actions that have continued to be delivered by the Council is provided below.

5.3. *Test and Trace and Outbreak Management* – There are several developments within the Test and Trace Programme:

- As the COVID-19 infection rate has continued to rise over recent months, the need for local contact tracing has become more apparent. Subsequently, pressure has been mounting on local authorities across England to provide locally supported contact tracing that compliments, not replaces, the national Contact Tracing Advisory System. According to Public Health England, the national Contact Tracing Advisory System (CTAS) responds to approximately 70% of positive test results within Cheshire East. Around 30% of cases are classified as 'lost to follow up', which means the national system has not made contact within 24 hours. From 25 November 2020, these cases are being handed over to the local Cheshire East contact tracing team that has recently been created. It will be a phased delivery, initially switching on only postcodes of significant concern from 25<sup>th</sup> November and by early 2021 this will be a service being delivered for the whole of Cheshire East. It will be led by the Contact Centre and specialist support provided by a Public Health team.
- Cheshire East Council is taking part in a national Mass Asymptomatic Testing (MAST) pilot project. This will involve a new kind of technology that could enable us to identify and isolate more asymptomatic people might spread the virus. They are known as Lateral Flow Tests (LFTs), which use the same swab method as the usual testing method but offer a rapid turnaround time of approximately 20-30 minutes, without the need for laboratory processing. We are in the process of working with the national team to receive a starter pack of 10,000 initial test kits and will be provided with enough kits to test 10% of the Cheshire East population. This will enable local teams to direct and deliver targeted testing based on their local knowledge and need. We are working with internal teams to identify pilot projects to test out this new technology before rolling it out more widely.

5.4. *Covid-19 Mass Vaccination* – Whilst an effective vaccine has yet to be manufactured for population usage, local authorities are being asked to assist the NHS to develop their plans for conducting mass vaccination. Cheshire East Council staff are working closely with Clinical Commissioning Group and Cheshire West and Chester Council colleagues to identify possible locations for

delivering the core programme and localised programmes for those unable to attend the core centres. The Government has requested local health and social care economies to be ready to support COVID vaccination by 1 December 2020. When a vaccine is available we will support our local care homes to access the vaccine working in partnership with the NHS.

5.5. Depending on the COVID vaccinations made available, more than one dose may be necessary to provide a sufficient level of protection for the population. This requirement will place a significant pressure on the health and social care system to deliver effectively, even with the phased approach that is planned to offer protection to every member of the population. Due to demand for influenza vaccination and delays in the supply chain, this programme may overlap with the COVID vaccination programme.

5.6. *Communities* - People Helping People is a service created by Cheshire East Council 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. The service is delivered for the local community, by the local community. To date the service has provided support to over 4,000 residents with 400 active cases still receiving support. This service has been instrumental in reducing demands and work is now underway to embed this into the Communities Team recovery planning, fully utilising volunteers to support people to keep safe and well at home. As the country has entered a second national lockdown this service has been key to be able to respond at speed to the most vulnerable cohort in the community ensuring they remain safe and well in their own homes having good access to volunteers or community based activities that meet their basic physical and mental health needs. This service is quickly becoming recognised amongst all residents across the borough as a vital community service. Some key recent updates associated with this service are as follows:

- Support for the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) was re-introduced on 5 November alongside the introduction of the four-week national lockdown. The 16,000 CEV cohort were advised by the Department of Health and Social Care to stay at home closely mirroring the advice provided around “shielding” in the spring. The Council is expected to make contact with all of the CEV people who have registered requesting support. This is anticipated to be around 10% of the cohort (1,600). Once contact is made during a welfare check, support is provided assessing both physical and mental health needs with either food provision or by linking the individual to an appropriate local community-based service. Funding has been allocated by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and



Local Government to provide this support which is being allocated to related activity.

- Leading on the Community & Vulnerable people workstream of the Test, Trace, Contain and Enable plan.
- The Cheshire East Social Action Partnership have developed 15 Volunteer Coordination Points (VCPs) which supported the response to date providing localised support, longer term plans are now under development of their continuation including sustainability as this initiative is becoming embedded into longer term practice.

5.7. The Covid-19 Community Response and Recovery Fund which was launched at the end of June 2020 has since provided funding to 69 successful applicants, totalling just over £300,000. This fund was also bolstered with an additional £246,000 of DEFRA funding to support vulnerable people around food poverty and accessing essential supplies. In consultation with the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector the grant amounts applied for has increased from £5,000 to £20,000. This will welcome proposals that are collaborative, sustainable, and have a high impact to support vulnerable residents over the winter months. The target aims based on needs gathered from residents will focus on tackling food, fuel and digital poverty.

5.8. *Adult Social Care* - The Commissioning Team have provided significant support for the Adults 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.

5.9. Infection Prevention Control training has now been delivered to all care providers in the Borough. Infection Prevention Control webinar refresher training sessions continue to be delivered on a monthly basis to all Care Homes across the Borough.

5.10. Cheshire East received the first tranche of funding from Round 2 of the Infection Control fund on 2 October 2020 equating to £2.356 million. Of this £1.567 million has been passported directly to care homes to support with the Infection Control measures specified in Government guidance. These measures are designed to limit staff movement within the home, support safe visiting among other workforce resilience and infection control measures. £672k has been distributed to community care providers with a registered office in Cheshire East from this funding in accordance with Government guidelines around use of the fund.

- 5.11. All care homes have an Infection Prevention Control Outbreak Plan supported by an Outbreak Management Toolkit issued by the Council. These can be quickly stepped up in the event of an outbreak and appropriate support put in place from the Infection Prevention and Control service and the Council's Quality Assurance team.
- 5.12. Officers are also working with care providers to ensure that their staff and care home residents continue to access flu vaccinations to ensure that there is resilience in the care workforce.
- 5.13. Monthly care home webinars have been set up in partnership with Cheshire CCG for care home providers with themed agendas such as Winter Planning, infection control, digital services etc. The next webinar is taking place on Thursday 26 November 2020 and has a focus on Infection Prevention Control, Flu Outbreak common themes and trends, Visiting advice, and Counselling and Bereavement Support for Care Home staff.
- 5.14. Weekly mutual aid calls continue to be well attended by Care at Home providers. These now include guest expert speakers and offer an opportunity for providers to work together to develop collective solutions to common problems. Professor Rod Thomson, CEC, Public Health Consultant attended the mutual aid call as a guest speaker and answered providers COVID-19 related Public Health questions.
- 5.15. 74 Care Homes across the Borough have been allocated a free iPad via NHSE. The iPads continue to enable residents to stay in touch with their loved ones and facilitate GP consultations.
- 5.16. Whole home testing continues with care home residents and staff. This has proved effective in identifying asymptomatic staff members at an early stage enabling them to self-isolate to prevent onward transmission in the care home. The whole home testing pilot continues to be working well across the Extra Care Housing and Supported Living Schemes.
- 5.17. The Care Home vaccination delivery plan has been completed, verified and submitted to Cheshire CCG. Ongoing local planning continues with Cheshire CCH and Public Health in relation to timescales and the administration of the vaccination.
- 5.18. Planning is underway with the Council's Public Health Team to explore the possibility of Lateral Flow Testing across Care Homes. Lateral flow tests allow a quick turnaround of results (within 20 minutes) and so, if implemented correctly and with the normal precautions around PPE and social distancing, can support safe visiting within care homes.

5.19. A Multi-Disciplinary Team has been established to design a relatives visiting strategy for Care Homes across Cheshire East that complements the existing Department of Health and Social Care guidance. The purpose of the strategy is to offer guidance and support to homes around facilitating creative visiting options for family members in a safe way. The strategy will offer comprehensive guidance, advice and support to Care Homes that can be referenced within the home's Dynamic Risk Assessment. Once the strategy is finalised it will be agreed by Cheshire East Council's Director of Public Health and monitored locally via Infection Prevention Control and the Council's Quality Assurance Team.

5.20. The Quality Assurance Team continue to undertake weekly contact calls to all care homes across the Borough. The purpose of this contact call is to seek assurance of the effective ongoing safe service delivery.

5.21. PPE support has been key to our Covid-19 response and recovery. The position changes rapidly but the current position at the time of writing is as follows:

- The Local Authority have been supplied with some PPE via the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) since the 24 March 2020. The Council have distributed PPE to eligible organisations across Cheshire East.
- All registered adult social care providers, opticians, pharmacists and urgent dental care have now been requested to register on to the government PPE Portal to continue to access free supplies. Orders are subject to limits according to capacity. Providers are asked to continue to develop their own supply chain. However, it is widely recognised that the PPE market has not recovered from the impact of Covid-19.
- To ensure all agencies are supported and services are able to deliver safe care to local residents, as well as protecting the care workforce, we are currently reviewing various options and opportunities to support external Care Providers to access PPE in emergencies or when they have issues with their PPE supply chain. A survey was opened to providers, educational settings and partner organisation to understand the overall impact of PPE at this juncture and how best to proceed forward.
- A stock has been locally purchased as part of the Council's recovery and outbreak planning, and we will continue to receive LRF PPE supplies on a fortnightly basis until March 2021 to support Local Authority, people in receipt of direct payment and all educational settings.

- A joint effort by the Fire Service and Cheshire East Highways to deliver PPE to schools has been very well received and we continue to work with schools to ensure their practices are aligned to the Public Health guidelines.

5.22. *Adults and Children's Commissioning* - Commissioners have worked closely with our 'Early Intervention and Prevention,' 'Community Wellbeing' and 'Public Health' contracted providers which have adapted but continued to deliver effective services during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Commissioners have worked with providers to re-instate contingency plans where needed in line with the second national lockdown. Despite the restrictions to service delivery of contracted services due to the pandemic and now the second national lockdown, we are seeing increasing demand for services as well as innovation in the way that services are delivered for example:

**Substance Misuse Service** – Our Substance Misuse Provider CGL have seen a rise in demand and referral for alcohol treatment and support since the beginning of the pandemic. The service has received 402 referrals during quarter 2 2020/21 in comparison to 261 referrals during quarter 2 2019/20. Over 60% of all referrals to CGL identified alcohol as the primary substance use at assessment. CGL have identified alternative safe ways of working and supporting people in Cheshire East such as offering Safe Storage to all service users in response to more service users having to take home medication. At the start of Q1, 13% of service users had safe storage at home. This was previously for people with children. By the end of June 2020 90% of all service users on a prescription have safe storage now in their homes. Throughout the pandemic treatment for Hepatitis C has still been delivered. Staff have delivered a Covid-safe outreach service utilising their clinic van and actively engaging the service users rather than requiring them to attend treatment services. This has helped to support many service users to keep safe and those that are shielding.

**Carers Hub:** Evidence from Carers UK shows that 4 in 5 unpaid Carers (81%) are currently providing more care than before the initial lockdown. Most Carers (64%) have not been able to take any breaks at all in the last six months. Connections were therefore made between the People Helping People service and the Carers Hub at the beginning of the pandemic to ensure that Carers were recognised and supported where needed via the Carers Hub. A temporary service to deliver breaks for carers during lockdown was set up (Take a Break) and delivered by Crossroads Together. The referrals received by the Carers Hub are reviewed for carers needs and then referred to Crossroads Together for assessment for the 'Take a Break' service. A positive relationship has developed between the two services with them working collaboratively to support carers.

**Domestic Abuse Service:** The Domestic Abuse Contract is within its second annual term. Despite not being able to offer the same community-based services as pre-lockdown, the service have ensured they remain visible on social media, with partner agencies and stakeholders to make the community aware the service is very much open and available to those who need it. Additional resource has also been positioned into the Domestic Abuse Hub to ensure clients are supported with early intervention work.

- 5.23. *Children's Social Care* – We have reviewed our service offer in light of the national lockdown and revised government guidance, and agreed it is important to maintain statutory service provision in line with our usual processes where it is safe to do so, including face to face visits, in order to effectively safeguard children and young people. Visits are carefully risk assessed to consider the risk of Covid to the child and wider family members. We have changed our recording system to ensure this risk assessment is clearly documented on children's files, so it is clear how decisions have been made. The guidance on face to face visits has been updated in line with the new national guidance.
- 5.24. Family time is continuing to take place as we recognise the importance of this to children and young people's wellbeing and long-term relationships. The individual circumstances and arrangements are being reviewed for each child to determine if this can be held safely face to face or whether this needs to take place virtually.
- 5.25. We have reviewed our contingency plans in light of the national lockdown, and we have a sufficiency plan in place for placements and residential settings. We are planning for our 14 care leavers to return home from university at Christmas.
- 5.26. As reported previously, we have experienced an increase in demand and complexity across Children's Social Care as a result of Covid. This is due to a unique year in terms of conversation rate from contact to referrals into the child in need team, Court delays and discharging children from care, particularly adoption. The increase in social workers' caseloads has made it more challenging to step down children within our usual timescales. Children are being stepped down to ensure they receive the right support, however the number stepping down has increased demand to the Council's Family Service. The complexity of work has increased in relation to challenges such as children and parental mental health, substance and alcohol misuse and social isolation. This is resulting in social worker and personal advisor caseloads being higher than we would want them to be. A clear plan is in place to reduce caseloads by the end the year. To support the increase in demand, we have stepped children down to early help where appropriate and developed additional step down meetings to increase frequency, challenged the Court around matters of delay, offered additional resources to families, care leavers and foster carers and

continue to recruit to vacant posts to ensure we have capacity to meet the demand. We have also worked closely with the partnership to ensure consistency of approach.

- 5.27. As learning from local and national themes have emerged we have used the operational Safeguarding Children Partnership meetings to understand what this has meant for children in Cheshire East. For example, following the Children's Minister's letter on the 29 September identifying concerns regarding risk to babies and young people attending alternate provision, we ran a themed meeting to look at these areas of our practice from a multi-agency perspective. This concluded that while there was some good practice in how we supported and safeguarded young people attending alternative provision, this could be strengthened further. A multi-agency task and finish group has subsequently been set up to progress the work in this area.
- 5.28. During the pandemic, there was local concern that the nationally imposed restrictions would have an adverse impact for those living in abusive relationships. The fear was that not only were the risks to victims heightened and the pressures on relationships magnified, but that also there would be limited access to support from both social networks and professional services. The action taken in Cheshire East Council, and across the Partnership has been effective, swift, responsive to changes in demand and proactive in preventing further harm. The data and more importantly the stories from victims, children and those who harm have illustrated that whilst we have not experienced the surge in demand expected after lockdown restrictions were lifted, we have seen that the level of abuse experienced has been more severe (an increase of 20% for IDVA services), we have seen victims who present with multiple issues (mental health, substance misuse) rise, and a faster escalation in the seriousness in the impact of their situation. On the positive side we have also seen that the inventiveness and creativity that has been necessary, has resulted in some changes which have had real benefit and which we will seek to sustain. We have continued to follow the needs of survivors to ensure we have responded to their wishes with partial opening of centres for one to one work. Work has been carried out on how it has felt for them during Covid-19, and their feedback and comments have been collated in a [video](#) which has been shared with the partnership, senior managers and elected members to raise the profile and understanding of survivors' experiences.
- 5.29. Covid caused significant delays in achieving permanency for cared for children, this included delays in finalising care plans in Court, challenges in the timeliness of discharge of Care Orders and the making of Adoption Orders. We have been active in challenging this through the Local Family Justice Board. There were also delays in planned transitions for children to move to live with their adoptive families between March and July 2020. We worked closely with Adoption



Counts, foster carers, birth families and adoptive parents to transition children to live with their adoptive families as soon as restrictions began to ease in June and July 2020 ensuring we minimised the impact of Covid as much as possible for these children. However, the pandemic has delayed the move to adoptive families for some of our children and young people which has had an impact on our overall cared for numbers.

5.30. Ofsted ILACS inspections have been paused due to the national lockdown. We are continuing to prepare for inspection for when these recommence from 5 January 2021.

5.31. *Prevention and Early Help* – As reported previously we are continuing to see the needs of families increasing, alongside an increase in referrals, which is resulting in a significant pressure for the Family Service. We are recruiting additional capacity to support the service.

5.32. 98% of our early years settings continue to be open and 96% of Childminders, with 100% attendance from our vulnerable children which is positive. A comprehensive programme of activities was provided for children and young people over half term.

5.33. Cheshire East Council offered free school meal vouchers over half term to ensure that vulnerable children and young people continued to be supported. The process had to be set up at short notice and staff quickly mobilised support for families; 18 staff ran the provision of vouchers, providing vouchers to 1,316 families with 2,546 children. Local businesses and communities also offered support with meals during half term for families which was fantastic, and we also shared the details of these on the Cheshire East website.

5.34. Performance on the Troubled Families programme continues to be positive; we have met all required performance by results claims for quarter 2 and we have submitted our expected 90 claims despite the current situation.

5.35. Child Health Hubs have been established in partnership with the NHS and are operating from some of our Children's Centres. This means that more children will be able to have their health needs met in their community rather than needing to attend an acute setting. Further work to expand the support offered through these settings will take place following the pandemic.

5.36. The service is planning the implementation of the **Winter Support Grant** programme launched by DWP on Sunday 8 November. This grant of £880K is to offer practical payment support to families with children in the form of food and utilities payment support at the discretion of the Local Authority. The grant is described as not a replacement for Free School Meals (FSM), however given the links to the Marcus Rashford Campaign to ensure that Children do not go

hungry during lockdown, it is recommended that the following eligibility criteria will be adopted by Cheshire East Council in distributing this grant from December to 31 March 2021. It is proposed to pay families or individuals via vouchers and pre-paid cards which will enable flexible purchases by families/individuals and can enable food and utilities payments with clear tracking of expenditure. We want to utilise a blend of distribution through schools prior to Christmas and via the Childrens Services workforce on an ongoing basis. We anticipate this arrangement to be confirmed in DWP guidance for the WSG by 22 November 2020.

*\*Please note all figures are indicative as they are based on the current cohort which could change in the period before the end of March 2021. Some children will fall into multiple cohorts but will only be eligible for one payment. Some cohorts are unknown at this stage and have been estimated.*

<b>Eligibility criteria</b>	<b>Payment</b>	<b>Estimated total</b>
All children in receipt of Free School Meals (10,325 children)	£15 per week per child over 3 school holiday weeks including Christmas	£464,625
Young people who are care leavers up to age 25 (188 young people)	£45 payment	£8,460
Young people who are NEET aged 16-18 (170 young people)	£45 payment	£7,650
Children who are Young Carers for their parents/carers (392 children)	£45 payment	£17,640
Children Open to Childrens Social Care and Early Help Services who do not fit in to criteria above (eg. families entitled to Free Early Years Childcare and 16-18 learners in low income families ) (1,800 children)	£15 per week per child over 3 school holiday weeks including Christmas	£81,000
Children living with parents who have been exposed to Domestic Abuse (352 children)	£15 per week per child over 3 school	£15,840



	holiday weeks including Christmas	
Parents/ carers who are experiencing financial hardship due to being unable to work as their children are self-isolating due to Covid 19 infection (50 parents/ carers)	To be agreed on a case by case basis	£2,250
Vulnerable children who are in need as referred by a partner agency	£15 per week per child over 3 school holiday weeks including Christmas	£9,000
Children who are vulnerable due to financial hardship	£15 per week per child, with a limit of 3 payments per child outside of school holidays.	£9,000
<b>Estimated total cost</b>		<b>£615,465</b>

5.37. *Education and Skills* – We have sent a letter from the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Families as a public thank you to leaders, teachers, college and school staff for all that they are doing to keep our children and young people safe and to ensure their education continues during the current crisis.

5.38. Attendance has remained high (48,976 pupils, 89% attendance at 13 November) and is above national, statistical neighbours, and the North West average. This is despite pupils isolating due to positive Covid test results in schools. As at 16 November there were 2,659 pupils not attending schools as they are isolating either due to Covid symptoms, testing positive for Covid or having been in close contact with a person who has tested positive. Attendance of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan and pupils with a social worker also remains good at 88% and 87% respectively.

5.39. The Education Covid Response Team which responds to reports from schools on positive cases, and offers advice and guidance on the appropriate measures and pupil isolation, continues to receive positive feedback from schools. As at 8 November, there had been 504 contacts to the helpline from 132 settings, 109 of whom had positive cases (170 staff and 256 pupils with a positive test).

Through providing support to settings in their contact tracing, the numbers of children and staff needing to isolate in response to a positive case has significantly reduced over time; meaning there is less impact on pupils' learning. We ran Public Health briefing sessions in November where schools shared the learning from their cases in order to help to continue to minimise infections and disruption to learning. As a significant number of pupils and teachers are isolating the support needed for schools is considerable.

5.40. Following the national lockdown on 5 November, all schools and colleges were asked to consider the new restrictions and to review and revise their risk assessments in line with these.

5.41. To enable us to provide information to the DfE on the impact of recent restrictions and the impact of the new lockdown measures, we asked all schools to complete an online survey in relation to current staff who are clinically vulnerable and extremely clinically vulnerable. We had an 83% response rate to the survey in less than 24 hours. This provided the following intelligence:

- Workforce absences were a concern for 70% respondents, but they anticipated the school remaining fully open with the capacity for children to physically remain in school.
- 9% said the school is regularly experiencing significant absence and are close to the point where they may have to switch to rotas/remote teaching.
- The biggest workforce issue is teaching staff absence followed by teaching assistant absence followed by issues with supply cover.
- 19% have had issues with access to supply or temporary cover. This increases to 40% in our special schools.
- 55% said funding is a constraint but even with additional funding there are other, larger constraints to remaining fully open.
- 29% said funding is the biggest constraint in keeping the school fully open.

5.42. We are continuing to provide intensive support to schools around how to implement the DfE guidance to ensure we have a consistent and safe approach across all schools. An updated FAQ including advice on Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and Pregnant staff has been provided to schools by HR along with an updated Risk Assessment and guidance document. We have also shared information on why Down's syndrome adults, but not children have been added to the high-risk list and provided an easy read document helpful around why certain adults, and not children with the same conditions, have been added to the clinically extremely vulnerable list.

- 5.43. From 2 November we introduced Compulsory Face Coverings on School Transport for all students aged 11 and over, unless exempt. As part of lock down this became a requirement from 5 November.
- 5.44. We are seeing an increase in schools saying they will exclude pupils as they can't cope with the behaviour of children – some are our most vulnerable. We are working together with schools on this as a cross service approach to prevent exclusions wherever possible. To date, we have had two unavoidable exclusions due to serious one off incidents.
- 5.45. We have an increasing number of schools challenging why we are not issuing fixed penalty notices or fines for attendance. DfE guidance is clear that schools should consider any concerns from pupils, parents and households, who may be reluctant or anxious about attending school and put the right support in place to address this. However, the guidance also states that usual school attendance powers and duties continue to apply, including schools and local authorities' ability to use parental responsibility measures, such as fixed penalty notices, where appropriate. We continue to monitor absence on a case by case basis and offer support to schools to work with families to encourage attendance.
- 5.46. We have now established an Action Hub through 'Edtech' to support better use of IT in remote learning in schools. We have a group of 30+ schools involved in the first wave of schools in receiving a wide range of support to use Google or Microsoft platforms.
- 5.47. The focus of the National Tuition Programme (NTP) is on supporting disadvantaged pupils, including those eligible for Pupil Premium funding. However, participating schools will be able to decide which of their pupils will most benefit from additional support. A further aspect of this programme is academic mentors who again support vulnerable learners. All eligible schools have been supported to access this programme with CE schools having success in accessing the additional £19,000 as from January 2021 as part of wave 2.
- 5.48. We are providing targeted support for catch up in the core subjects through a programme of support commissioned through 'Literacy Counts' which consists of 20 sessions of training and development. A launch event was very well attended in early November on Reading, Writing and Phonics. We are now planning the launch of sessions on maths in early 2021.
- 5.49. A programme to support disadvantaged learners using the latest national research into the most effective practice has been commenced for around 15-20 schools. Priority schools have been approached to be part of this work which is led by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) who are the leading organisation in educational research.

5.50. We launched our Wellbeing in Education Programme in November. Each school will receive two training sessions which aim to empower key staff with knowledge, understanding and clear strategies, so that they can use these to influence school/college policy, procedures and responses in regard to supporting and enhancing wellbeing and resilience for all. This is a national training programme which we have tailored to meet our local needs. So far there has been good attendance from schools.

5.51. *Homelessness and Rough Sleepers* - From the 26th March 2020 to 31st October 2020 Housing have accommodated 185 households who presented to us as homeless and have placed them in emergency provision, predominately hotels who had agreed to continue to work with us. Of those 185:-

- 143 have successfully been moved on from the hotel placements into a mix of other accommodation, long and short-term provision.
- 14 Lost their accommodation due to their behaviour
- 12 abandoned the hotel or they disengaged.
- 16 are ongoing

5.52. Those accommodated were predominantly singles, but we also accommodated five families. As of 31 October 2020, we had 12 households in Bed and Breakfast and plans were in place to move those onto more appropriate accommodation

5.53. In addition to those placed in emergency accommodation the Housing Options Team have also prevented or relieved 602 from homelessness.

5.54. The Cheshire East Rough Sleepers Outreach team work proactively to support individuals who are rough sleeping. We are currently seeing the number fluctuate and are between 6 and 10 rough sleepers, located across the Local Authority.

5.55. With the introduction of new restrictions, the Housing team have been preparing for a possible increase in homelessness presentations and also the possibility of a further call from Government to bring Everyone in. This includes extending our accommodation solutions, tailoring them to meet a number of housing needs.

5.56. Cheshire East has been successful in securing funding through the Government's "Next Steps" programme. There were two funding streams, one providing short term funding to be used by March 2021 and Cheshire East has been awarded £56,000 to provide rent in advance and support to 38 individuals to enable them to access the private rented sector. Concrete, who is one of Cheshire East's commissioned Housing Support Providers, will be providing the support.

- 5.57. The second funding stream provides funding to secure additional accommodation. Housing submitted a bid in conjunction with the Plus Dane Group to enable them to purchase 8 properties to use for those with complex issues and to provide intensive support. Cheshire East was awarded £450,000 grant funding, with a requirement to provide £100,000 towards the purchase costs and the intensive support for 2 years at a cost of £119,700 per annum, both of which will be funded via our Flexible Homelessness Grant.
- 5.58. MHCLG have allowed us to re-profile some of our Rough Sleeping Intervention funding in order to support the short term bid and we are also undertaking a tendering exercise to develop a Fresh Start scheme, which will provide 6 units of accommodation and support for those with complex needs, with a history of offending.
- 5.59. The Housing Options team continues to work with landlords to prevent the increase in eviction rates. A number of early intervention plans have been put in place including establishing an early notification protocol with social housing providers in relation to tenants who are in arrears, looking at ways we can work together to prevent them from becoming homeless. We are working with the private landlords on our database providing information on assistance available for tenants in arrears and advice on how to get direct payments if they are on Universal Credit. We are also giving advice in respect of any anti-social behaviour and details of any changes to the legislation.
- 5.60. We are utilising our Homelessness Prevention funding to try and prevent evictions or assist those at threat of homelessness to access alternative accommodation
- 5.61. *Town Centres* - The monthly data reports on visits to town centres in the Borough's Principal Towns and Key Service Centres indicate that in October the majority of the Borough's centres experienced either a levelling off or a slight fall in visitor numbers from September. This may have been influenced by darker evenings but also could indicate an increase in nervousness due to rising Covid cases. When compared to the same month last year total visits in the Borough's centres ranged from -25% to + 23%. As with September, impacts on visits appear to be less severe than that recorded as a national average.
- 5.62. *Tatton Park* - Tatton Park's attractions reopened on a phased basis from 3rd June 2020 when the Parkland reopened. Adjustments to visiting arrangements were made, such as pre-booked visits to Garden, Farm and Mansion, to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience, complying with national guidance and to maintaining best practice. Since then Tatton has been a popular visitor destination with its outdoor attractions doing well. The continuing appetite for visits to the outdoors has also seen an increase in visitor numbers in Cheshire East's country parks and countryside sites.

- 5.63. Overall since June, paid visits at Tatton Park have been 42% up on the same period last year despite the lack of the major outdoor events. However, like comparable indoor attractions elsewhere, the Mansion did not see such an uplift, with visitors focusing more on outdoor elements of a visit. The Mansion closed at the end of September and apart from the October half-term, is now closed for the winter.
- 5.64. Taking account of restrictions, national guidance and recent visitor trends, Tatton's popular Christmas events have been redesigned. The Christmas Mansion will not take place in 2020 but is replaced for this year with a Christmas event in the gardens. Christmas at the Farm has been reconfigured to take account of the need to be Covid-secure but is able to continue on a pre-booked basis, with all slots now sold-out.
- 5.65. The recent lockdown has had an impact on Tatton, with closure of the Farm attraction, Gardener's Cottage tearoom and non-essential shops. The Parkland, Gardens, take-away food and the Housekeeper's Store food shop have remained open in line with government guidance. The closure of the Farm has led to a reduction of 28% in paid visits overall and led to cancellation of its first Christmas event weekend (Nov 28th/29th). Since lockdown, the Parkland and Gardens have continued to do well, remaining 37% and 26% up on the equivalent period last year
- 5.66. *Business Support* - On Business Grants, the Government announced four new grant funds to support business since the introduction of the Local Covid Alert Level (LCAL) and the national lockdown. These grants have an estimated total value of £15,262,935.
- 5.67. The grants are different to those that the Council received during Lockdown1. A brief explanation of each grant is:
- 5.68. Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) - The grant amount £6,520,842 and is 90% of the estimated grant funding requirement, calculated using Valuation Office Agency data. This grant is to support those businesses that are required to close as a result of the national restrictions and have a business property that has a rateable value as determined by the Valuation Office Agency. It will be a one-off payment for the four-week national lockdown period, with the amount payable dependent on the rateable value of the business premises. The Council has no discretion over this grant and will make payments to eligible businesses in line with the government guidance.
- 5.69. Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) - The grant amount is £1,059,053, it is part of the wider set of measures to support businesses in response to Coronavirus (Covid-19) and specifically for businesses that were still open but have been severely impacted by Local Covid Alert Levels 'High' (LCAL 2) and



‘Very High’ (LCAL 3) restrictions since 1 August to 4 November 2020. Cheshire East entered Local Covid Alert Level ‘High’ (Tier 2) on 14th October. The grant funding will therefore cover the 22-day period from 14 October to 4 November 2020. The Grant is aimed at hospitality, accommodation and leisure businesses in the Local Authority geography, there is a small discretionary element to this grant of 5%

- 5.70. Local Restrictions Support Grant (Sectors) - This grant scheme is to support eligible businesses that have been required to close and have been unable to reopen since 23 March 2020. This includes nightclubs, dance halls and discotheques, adult entertainment venues and hostess bars. Grant funding for eligible businesses will be payable by Local Authorities in 14-day payment cycles with eligibility starting on 1 November 2020, the scheme will close when LRSG (closed) comes into effect on 5 November 2020. The Council has no discretion over this grant and will make payments to eligible businesses in line with the government guidance.
- 5.71. Additional Restrictions Grant - Local Authorities will receive a one-off lump sum payment amounting to £20 per head. This amounts to a total of £7,683,040 in Cheshire East. The funding can be used across financial years 2020/2021 and 2021/2022. Once a Local Authority exits national or LCAL 3 restrictions they will not receive additional funding under this grant scheme if the Local Authority then re-enters national or LCAL 3 restrictions. It is expected this grant will primarily take the form of discretionary grants, but Local Authorities could also use this funding for wider business support activities.
- 5.72. A new policy for the discretionary grants has been developed and to simplify the process for businesses, a single application has been put in place. This application is available on the Council’s website and it went live on the 16 November. The Local Restrictions Support Grants (LRSG) are being administered by the rates team and the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) by Economic Development, at the time of writing (19/11/20) the Council has received 1662 applications for grant, 1437 for LRSG and 225 for ARG.
- 5.73. *Leisure Centres and Libraries* have temporarily closed in accordance with the legislation for the second lockdown. The legislation does provide some exceptions, and consequently 3 libraries continue to provide access for work clubs half a day a week on an appointment basis. Leisure Centres co-located on school premises continue to provide access for schools where required.
- 5.74. Everybody Sport & Recreation has seen very significant reductions in its income due to the pandemic, with receipts from fees and charges effectively reduced to zero during periods of closure required under lockdown rules. Whilst the Trust has strived to manage down its expenditure – including furloughing staff – it has been necessary for the Council to provide advance payments of

management fee to Everybody Sport and Recreation to ensure service continuity for the Council's leisure centres during and after the coronavirus pandemic.

- 5.75. With the second lockdown, the latest views of post pandemic recovery and most recent estimates of the operating position for the Trust, it is clear that without further financial support they will not be able to meet their costs and liabilities through to March 2021. Whilst there is a prospect of Government funding from the recently announced £100m support package for public leisure centres – which may replace the aid provided by the Council, in due course – it is considered essential that the Trust is given assurance as regards support to help maintain its cash flow, at this time; and it is therefore recommended that a Supplementary Revenue Estimate is provided of £500,000, to provide a budget for an additional management fee payment to Everybody Sport & Recreation Trust in 2020/21.
- 5.76. *Kerbside waste and recycling* collections continue as normal. In a change from the first lockdown, Household Waste and Recycling Centres are permitted to remain open.
- 5.77. The risk of increased demand on *Bereavement Services* from Covid related deaths continues to be monitored. Contingency plans are in place to increase the number of cremations that can be undertaken each day by lengthening the working day and shortening service durations if required.
- 5.78. The new guidance and legislation for the second lockdown has led to an increase in enquiries and complaints to Regulatory Services as the list of businesses that must close is not comprehensive. However, compliance by businesses across the borough with the new regulations is generally good, with Regulatory Services providing advice and guidance initially to encourage compliance, but ready to follow up with formal enforcement action if required.
- 5.79. *Highways, Transport & Parking* - The Government have announced the outcome of the bid process for the second tranche of Active Travel funding. For the borough, an indicative allocation of £612,000 was provided and the award is £588,000. The difference this time is the term “emergency” has been removed from the fund and there is a requirement to demonstrate consultation activity. The schemes will be brought forward integrated with the Council's existing active travel programmes.
- 5.80. *Parking* use has dropped in this second lockdown to around 30 to 40% of pre COVID levels but this is much higher than the first lockdown. Consideration is being given to what support could be provided to attract people back into our towns once the situation around COVID makes this feasible.



- 5.81. *Travel on public and community transport* has dropped as we enter into the second lockdown but, as with parking, travel in the borough remains significantly higher than in the first lockdown. Concessionary bus travel and the use of the Council's FlexiLink service is lower but still remain important services for essential journeys for these residents. All services are applying the COVID rules put in place to seek to control the rate of infection.
- 5.82. *Highways maintenance operations* and the construction of the borough's infrastructure programme is continuing, applying the COVID rules and regulations. The borough has a significant on-going programme of works and the team and our contractors are successfully delivering despite the changes that have had to be put in place, in particular on site. Construction activity relating to utility works and housing development sites as it affects the borough's roads is higher than pre COVID levels placing an increased workload on the team.
- 5.83. *Workforce and Workplace* - Those staff who can work from home were encouraged to do so when the lockdown was introduced in March. That has continued to be the case as the situation has evolved. We have made a significant investment in mobile IT to allow staff to operate as effectively remotely. As at 17 November, 95% of staff have been migrated. However, to support services who need more flexibility to continue to deliver services while still working under COVID-19 restrictions, we have introduced team zones which allocated spaces within our buildings that will be carefully managed by heads of service. We continue to communicate with staff on a regular basis and have had positive feedback on this.
- 5.84. Frontline staff continue to deliver services with adjustments to working practices in line with the COVID guidelines to ensure they are protected from the virus as far as practicable. In some areas this has added to the cost of running the service, with the purchase of additional PPE and vehicles for example. Staff also continue to work flexibly and divert from their normal duties to support the Council's varied roles on COVID.
- 5.85. We are continuing to monitor COVID-19 related absences on a regular basis, including the numbers of staff self-isolating and/or off sick. As at 19 November 2020, there are currently 36 staff self-isolating and working from home, 32 staff self-isolating not working from home, 13 staff with COVID related sick absences and 89 staff off with non-COVID related sickness. The enduring nature of the pandemic is leading to increased feedback from staff about fatigue. We are encouraging staff to take leave and making available a range of well-being support.
- 5.86. *Governance and Decision Making* - The Council moved quickly to facilitate remote meetings. All Members were provided with laptops and support to

operate effectively. Formal meetings are taking place remotely as standard now, including two remote Council meetings. A survey of Members, overseen by the Members Forum, has gathered helpful feedback on the use of the technology. Members have responded positively to the changes and the support they have received. Advice and guidance has been provided in terms of accessing office buildings, risk assessment and adapting to remote working on a longer term basis.

## **6. Implications of the Recommendations**

### **Legal Implications**

- 6.1. The Coronavirus Act 2020 received Royal Assent on 25 March 2020. The Act has extensive schedules setting out a wide framework to life under lockdown. The Act has been followed with copious and frequent guidance notes, frequently with implementation dates ahead of what is practically possible, e.g. Household Waste and Recycling Centres, administration of School Admission Appeals, restrictions on and subsequent opening of certain business premises, Test and Trace.
- 6.2. The Coronavirus Act also set out a framework by which Local Authorities could reduce their statutory duties in relation to the Care Act 2014, for Adult Social Care. These Care Act Easements could be implemented should the capacity of Adult Social Care staff become so reduced that it could not continue to meet its duties. To date Cheshire East Council has not initiated any Care Act Easements.
- 6.3. Any necessary urgent decisions have followed the process set out in the Constitution.
- 6.4. Local authority meetings - on Friday 31 July 2020, the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 came into force and will expire on 7 May 2021 unless extended. It removes the requirements to hold annual meetings; allows councils to hold all necessary meetings virtually, to alter the frequency and occurrence of meetings, without the requirement for further notice and to enable members, officers and the public to attend and access meetings and associated documents remotely. However, the amended regulations do not specifically mention 'hybrid' meetings.
- 6.5. The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No 3) Regulations 2020 came into force on 18 July 2020 and will expire at the end of 17 January 2021. They give local authorities (LA) power to give directions which impose prohibitions, requirements or restrictions relating to premises, events and public

outdoor spaces, more commonly known as local lockdowns in order to tackle local coronavirus outbreaks. The LA must ensure the conditions set out in the Regulations are met before it can give such a Direction. It must also have regard to advice from its Director of Public Health when deciding whether or not to make a Direction. If a Direction is made, the Secretary of State (SoS) must be notified as soon as reasonably practicable, and the Direction must be reviewed at least once every seven days to ensure the conditions for making it are still met. Similarly, the SoS has the power to direct a LA to make a Direction under the Regulations, if the SoS considers the conditions for making a Direction are met.

- 6.6. Directions relating to premises may require closure of premises, restriction of entry or restrictions relating to the location of persons in the premises. A LA may not make a Direction relating to premises which form part of essential infrastructure.
- 6.7. Directions may be given in relation to specified events or events of a specified description.
- 6.8. If the LA gives a direction which imposes a prohibition, requirement or restriction on a person specified by name, the LA must give notice in writing to that person and also publish the notice to bring to the attention of persons who may be affected by it. Persons who are given a direction under the Regulations have a right of appeal against the direction to a magistrate's court and also to make representations to the SoS.
- 6.9. LA designated officers and constables have enforcement powers. Persons who contravene directions under the Regulations or obstruct persons carrying out functions under the Regulations commit offences.
- 6.10. Officers continue to consider both formal Regulations and Guidance issued by Government which informs the Council's approach to the relevant subject matter. By way of example, the government's advice on COVID-19: Guidance for the safe use of council buildings was updated on the 9th September 2020. See link for full details:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-council-buildings/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-council-buildings>

- 6.11. Particular reference is drawn to section 3c 'Meetings' which states:

"We continue to recommend that where meetings can take place digitally, without the need for face-to-face contact, they should do so. Where council buildings need to be used for physical meetings, these meetings must be managed within the social distancing guidance and principles set out above."

- 6.12. As referenced in para. 7.1.4 above, the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 enable remote meetings. The key question to consider in all cases would be, is it necessary to holding face to face meetings in council buildings? Such risk assessment would need to consider the availability of alternative methods, i.e. virtual meetings, the risk and data pertaining to infection rates both locally and nationally, any particular local considerations and vulnerabilities of those who may be impacted by a decision, and equality considerations when considering the necessity if it should hold in person meetings.
- 6.13. The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) (Amendment) (No. 4) Regulations 2020 which came into force on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020, amended the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2020, so that people may not participate in social gatherings, in any place, in groups of more than 6, unless they are members of the same household, two linked households, or exceptions apply. The changes apply to England, in so far as an area isn't subject to additional or enhanced restrictions by way of are specific regulations.
- 6.14. The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Obligations of Hospitality Undertakings) (England) Regulations 2020, came into force on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020 by way of emergency Regulations. The Regulations make provision for requirements for pubs, restaurants, cafes and other businesses involved in providing food for consumption on the premises to take reasonable steps or measures to limit customers to parties of six, and to keep tables an appropriate distance apart.
- 6.15. The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Collection of Contact Details etc and Related Requirements) Regulations 2020 came into force on 18 September 2020, again by way of emergency Regulations. The Regulations make provisions requiring designated venues to collect certain contact details mainly from customers, visitors and staff (as set out in the regulations), store this information for 21 days, and share it with NHS Test and Trace or local public health officials, if requested. This is with the purpose of enabling NHS Test and Trace and local public health officials to contact people who may have been exposed to coronavirus and give them appropriate public health advice to help stop the further spread of the virus.
- 6.16. The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (High) (England) Regulations 2020 were made on 12 October 2020 and came into force on 14 October 2020. Cheshire East Council fell within the area covered by these Regulations, known as Tier Two restricted areas. In general, these regulations make provision for local restrictions in the affected areas in terms

of social interaction and operation of some businesses. People must not socialise with anybody outside of their household or support bubble in any indoor setting, whether at home or in a public place, nor must they socialise in a group of more than 6 outside, including in a garden or other space like beaches or parks. The Regulations make provision for certain lawful exceptions to these restrictions. Similarly, businesses and venues can continue to operate, in a COVID-Secure manner, other than those which remain closed in law. Certain businesses selling food or drink on their premises are required to close between 10pm and 5am. Businesses and venues selling food for consumption off the premises, can continue to do so after 10pm as long as this is through delivery service, click-and-collect or drive-thru. Schools, universities and places of worship remain open. Weddings and funerals can go ahead with restrictions on the number of attendees. People can continue to travel to venues or amenities which are open, for work or to access education, but should look to reduce the number of journeys they make where possible. There is also an expectation that any national guidance in place at the time will be followed for example the wearing of face masks where mandated and maintaining social distancing. The Regulations make provision for a constable, a police community support officer or a person designated by a local authority, to enforce the regulations, with any offence/breach being punishable by a fixed penalty notice fine, which operates on an increasing scale should there be repeated breaches of the regulations. The fines can be levied against individual, or businesses who fail to adhere to the regulations.

- 6.17. The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No. 4) Regulations 2020 are in force between 5 November 2020; expiring on 2 December 2020 and provide for a temporary 28 day lockdown. People must not leave or be outside of their home without 'reasonable excuse'. 'Reasonable excuse' to leave one's home includes: shopping for basic necessities, for example food and medicine (Schedule 3) Reg 6(2)(a), to exercise outdoors or visit an outdoor public place - with the people you live with, with your support bubble or, when on your own. Additionally, you must not meet socially indoors with family or friends unless they are part of same household or support bubble. Outdoor public places include parks, beaches, countryside, public gardens, allotments, playgrounds.
- 6.18. Places of Worship will be closed with minor exceptions, funerals or essential voluntary and public services, such as blood donation or food banks. Other exempted activities include some support groups education, voluntary or charitable work or providing emergency assistance.
- 6.19. Visiting relatives in care homes – specific guidance has now been published <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus/update-on-policies-for-visiting-arrangements-in-care-homes>

which supplements the legal position set out in the health Protection (Coronavirus, restrictions)(England)(No.4) Regulations 2020 and requires all decisions to be taken in light of general legal obligations e.g. Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998 as applicable. Enforcement is by a person so designated by the local authority and is a 'relevant person' for the purpose of enforcement under the Regulations (Reg. 19(11)(b)(iii)). Matters against which a LA may enforce are constrained to Regulations 15 – 18 inclusive. The provisions broadly align with those in place during the first lockdown and local authorities are limited to matters concerning business restriction. Methods of Enforcement include Prohibition Notice and Fixed Penalty Notices.

### **Financial Implications**

- 6.20. The potential financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have been reported to Cabinet each month since July with the October update including the additional link to the Council's underlying budget performance in 2020/21. Members outside of Cabinet have received briefings via the Audit and Governance and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committees or direct Member briefing. This report presents the latest financial position and identifies Government funding already provided or claimed to date.
- 6.21. Significant levels of uncertainty remain over the potential financial implications for local authorities. The financial issues facing Cheshire East Council are just part of an ongoing national issue for public services, and the whole UK economy. Central Government continues to react with funding support packages for both general and specific purposes. The Council continues to support MHCLG in gathering evidence, on a monthly basis, of the potential costs and income losses for 2020/21 based on information and guidance available at the date of the Government return. The information from the Council contributes to the ongoing negotiations between the LGA, MHCLG, HM Treasury and other Government Departments and sector-led organisations such as the County Councils Network.
- 6.22. The nature of financial issues, and the approach to funding costs and income losses associated with the pandemic, has inevitably changed over time 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 which had been approved by Council on 20 February 2020.
- 6.23. The returns to Central Government identify three main types of financial pressure:



(i) **Un-ringfenced Expenditure and Income Losses**

The most recent forecast of financial pressures from COVID-19 on the Council's 2020/21 budget for Services is £33m. The figures are under monthly review and expenditure is expected to rise with the rising number of infection cases. 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; and £2.1m has also been claimed so far under the Income Compensation Scheme and is pending analysis before payment. The Government has also announced that £100m has been top sliced from national grant provision totals to provide support to keeping leisure centres open; and a claims process to access this funding will be announced shortly.

(ii) **Collection Fund**

Potential losses on the Collection Fund relate to Council Tax and Business Rates income. At the time of writing, the Council expects to have to bear these losses. Latest guidance from Government requires councils to spread the impact over the next three years. However, there is ongoing consideration from MHCLG and the LGA on this issue and further information will be provided when it is available. Cash shortfalls in-year are expected to be in the region of £9.6m. 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.

**Table 1: The approach to un-ringfenced funding has changed over time**

Announced	Funding for CEC	Notes
(England total)		
<b>19<sup>th</sup> March</b>	£9.150m (£1.6bn)	Adult Social Care based payment
<b>18<sup>th</sup> April</b>	£10.539m (£1.6bn)	Payment per capita to help reflect lost income
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>£19.689m (£3.2bn)</b>	
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> July</b>	£2.712m (£0.5bn)	Adult Social Care / deprivation based payment
<b>12<sup>th</sup> October</b>	£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.
<b>Total</b>	<b>£24.979m (of £4.6bn)</b>	
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> July</b>	<b>£6.1m</b> (£n/k) for Income Compensation	Estimated total – subject to claims process. £2.1m claimed so far, in 1 <sup>st</sup> of 3 data collection rounds  Compensation at 75p in £1 for losses above 5% of sales, fees and charges budgets
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> July</b>	£nil for Collection Fund	Defer Collection Fund Deficit over 3yrs

6.21 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 **£6.1m**, if settled in full. Including for £9.6m of losses on the Collection Fund, it is currently estimated that there is a shortfall for the Council of c. **£13m**. However, the financial impact is increasing, due to increasing number of cases of COVID-19, and at this point it is not clear whether the forecast shortfall will change; it will be subject to ongoing analysis and review.

6.22 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
4. Reviewing the consequences of funding shortfalls on the Council's Capital Programme and how this impacts on the Council's long-term funding of capital expenditure

**Table 2: Specific Grants are valued at c.£198m**

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 (£40m)	£294,536	£294,536	£0
Rough Sleeping/ Next Steps Accommodation (£3.2m + £91.5m +£10m + £105m)	£158,516	£51,000	£107,516
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 (£600m)	£5,320,292	£5,320,292	£0
Business Grants (£12.3bn)**	£87,445,000 (spending to date)	£95,514,000	Awaiting guidance
Discretionary Business Grants (£617m)**	£4,357,000 (spending to date)	£4,372,250	

Local Restrictions Business Support Grants **	£15,262,935	£15,262,935	
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 (£n/k)	£3,073,216	£3,073,216	£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 (£254m)	£299,634	£305,467	(£5,833)
Self Isolation Test and Trace Support Payment (n/k)	£250,979	£250,979	£0
Infection Control in Care Homes (£546m) 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tranche	£4,712,872	£4,712,872	£0
Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (£32m)	£210,000	£210,000	£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)	£n/k	£n/k (pending claims process)	£n/k

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

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

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

6.2.4 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

6.2.5 As noted in Table 2 above, the Council has been allocated £880,472 in respect of the Covid Winter Grant Scheme; this is for extra targeted financial support to those in need over the winter period, to provide direct assistance to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic. A Supplementary Revenue Estimate is required to be approved, in respect of the expenditure to be incurred, as fully funded by the grant, and the matter is included as a recommendation in this report.

6.2.6 As noted in 5.74-5.75, it is recommended that a Supplementary Revenue Estimate is approved of £500,000, to provide a budget for an additional management fee payment to Everybody Sport and Recreation Trust to maintain its cash flow. This will be fully funded from the un-ringfenced Covid-19 Emergency Grant for Local Government.

### **6.3 Policy Implications**

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

### **6.5 Equality Implications**

6.6 Implications of the changes will continue to be reviewed. We are carrying out individual risk assessments for staff with protected characteristics, particularly in relation to BAME colleagues and staff with a disability.

## **6.7 Human Resources Implications**

6.8 The report provides information in relation to the Council's workforce and workplace. Throughout the pandemic, there has been regular communication with staff and good co-operation with the Trade Unions.

## **6.9 Risk Management Implications**

6.10 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 and plans have been tested against concurrent risks of EU Exit and winter pressures.

## **6.11 Rural Communities Implications**

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

## **6.13 Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children**

6.14 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.

## **6.15 Public Health Implications**

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

## **6.17 Climate Change Implications**

6.18 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. This is outlined in paragraph 6.5.14.

## **7 Ward Members Affected**

7.1 All Members.

## **8 Consultation & Engagement**

8.1 Formal consultation activities were initially paused due to the lockdown restrictions. We are reviewing 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**

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

Frank Jordan, Executive Director Place and Deputy Chief Executive

Mark Palethorpe, Executive Director People

Jane Burns, Executive Director Corporate Services

This page is intentionally left blank



*Working for a brighter future together*

Key Decision: N

Date First  
Published: N/A

## Cabinet

---

**Date of Meeting:** 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020

**Report Title:** Pre-Budget Consultation 2021/22 – 2024/25

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Amanda Stott Portfolio Holder for Finance, ICT and Communication

**Senior Officer:** Lorraine O'Donnell, Chief Executive and Alex Thompson – Director of Finance and Customer Services

---

### 1. Report Summary

- 1.1. The impact of COVID-19 has created unprecedented levels of demand and financial uncertainty for all local authorities in England. The proposed Comprehensive Spending Review will now only focus on the 2021/22 financial year and an annual local government financial settlement is expected to be announced shortly.
- 1.2. Cheshire East Council is no different from other councils in dealing with the uncertainty and it is clear, that in presenting a set of proposals for consultation, that many underlying assumptions may be subject to change.
- 1.3. Nonetheless, the Council has developed proposed changes to the Council's budget which can significantly address the current projected financial pressures for 2021/22 to 2024/25.
- 1.4. The Council has a duty to consult on proposed changes to the budget and this report asks Cabinet to approve the consultation material for the 2021/22 to 2024/25 Medium Term Financial Strategy so that the survey can be launched on-line and allow the Council's stakeholders to provide feedback on the proposals being put forward.
- 1.5. The consultation document outlines that had it not been for the pandemic, the 2020/21 budget outturn would be balanced, and this presents a strong

baseline for the Council. It then goes on to outline how the Council has managed the financial challenges of COVID-19 to date and highlights that without taking action, the increased levels of demand for services and rising costs would present significant financial pressure for the Council over the medium term period.

- 1.6. This year, given the on-going pandemic, the consultation is being produced and will be hosted on the Council's Engagement Hub as an on-line survey which will contain the background to the financial situation the Council is currently facing. It will provide the facility to review and comment on the proposals being put forward.
- 1.7. Appendix A sets out the contents of the on-line survey and provides details of the proposals being put forward aligned to the Draft Corporate Plan.

## **2. Recommendation**

That Cabinet:

- 2.1. Approve the Pre-Budget Consultation survey provided at Appendix A which will be launched on-line on 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

## **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1. The consultation process provides an important opportunity for interested parties to understand and comment on how the Council proposes to balance the Council's Budget in line with its commitment to be open and transparent in its decision making.
- 3.2. The proposals described in the consultation document are summarised under broad themes. The purpose of the consultation is to obtain feedback on these broad budget proposals. The Council will undertake detailed and specific consultation on individual proposals with people who would potentially be affected before they are implemented. This includes consultation with staff and trade unions. This means that some proposals may change, even during the financial year, and this will be recognised when the overall strategy is presented to Council in February.

## **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1. Delay publication of the consultation until after the local government finance settlement has been confirmed, which is usually late December, and adopt the minimum level of engagement. This is not desirable because it is not transparent.
- 4.2. Publish Consultation material in similar format to previous year, with detailed information for all changes to the Council's budget. This approach



has come under criticism in recent years for being too lengthy and not helpful to gaining feedback on the proposals that are most likely to affect residents.

## **5. Background**

- 5.1. The budget consultation reflects the priorities of the Council as outlined within the Draft Corporate Plan (See Appendix B).
- 5.2. Whilst the Council is committed to achieving its priorities, for example economic growth, safeguarding the vulnerable and providing services for residents who need support, there continues to be a requirement for the Council to achieve financial stability.
- 5.3. Therefore, the final draft of the Corporate Plan will be informed by this consultation and vice versa. Both the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Corporate Plan will be presented to Full Council for approval at the same time.
- 5.4. In developing proposals for the budget, the additional costs of services are balanced against income from local taxation, charges and appropriate use of one-off funding sources or grants. This approach is supported by a reserves strategy that recognises emerging risks.
- 5.5. In 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic has had an extraordinary impact on the Council's finances. Overall this impact is expected to be in excess of £240m, which includes increased expenditure, the administration of new government grants and significant losses of important income. The pandemic has created significant financial uncertainty for the Government and this has had a knock-on effect to local authority funding too. The financial implications of the pandemic will continue to affect the Council's budget for years to come. Further information is outlined on a separate report on the agenda of this meeting.
- 5.6. The pandemic has led to higher levels of demand for services such as Social Care Services (safeguarding, domestic abuse, social care support, mental health, poverty), and has also impacted on income such as council tax, business rates and car parking.
- 5.7. The Council is working with Government to get help where it is most needed, but there is still the potential that the Council's budget will be severely impacted, and this can affect services.
- 5.8. For 2021/22 the Government will delay the planned implementation of the Fairer Funding Review and revisions to the Business Rates Retention scheme meaning that there is a high likelihood that the one year settlement

will provide a repeat of current funding levels. This has been factored into the assumptions underlying the budget consultation and is likely to be confirmed as part of the Spending Review announcements on 25<sup>th</sup> November.

- 5.9. The Council agrees a rolling four-year Capital Programme each year consistent with the Capital Strategy and the resources available. A full review of the programme has been completed as part of the 2021-25 business planning process to ensure capital expenditure is priority based and is aligned with the Council's priorities.
- 5.10. In determining how much capital investment to undertake, the Council will consider the long-term impact of borrowing on the revenue budgets. During this four year period, new schemes will only enter the programme if they are fully funded from external sources or deliver a revenue return.
- 5.11. The current approved capital programme is £492.5m. The Addendum has a further £368.7m of proposed capital projects awaiting approval into the main programme, once the appropriate funding is identified. 63% of the Capital Programme is funded from external sources and 37% funded by council resources. The revenue cost of the capital programme for borrowing repayments over the next four years is estimated to be £69m. The current proposed capital programme is affordable within the current financial assumptions underlying the Council's budget.
- 5.12. Once the budget consultation has been published, consultation events will be undertaken with key stakeholders including:
  - Staff
  - Member
  - Businesses and business organisations
  - Schools
  - Trade Unions
  - Town and Parish Councils

5.13. The timetable to approval of the 2021/22 budget is set out below –

Date	Who?	What?
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> December</b>	Online survey	Launch Pre-Budget Consultation
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> December to mid January</b>	All Stakeholders	Respond to formal consultation via meetings or online survey
<b>Late December</b>	Central Government	Finance Settlement
<b>January</b>	CEC Officers	Collate survey responses
<b>January</b>	Cabinet / ELT	Analyse survey responses and finalise budget position
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> February</b>	Cabinet	Recommend MTFS to Council
<b>17<sup>th</sup> February</b>	Council	Approve 2021/22 budget, Council Tax and MTFS

5.14. Comments on the consultation are welcome until 8th January 2021. All comments will be considered by Cabinet. After this date, comments on the budget can still be submitted up to the Council meeting on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021 when the Budget and the results of the consultation are considered by all Council Members, however, this may not be practical as proposals cannot be accepted without proper analysis as the budget must be based on robust estimates.

5.15. Feedback to this consultation, and further government announcements, will be important in developing a comprehensive Medium Term Financial Strategy that contains robust proposals, for approval in February 2021.

## **6. Implications of the Recommendations**

### **6.1. Legal Implications**

6.1.1. The Council has a legal duty to set a balanced budget for each financial year, pre-budget consultation forms part of the budget setting process.

### **6.2. Finance Implications**

6.2.1. Appendix C provides the proposals being presented for consultation as part of the Council's requirement to set a balanced budget for the next financial year.

6.2.2. The consultation document highlights the following variations to the Council's current budget:

Summary position for 2021/22 to 2024/25	Estimated Net Budget 2021/22 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2022/23 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2023/24 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2024/25 £m
Service Budgets	288.9	293.6	296.8	303.0
<i>Including: Proposed changes as follows -</i>				
Open	0.7	1.2	3.9	4.2
Fair	3.7	1.9	2.1	4.0
Green	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.5
Total Service Budgets	293.6	296.8	303.0	311.7
Total Central Budgets (Net of Reserves)	11.0	13.2	14.9	16.9
TOTAL: SERVICE + CENTRAL BUDGETS	304.6	310.0	317.9	328.6
<i>FUNDED BY:</i>				
Council Tax	-235.9	-243.0	-250.2	-257.7
Business Rate Retention Scheme	-49.1	-49.1	-49.1	-49.1
Specific Grants	-21.6	-19.9	-18.5	-17.2
Collection Fund Deficit due to Covid-19	2.0	2.0	2.0	0.0
TOTAL: FUNDED BY	-304.6	-309.9	-315.8	-324.0
Funding Deficit / (Surplus)	0.0	0.0	2.1	4.6

6.2.3. The most significant assumptions behind the position presented in the consultation document are detailed below:

- All proposals will achieve the financial targets or be replaced with equal alternatives.
- Proposals to vary the Council's budget will be aligned to the Corporate Plan. The ongoing consultation on the content of the Corporate Plan may therefore impact on some of the financial proposals.
- Pay and pension inflation will see an overall increase in employee costs of c.2.5% pa.
- Council Tax levels will increase at 1.99% pa.
- The Tax Base will increase by c.1,800 properties per annum in line with the local plan.
- The Local Government Settlement will present a position whereby the Council will be 'no worse off' than 2020/21. This may mean

some grants are reduced but compensated by the expectation that Council Tax levels could be increased to compensate for this. In this scenario the Council would have to increase Council Tax levels accordingly to achieve the 'no worse off' position.

- The impact of COVID-19 does not exceed the current MTFS position. This means that costs deferred to 2021 and beyond will be managed through grants carried forward, the use of earmarked reserves or through risk allocations within the existing Capital Programme.
- General Reserves will remain unchanged in 2021/22 at £10.3m, which requires a balanced outturn from the 2020/21 budget (excluding the impact of COVID-19 in the above point).
- General Reserves are adequate to manage the normal level of risk associated with the overall management of a net budget of c.£300m as per the 2020 Reserves Strategy.
- Costs of changes, such as any requirement for redundancy payments will be funded from Central Budgets created as part of the balanced position for 2021/22 and 2022/23.

6.2.4. If these assumptions vary during the consultation period then the Council will have to take such variations in to account alongside the feedback from the consultation.

### **6.3. Policy Implications**

6.3.1. The report outlines policy and budget proposals which will impact on service delivery arrangements.

### **6.4. Equality Implications**

6.4.1. Equality Impact Assessments have been undertaken for every proposal put forward as part of this budget consultation.

### **6.5. Human Resources Implications**

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

### **6.6. Risk Management Implications**

6.6.1. Cheshire East recognises that in pursuit of its objectives and outcomes in this pre-budget consultation that it may choose to accept an increased degree of risk. Where the Council chooses to accept an increased level of risk it will do so, subject always to ensuring that the potential benefits and threats are fully understood before developments

are authorised, that it has sufficient risk capacity and that sensible measures to mitigate risk are established.

6.6.2. The Council also establishes a level of reserves that are adequate to protect the Council against financial risks, such as emergencies, which are not specifically budgeted for in individual years.

6.6.3. The Council will continue to be flexible about investing revenue funding in maintaining sustainable services and reflecting changes to the risks facing the Council. The full Budget Report will include a revised Reserves Strategy for 2021/22 to provide further detail on estimated balances and the application of reserves in the medium term.

#### **6.7. Rural Communities Implications**

6.7.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

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

6.8.1. Proposals affecting the Children's area of the budget have been set out as part of Appendix A and C.

#### **6.9. Public Health Implications**

6.9.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

#### **6.10. Climate Change Implications**

6.10.1. The draft Corporate Plan has a very strong environmental thread throughout with a specific aim for the Council to be 'Greener'.

6.10.2. A number of proposals are listed which will support the Council's commitment of being carbon neutral by 2025. These are included in the wider list of proposals within Appendix A and C

### **7. Ward Members Affected**

7.1. All Members will have the opportunity to be involved in the engagement process.

### **8. Consultation & Engagement**

8.1. This report sets out the Consultation process planned.

### **9. Access to Information**

9.1. Any supporting documents that help to explain or evidence the report and its recommendation should be included here in accessible formats. Authors

should take note of any confidentiality or cost of access issues in this section for reports that end up in the public domain.

## **10. Contact Information**

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

Name: Alex Thompson

Job Title: Director of Finance and Customer Services

Email: [alex.thompson@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:alex.thompson@cheshireeast.gov.uk)



This page is intentionally left blank

# Cheshire East Council Budget Engagement 2021 – 25

## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global crisis on an unprecedented scale. Coronavirus has affected countless countries and communities worldwide and without doubt has significantly changed our way of life as we all know it.

Against this backdrop, we have incurred significant additional costs and seen income in many areas reduced including parking, weddings, planning applications, council tax and business rates.

Cheshire East Council like every other local authority, is also dealing with unprecedented financial pressures due to increasing demand, particularly in adult and children's social care and our statutory duties to protect the most vulnerable. The impact of COVID-19 only adds to the existing uncertainty around the funding of vital local services that we must both manage and seek to secure. We must also plan for and support the recovery of our economy, our communities and our local public services.

Independent studies<sup>1</sup> have identified the forecast shortfall in funding for council services in England is £3.1 billion as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is in addition to an underlying shortfall of as much as £4billion<sup>2</sup> that reflects the short-term nature of funding settlements from central government and the failure to recognise the growth in demand for services.

The council has reported a potential £13 million funding deficit related to the impact of COVID-19 in 2020/21 in addition to an already identified shortfall of £12 million in 2021/22. At the time of writing we are in a second national lockdown and there is future uncertainty around the impact of COVID-19 on the remainder of this financial year and the longer-term impacts of the pandemic into 2021/22 and beyond. This document assumes that these future impacts of COVID scarring will be funded by the Government. If this is not the case, the financial pressures on the Council will be increased. We will react to these pressures to protect essential local services as far as possible.

This budget engagement outlines our priorities, how we are investing to achieve them and how we must change things to live within our means over the next few years.

### Notes:

1. Source: Institute of Fiscal Studies
2. Source: Local Government Organisation

## Purpose of our Budget Engagement

Cheshire East Council provides more than 500 services for approximately 382,400 residents. From gritting roads to looking after vulnerable people, hundreds of council services are accessed every single day.

As your council, we have a responsibility to deliver cost effective services in a way that provides our residents with value for money and to ensure every penny is accounted for and spent wisely to deliver so many vital local services which support the needs of local people.

We are legally required to set a balanced budget each year, meaning we cannot spend more than our income. As part of this process we need to seek the views of residents and businesses regarding priority areas for the year ahead. In making such important decisions, we are keen to understand how the COVID-19 crisis has changed priorities, the impact on families and challenges facing local communities. Your views and feedback on our proposals as local people, businesses, organisations, Councillors and staff are therefore important and will help us to fully understand the impact of the changes required to achieve a financially balanced position.

Cheshire East Council is responsible for managing total expenditure in excess of £700million, after taking all the conditional income and grants the council receive into account, this creates an annual net revenue budget of approximately £300million. This covers the day-to-day running costs of providing vital services and equates to approximately £15 per week for every resident living in the borough.

As well as providing day to day services to support children and adults who need our help, the council also manages a range of capital projects such as building new schools, new roads, information and digital technology and regenerating our town centres. The total amount of projects being managed over the next four years alone, is almost £400million.

2020 has been an unprecedented year given COVID-19 and that makes the task of setting a balanced budget for next year an even greater challenge than usual.

This document outlines the key financial issues that we need to tackle, including those that relate to the ongoing pandemic, our proposed response to these financial challenges, our plans for spending next year, and how your views will be captured and decisions regarding the council's budget will be made.

## Giving your feedback

Please submit your feedback by 8<sup>th</sup> January 2021. You can let us know what you think by:

- Completing this short survey
- Emailing [RandC@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:RandC@cheshireeast.gov.uk)
- Tweeting @CheshireEast #CECBudget

For any queries about this engagement e.g. if you would like to receive this questionnaire in an alternative format, or submit your response in a different way, please call Customer Services on 0300 123 5500 or email [RandC@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:RandC@cheshireeast.gov.uk).

## Your confidentiality is assured

Any personal information you supply will remain strictly confidential and will be used in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. To find out more about how we use your information see [our privacy policy](#).

## Survey content

The engagement now covers the below topics - please choose which of these topics you would like to view and answer questions on:

- ☐ 1. Our priorities
- ☐ 2. Unprecedented times – the impact of COVID-19
- ☐ 3. Spending within resources
- ☐ 4. Spending on our priorities for next year
  - a. Open
  - b. Fairer
  - c. Greener
- ☐ 5. Managing the Council's Financial affairs

## 1. Our priorities

Over the last few weeks, we've been asking residents, businesses, other organisations, our staff and Councillors about our plans for the future. Our new draft corporate plan sets out the vision and priorities over the next four years. Our vision is for a more **open, fairer and greener Cheshire East**.

The vision is ambitious and long-term, leading to three broad aims of:

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

The draft corporate plan includes actions that will help us towards these goals. Clearly, our ability to deliver them all will depend on the resources we have at our disposal. This means that our corporate plan and the budget are intrinsically linked.

In this budget engagement, we set out how we are investing in our priorities as well as where we are continuing to drive savings and efficiencies.

The council must invest additional funds in key frontline services to manage demand and meet our priorities to care for people and create a sustainable place. The increase in population across the borough inevitably leads to further demand for some services, but the complexity of care needs in particular also causes costs to increase.

Continuing to deliver our existing services in the current format is not possible without additional investment.

Although our services are valued by you, our residents, we also recognise that services should not cost more in Cheshire East than elsewhere. Our staff are all committed to providing you with excellent service, and we work hard at providing the support to our staff that they need. The financial forecasts include pay inflation, but also include potential changes to terms and conditions in line with other similar organisations. Over time it is also clear that services will need to adapt and transform, and in doing this some roles will change or in some cases will no longer be necessary.

The council is committed to 'digital first' and will adopt strategies that improve access to services and create efficiencies. New technology requires investment but, overall, business cases will demonstrate that we will operate in a far more efficient way using new systems, in particular through a reduced requirement to maintain large office spaces.

## 2. Unprecedented times – the impact of COVID-19

The global COVID-19 pandemic is having a significant impact on all our lives. The council and its partners are working tirelessly to respond to the challenges. At the same time the council has continued to strive to:

- deliver essential local services
- protect our most vulnerable children, families and vulnerable adults
- support our communities and local businesses.

The financial implications of the pandemic will continue to affect the council's budget for the next few years. The council is working with Government to get help where it is most needed, but there is still the potential that the council's ability to do that will be impacted and this can affect services.

The council's latest forecasts estimate that as much as £13million of COVID-19 related expenditure or income losses will have to be funded locally. But there is still quite a lot of uncertainty so we must make some assumptions about spreading this cost over the medium term to help set a balanced budget for 2021/22.

If the situation improves, we may not need to make all the savings proposed in this consultation. But if it stays the same or gets worse, it is likely that we will need to make savings to the services we really want to protect.

### More information about the council's response to COVID-19

The council's response to COVID-19 has been comprehensive and impacts on all services. Regular reports have been provided to Councillors on the activities to combat COVID-19, the latest version of which can be [viewed on the council website \(opens new window\)](#).

**To what extent do you agree or disagree the council is managing the impacts of COVID-19 effectively?** *Please tick one box only*

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Tend to agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Tend to disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't know

**Is there anything else you think the council could do to manage the impacts of COVID-19? Please write in below**



### 3. Spending within resources

All Local Authorities (councils) in the UK are legally required to set a balanced budget, meaning they cannot spend more than their income. Cheshire East Council gets income from Council Tax, business rates, government grants and local fees and charges.

Since 2013/14 central government's general-purpose revenue support grant to Cheshire East Council has fallen by £55.9million to zero. The reduction was partially mitigated by permission to raise more money through Council Tax and other sources.

This is a difficult challenge when lots of the council's spending is driven by increases in demand as the population grows and people live longer, as well as unavoidable costs such as inflation and national living wage. A large proportion of this is spent on supporting older people in care homes or in the community, people with a physical or learning disability or mental ill health. This is in addition to protecting our most vulnerable young people who need to come into the care of the local authority or ensuring our children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) are supported to live full and active lives. Our income sources are at risk due to the impact COVID-19 is having on the economy.

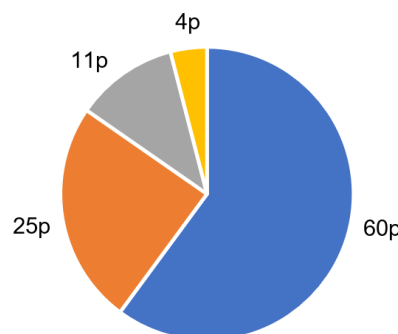
The council's finances are audited, with reports to central government and independent external auditors that provide an opinion on the quality of the council's arrangements. If there is a risk that a council is not going to achieve a balanced budget in-year or in the future it must take immediate action.

When the council agreed a budget in February 2020 it was balanced. However, we also made it clear that there would be a financial deficit of £12million in 2021 and beyond, and we would need to take appropriate action to address this to enable the council to set a balanced budget.

#### How is £1 of your Council Tax spent?

In February 2020, Cheshire East Council agreed it would spend each £1 of its budget for the year April 2020 to March 2021 in the following areas:

People Services e.g. Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care	60p
Place Services e.g. Highways, Waste, Libraries, Leisure	25p
Corporate Services e.g. Legal, HR, Trading Services	11p
Central Budgets e.g. Funds for Capital Projects	4p
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1</b>



### Within budget so far

The good news is that this year, impacts of COVID-19 aside, the council is living within its means, with the Mid-Year Review balanced to within 0.2% of the budget that was agreed for the year. In the previous financial year, the council was forecasting an overspend of 2.7% (or £7.5m) at mid-year, so this is an improvement.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that the council spends money wisely?** *Please tick one box only*

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Tend to agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Tend to disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't know

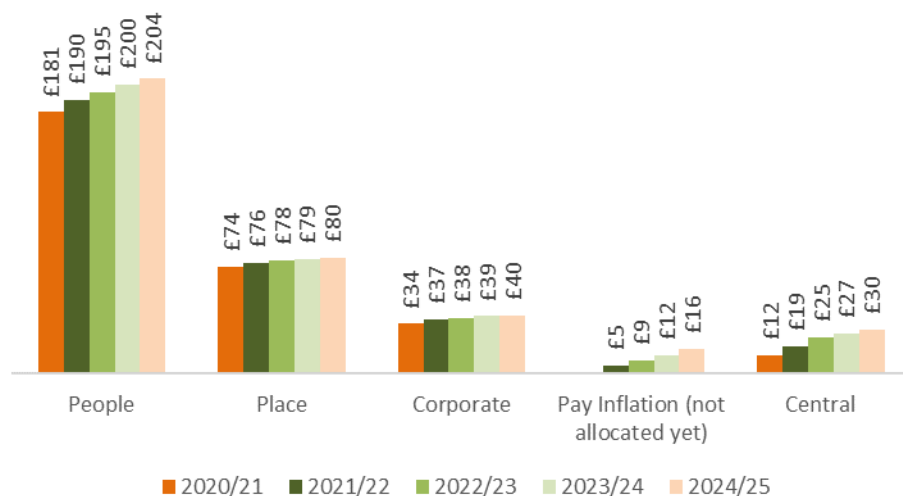
**What information do you need to be able to judge how the council spends money?** *Please write in below*

## 4. Spending on our priorities for next year

We will continue to invest in our priorities, support our most vulnerable residents and meet the needs of an expanding population.

Service area	Spending priorities
<b>+£9m in 2021/22 for People Services</b> (services include Social Care for Children and Adults, Education, Public Health and Communities)	Whilst we have significant financial challenges, we plan to invest in these services and there will be increases in spending to meet the needs of the growing numbers of older people who often have complex care needs and younger adults who are living longer with very complex needs. We are also prioritising investment in services for children, education (including more school places), early help and public health.
<b>+£3m in 2021/22 for Place Services</b> (services include Highways, Waste, Environmental Management, Economic Development, Planning and Leisure)	<p>The council is committed to improving the environment and reducing carbon emissions in the Borough, therefore spending is being prioritised to support this ambition. We are also investing to support the regeneration of our towns and economic development across the Borough.</p> <p>In addition, as more houses are being built, we need to ensure we can increase the level of services such as waste collection to meet this demand.</p>
<b>+£3m in 2021/22 for Corporate Services</b> (services include Legal and Democratic Services, ICT, Finance, HR and Customer Services)	We will continue to invest in modern technology and efficient ways of working. We've completely changed how we work since lockdown with all staff who can working from home. This will help us to reduce our premises costs in the future, for example. We also have set money aside to cover losses in Housing Benefits and to provide support with housing costs to individuals on lower incomes.
<b>+ Additional Budgets</b> (across all services to manage items such as pay inflation and the ongoing costs of the capital programme)	Pay inflation includes money for pensions, and the costs of the capital programme which reflect the council's requirement to borrow money to fund significant infrastructure schemes.

Projected Budgets, by service area (£million)



Under the current funding arrangements for Local Authorities, which has seen reductions in government grants as well significant control over other funding sources, the demand for services will exceed the resources available to the council.

This means whilst investing in its priorities, the council must also reduce expenditure, which can prevent or delay the council from achieving its locally identified priorities.

If the council is able to access a fairer level of funding, which increases the budget, then, based on the responses to the consultation, not all of the proposals to reduce expenditure will need to go ahead.

In February next year, the council must meet to agree its [Medium Term Financial Strategy](#), which will show how spending pressures can be balanced against available resources, or reductions in spending by changing the way services are delivered.

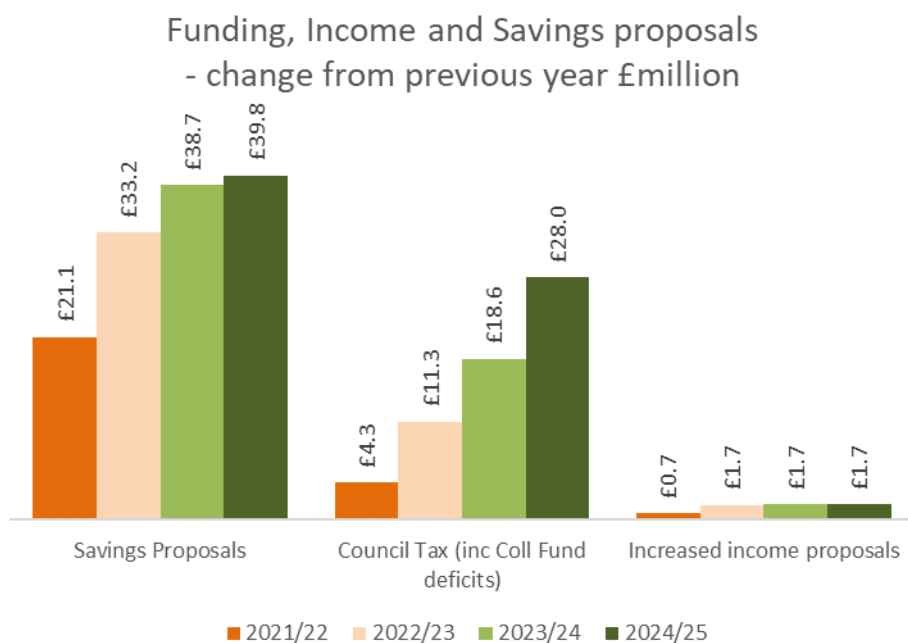
If a council is predicting a budget shortfall for next year, meaning it would spend more than its income, it must show how it will make up this shortfall by proposing savings.

Savings are proposed across all areas of the council. We aim to do this through improved efficiency, reducing duplication, streamlining how we work, better targeting and reducing support for lower priority activities. We also need to make sure we have the right skills in the right places to

deliver the council's priorities. This could mean a reduction in the workforce, but we will work hard to minimise compulsory redundancies and to support our staff.

Income will come from increasing Council Tax levels as well as charging for more services or increasing existing prices for services.

Part of the overall strategy is also to be use reserves specifically built up over time, to fund longer term costs such as capital funding.



Overall the Council's budget is still expected to rise, with expenditure increasing across each of the Council's priorities, funding coming from Council Tax. Although there is a risk that spending may exceed income from 2023/24 this reflects the approach of the Council to develop sustainable proposals but not to make significant reductions that may not be necessary if government funding settlements become clearer, and more focused on long term opportunities.

Summary position for 2021/22 to 2024/25	Estimated Net Budget 2021/22 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2022/23 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2023/24 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2024/25 £m
Service Budgets	288.9	293.6	296.8	303.0
Proposed changes as follows:				
Open	0.7	1.2	3.9	4.2
Fairer	3.7	1.9	2.1	4.0
Greener	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.5
Total Service Budgets	293.6	296.8	303.0	311.7
Total Central Budgets (Net of Reserves)	11.0	13.2	14.9	16.9
<b>TOTAL: SERVICE + CENTRAL BUDGETS</b>	<b>304.6</b>	<b>310.0</b>	<b>317.9</b>	<b>328.6</b>
FUNDED BY:				
Council Tax	-235.9	-243.0	-250.2	-257.7
Business Rate Retention Scheme	-49.1	-49.1	-49.1	-49.1
Specific Grants	-21.6	-19.9	-18.5	-17.2
Collection Fund Deficit due to COVID-19	2.0	2.0	2.0	0.0
<b>TOTAL: FUNDED BY</b>	<b>-304.6</b>	<b>-310.0</b>	<b>-315.8</b>	<b>-324.0</b>
<b>Funding Deficit</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>4.6</b>

## 4a. Open Investment and Saving Proposals

	Open - Investment	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m
Transparency	Local decision making is crucial to be a transparent organisation. Local elections must be funded properly and the next all-out elections for the borough, town and parish wards are scheduled for May 2023. We will increase the budget to save up each year to meet this cost.	0.150			
Financial Sustainability	To support a sustainable financial future for the council, through service development, improvement and transformation, we will make decisions to fund pay awards but must also recognise some important ongoing financial pressures. Pay inflation increases will include review of pay structures; spinal point incremental increases for eligible staff and annual nationally negotiated pay awards.	6.805	3.473	4.029	4.134
Commercial Opportunities	Adjustments to the income target for the council's owned company, Orbitas Bereavement Services have been agreed and essential capital and revenue investment in Public Rights of Way service are proposed to enable them to continue to provide the service.	0.042	0.021		
Workforce	<p>The council will continue to invest in modern working practices and efficient ICT and communication systems including telephony and video conferencing systems which underpin and support innovation, and affordable frontline delivery.</p> <p>There will also be a programme of ICT procurement and contract renewal over the next three years for ongoing software maintenance and support for service delivery.</p>	0.634	0.769	0.895	0.032
	<b>Open – Total Investment</b>	<b>7.631</b>	<b>4.263</b>	<b>4.924</b>	<b>4.166</b>



	<b>Open - Savings</b>	<b>2021/22 £m</b>	<b>2022/23 £m</b>	<b>2023/24 £m</b>	<b>2024/25 £m</b>
Listen, Learn	Surveys will continue to support our decision making, but as no further funding is required for the Census 2021, £20,000 can be removed from the budget.	(0.020)			
Financial Sustainability	<p>The corporate services directorate will look at more efficient ways of working by completing staff restructures, focussing on highest priority activities, developing self-service digital solutions and generating income. It will further reduce costs from a wide-ranging review of terms and conditions of service across all areas to ensure the council is aligned with legislative changes, best practice and new ways of working. Pension forecasts will also reduce in line with latest forecasts and spending will reduce on corporate subscriptions, professional associations and journals.</p> <p>A review of the shared services between Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester councils will ensure that value for money is delivered, that there is merit in continued collaboration, and that opportunities for further efficiencies are identified.</p> <p>Along with Cheshire West and Chester Council, the council has agreed to invest in a new system which supports payroll, accounting for income and paying suppliers. The new system will enable the council to be more efficient by automating processes and will reduce the number of staff needed for these transactions.</p> <p>Repayment of the Council's debt is frequently reviewed, to assess value for money and appropriateness under the Minimum Revenue Provision policy. Reviews will deliver budgetary savings in the short term but does not necessarily alter the overall liability over time. The capital financing budget will increase over time and will take account of available capital resources, including the use of anticipated capital receipts.</p> <p>We will look to reduce the level of debt owed to the council through extended pre-payment and increased debt recovery. Improved debt collection over time reduces income from court costs, which are already</p>	(5.025)	(0.951)	(0.260)	0.030

	<p>forecasting a budget shortfall. Excess Direct Payments funds can also be recovered.</p> <p>As a result of COVID-19, we have been able to improve usage of ICT. This enables us to make a one-off, permanent saving from the travel element of Members' Allowances to reflect the existing and expected continued lower level of claims for travel allowances due to virtual meetings. Savings to travel budgets will be recognised in key services as staff will not be required to make as many journeys.</p> <p>In conjunction with NHS colleagues, we can undertake reviews of nursing home placements and complex care packages to identify those people who have a primary health need and are therefore eligible for Continuing Healthcare Funding.</p> <p>Further efficiency savings and reduction in expenditure will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved customer experience in the highways service and a reduction in annual cuts of grassed areas</li> <li>• Improvements to Regulatory Services ICT systems</li> <li>• Using contract services for low risk food hygiene inspections</li> <li>• Migration of the CCTV service to a wireless network</li> <li>• Reduced funding to the Constellation Partnership</li> <li>• A new operating model for Congleton Visitor Centre</li> <li>• Reducing base budget for community grants and signpost to alternative sources, for example, crowd funding.</li> </ul>				
Commercial Opportunities	<p>The council owns or partly owns several separate trading companies. It will review of the governance arrangements of the council wholly owned companies including the development of opportunities for efficiencies/ income generation. The council will be undertaking a strategic review of leisure services and the operating agreement between the council and Everybody Sport &amp; Recreation.</p> <p>The Fees and Charges Review and Change Project will review the current status within service areas of the council and deliver a change in policy and practice to maximise efficient and tangible income generation.</p>	(1.527)	(0.710)	(0.332)	(0.040)

	<p>The council proposes to enable Cheshire East Highways to undertake external works for 3<sup>rd</sup> party clients to deliver an income stream and/or overhead reduction for the Council.</p> <p>We are obliged to provide value for money from each of the commissioned services. With COVID-19 many providers have embraced digital working, and this means we must find new ways to make efficiencies to meet increasing demand. The commissioning staff will complete a comprehensive review of all contracts considering fees and charges, performance, outcomes, service delivery and quality.</p> <p>There are proposals to establish two new traded services. Establishing an Education Psychologist traded service would provide early intervention support to children and therefore also potentially reduce demand on the SEND service. Establishing a traded service for non-statutory elements of Attendance Service would provide early intervention support and improve the support offer to schools and families to improve the attendance of children at school.</p>				
Workforce	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how adult social care can operate differently. There are opportunities such as the development of the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) and integration commissioning that will enable the staff to work differently. New ways of working and integrated posts will be adopted which will result in more efficient ways of working.</p> <p>A strategic review and transformation of the existing main office estate as part of the Estates and ICT transformation programme. This will improve the design of the office environment, support flexible working, reduce overall carbon emissions and deliver net savings. This also involves a review of all council buildings that provide customer facing services within towns and neighbourhoods across the borough.</p> <p>The local authority receives an external grant to support school improvement functions for the maintained schools' sector. We propose to use a proportion of this grant to contribute towards staffing costs of those staff who directly support our maintained schools to improve outcomes for their learners.</p>	(0.399)	(1.500)	(0.460)	

	<p>A saving on the corporate training budget can be achieved through a shift towards using, wherever possible, more cost-effective means of providing courses such as online training.</p> <p>We are currently aligning our services across Early Help to deliver more effectively on a locality basis using our partnership model 'Together in Communities' to improve the understanding and accountability of all partners regarding their roles and responsibilities around identifying and offering whole family early intervention and support. We are also looking to commission a volunteer model to support the step-down arrangements and to provide ongoing support that some families will require when they no longer meet the threshold for more intensive early help.</p> <p>Once locality working is well embedded, the volunteer service is delivering excellent outcomes and as a partnership, our council services are no longer having to lead on a high majority of prevention casework, we will be in a position to streamline our teams accordingly in the Family Service and Children's Centres.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to review the way we operate children's and family centres, moving forwards with less requirement to offer full time reception duty cover and, with the recent investment to enable staff to work remotely, offer more services in a virtual, digital capacity. This reorganisation is required in order to streamline business support which means we have flexibility to cover fewer bases and at different times of operation. This will support better integrated working with NHS services moving forwards.</p>				
	<b>Open – Total Savings</b>	<b>(6.971)</b>	<b>(3.161)</b>	<b>(1.052)</b>	<b>(0.010)</b>

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the investments and savings under Open?** *Please tick one box only*

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Tend to agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Tend to disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't know

**Do you have any comments to make on the investments and savings under Open?** *Please write in below*

## 4b. Fairer Investment and Saving Proposals

	Fairer - Investment	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m
Reduce Reliance	<p>The Adults Social Care budget both here in Cheshire East, and across the country, remains under pressure as a result of a number of factors. These include young people transitioning into adulthood, care fee levels paid to external care providers, the rising demand generally and our older population requiring much more complex care. To ensure the council is well placed to meet this demand it will invest in services that will deliver high quality support to our most vulnerable residents.</p> <p>Cheshire East Council has a duty under the Care Act 2014 to “promote the efficient and effective operation of a market in services for meeting care and support needs.” In delivering this obligation, councils must ensure the sustainability of the market and that there are sufficient high-quality services available to meet the care and support needs of adults in the area. We propose a fee uplift for Accommodation with Care and Complex Care providers for 2021/22.</p> <p>There are currently 2* PFI (Private Finance Initiative) extra care housing schemes in Cheshire East where the Council provides the cost of catering/restaurant service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Oakmere in Handforth with 53 apartments</li> <li>- Willowmere in Middlewich with 71 apartments</li> <li>- Beechmere in Crewe had a major fire in August 2019 and the entire site was destroyed. It had 132 apartments and is scheduled to be re-built, however, no dates have yet been confirmed for this.</li> </ul> <p>The restaurant facilities at all PFI extra care housing schemes are currently subsidised by the Council and this proposal is to continue the subsidy. Options to reduce this subsidy will continue to be explored.</p> <p>This is to bid for additional growth to meet the demands for advocacy services. Local authorities have an obligation to provide statutory advocacy services. This support enables an individual (usually a</p>	6.853	4.000	4.000	4.000

	vulnerable person) to understand, communicate their choice and to participate in decision making which affects them.				
Safeguard Children	The number of new Education, Health and Care Plan requests continues to increase significantly above the national rate. Previous investment in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Service should enable the service to deliver on new needs assessment requests but further investment is essential to enable the service to fulfil the statutory requirements for ongoing annual reviews.	0.100			
Corporate Parenting	The children's social care budget, both here in Cheshire East and across the country, remains under pressure as a result of several factors. These include increasing numbers of children and young people entering the care system. To ensure the council is well placed to meet this demand it will invest in services that will deliver high quality support to our most vulnerable group of children.	1.300	1.300	1.300	
<b>Fairer – Total Investment</b>		<b>8.253</b>	<b>5.300</b>	<b>5.300</b>	<b>4.000</b>

	<b>Fairer - Savings</b>	<b>2021/22 £m</b>	<b>2022/23 £m</b>	<b>2023/24 £m</b>	<b>2024/25 £m</b>
Health Inequalities	<p>The Pathfinder contract is due to end in May 2021 following a contractual period of 2+ years. Commissioners proposed not to extend the contract further into the extension period. To provide support for people contacting social care via upskilling frontline staff (Local Area Coordinators, Community Development Officers libraries), especially on financial matters/form filling/signposting. Other social prescribers (including Community Connectors) will have further training on financial inclusion to bridge further gaps. The People Helping People service also provides support which aims to prevent social isolation within our communities.</p> <p>Mental Health Floating Support focuses on early intervention and prevention, supporting the development of innovative solutions to best meet the needs aiming to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and their families. Interventions will promote people's</p>	(0.220)			



	independence and thereby reduce demand on social care and health services. Funding of this will be picked up by the public health ring fenced grant in future and will require subsidy from the Council's non-ringfenced funding.				
Reduce Reliance	<p>The current and future cost savings will be made by reconfiguring the Communities Team to focus on low level prevention activity and mobilising the local community to support low level domiciliary care tasks. The appropriate management structure would be more integrated within Commissioning which will allow a seamless approach to gathering local need and intelligence and matching this to future integrated commissioning intentions.</p> <p>The Virtual School for Cared for Children supports cared for children and care leavers with transition to employment, through the procurement of an external provider who facilitates access to employment. It is proposed that this programme is supported through pupil premium grant received from the Department for Education to support progress and achievement of cared for children.</p> <p>Our strategic vision for day opportunities in the future within Cheshire East is to support safe, purposeful and personalised activities that enable citizens to play a valued role in their community and to live as independently as they choose. Ensuring that vulnerable adults can access activities appropriate to their needs, and with choice and control is paramount. By ensuring that all day opportunities adopt a more personalised and flexible approach we can potentially reduce the level of expenditure and see more people take up Direct Payments.</p> <p>We are proposing to undertake a full review and reassessment of all the Local Authority's section 117 aftercare arrangements under the Mental Health Act (1983), as permitted under the Act and acknowledging that people can recover from episodes of mental health and therefore can be enabled to live their lives more independently. As required by the legislation, this will be done in consultation with our NHS colleagues.</p>	(2.616)	(0.850)	(0.150)	

This Family Information Service (FIS) provides the statutory function to advise parents and carers about the availability of Childcare and support services for children for Cheshire East families. The proposal is to review the role of the FIS officers and look at how their frontline advice and guidance can be delivered in a different way, utilising those staff already front facing with families such as Business Support Assistants and Family Service Workers.

This Contract Management Team intend to monitor providers performance and potential cost reclamation against Key Performance Indicators for fulfilment of commissioned hours via the Electronic Monitoring System. The system is utilised to monitor the commissioned prime providers delivering care and support across the Borough of Cheshire East against their Key Performance Indicators (KPI) as set out in the Care at Home contract specification, pricing schedule and Performance Monitoring Framework.

The system aims to drive up the quality of the service that care providers deliver to people whose care is commissioned by the Council. The quality of the service actually delivered is measured against the commissioned care packages in terms of the start time of the call, call duration and continuity of carers. In cases where the care call is less than 80% of the commissioned call time and over all less than 90% the contract allows Commissioners to recover any costs attributed to the failure to adhere to the call duration KPI.

Cheshire East Council is a partner in the digital platform that shares data called the Cheshire Care Record. This is used by Health and Social Care practitioners to enable a holistic view of a person's health and social care needs. The budget has some flexibility in it to reduce the amount required to maintain its usage.

The Skills & Lifelong Learning Service supports post-19 learners in developing skills for employment through accredited courses and wider community engagement. The principle funding stream is an Education and Skills Funding Agency grant currently supplemented by council

	<p>funding. The intention is to reach the position where the service team functions entirely on grant.</p> <p>Schools are supported by the local authority through our school liaison services as well as being part of a comprehensive traded service including governance. The function of this service will be reviewed to achieve efficiencies.</p>				
Safeguard Children	<p>To redesign Early Help Services on to a locality delivery model, streamlining management arrangements to increase integration and reduce duplication.</p> <p>We intend to review our commissioned services to ensure that they offer the very best experience and life chances for people with learning disabilities. This will involve working with our NHS colleagues and care providers, ensuring a person-centred approach at all times.</p> <p>We know that outcomes for children who enter the care system, particularly those who enter it late, are not optimised. The sooner we can support children and their families, to help them stay safely together, the better the chances are for all those family members to do well and have the best chance of a good life. If we continue to strengthen our frontline practice ensuring we have the right plans and care arrangements for our children, with permission to be creative and flexible in our approach, a reduction in the budget will follow. We will achieve this through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Safely reducing the number of cared for children</li> <li>2. Resetting the current placement imbalance by reducing the number of children living in children's homes and with external foster carers. This will increase the number of cared for children living locally in Cheshire East.</li> </ol> <p>This service supports achieving better outcomes for children, young people and families through delivery of service development, improvement and transformation initiatives, effective partnership working through the coordination of the key children's partnership boards, coordination of external support and validation including</p>	(1.634)	(2.571)	(3.007)	

	<p>inspection, and support to the cross service business functions for the People directorate.</p> <p>As a result of COVID-19, improved locality working and partnership working and a successful volunteer service, we will be able to realise savings to the travel budget as staff will not be required to make as many journeys to delivery sites or family's homes. We are utilising improved ICT functionality so have less need to travel to the office for meetings and in some instances are using the technology to deliver services to families.</p>				
Best Start	This proposal is to reduce the Development and Partnerships Service by 50% in 2023-24 to generate a cost saving as this service is not statutory. The roles of the service would need to be absorbed by existing services which may impact on our ability to carry out these functions and our ability to carry out service development and transformation.			(0.300)	
Collaboration	To reduce by 10% the council's contribution to deliver a single Youth Justice service across the Cheshire Constabulary area.	(0.045)			
<b>Fairer – Total Savings</b>		<b>(4.515)</b>	<b>(3.421)</b>	<b>(3.457)</b>	

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the investments and savings under Fairer?** *Please tick one box only*

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Tend to agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Tend to disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't know

**Do you have any comments to make on the investments and savings under Fairer? *Please write in below***

## 4c. Greener Investment and Saving Proposals

	Greener - Investment	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m
Great Place	<p>The Council is required to meet the housing needs of the Gypsy and Traveller Community.</p> <p>Based on an assessment of need it is proposed to develop a transit site which will provide a safe environment and avoid the occurrence of unauthorised encampments.</p> <p>The new facility will require running costs to be covered and therefore growth of £27,000 is proposed to meet these costs.</p> <p>The proposed facility is subject to securing planning approvals before construction commences.</p>	0.027			
Neighbourhoods	<p>The Council has previously set an income target relating to environmental enforcement. The Council is currently reviewing its approach to enforcement and has identified that having a fixed income target is not sustainable. Therefore, growth is proposed to remove this income target from for the budget.</p>	0.118			
Environment	<p>Housing growth to date and future projections in house building will see a corresponding increase in recycling and waste. In addition, annual price increases for waste disposal contract costs have been factored in.</p> <p>We have committed to be carbon neutral by 2025 and to influence carbon reduction across the Borough. Our Environment Strategy and Carbon Action Plan, sets out how we will achieve this. Planned growth in the budget has been factored in for 2021, but due to cost pressures this is proposed to be removed with growth of £20,000 planned for the following year.</p> <p>Additional investment is required to fund the implementation of the Council's tree risk management strategy.</p> <p>Illuminated traffic signs and bollards are an integral feature of the highway providing guidance and direction for all road users. Installed</p>	0.810	1.194	0.572	0.582

	over the last 50 years they are an ageing, energy inefficient asset that requires replacement with low energy LED illumination or no energy de-illumination to current standards.				
	<b>Greener – Total Investment</b>	<b>0.955</b>	<b>1.194</b>	<b>0.572</b>	<b>0.582</b>

	<b>Greener - Savings</b>	<b>2021/22 £m</b>	<b>2022/23 £m</b>	<b>2023/24 £m</b>	<b>2024/25 £m</b>
Great Place	<p>These planned savings result from income and efficiencies generated through the investment programme in the facilities at Tatton Park, which will improve the visitor experience and reduce the overall subsidy the Council makes to Tatton Park.</p> <p>Engage with Community organisations and Local Councils to explore opportunities to work together on the delivery and funding of services. This will include the potential of asset transfers and partnership approaches to funding key services and facilities.</p>	(0.150)	(0.036)	(0.048)	(0.046)
Neighbourhoods	Savings through the recommissioning of Housing Related Support contracts.	(0.045)			
Transport	<p>The Council must meet unprecedented and complex challenges with increasing customer expectations to provide a modern, fully maintained, safe, responsive, harmonised and fair parking service. A separate and detailed consultation is being undertaken to inform detailed proposals to potential changes to car parking tariffs in the borough.</p> <p>This initiative seeks efficiency savings and income opportunities in the delivery of supported local bus services. Engagement with residents, bus users, bus operators and other stakeholders will be undertaken before final budget adjustments are made.</p> <p>The Council has reviewed the flexible transport Flexi-Link service and changes have been made in the way it is commissioned and delivered. This has enabled the service to be improved and deliver the efficiencies</p>	(0.469)	(0.955)		

	planned. There is no proposal to reduce this service. In addition, savings will be delivered through a combination of increased income through advertising and reduced costs in the contract with the Council's company Transport Service Solutions Ltd, which will not impact on the level of service provided to residents.				
	<b>Greener – Total Savings</b>	<b>(0.664)</b>	<b>(0.991)</b>	<b>(0.048)</b>	<b>(0.046)</b>

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the investments and savings under Green?** *Please tick one box only*

- ☐ Strongly agree  
☐ Tend to agree  
☐ Neither agree nor disagree  
☐ Tend to disagree  
☐ Strongly disagree  
☐ Don't know

**Do you have any comments to make on the investments and savings under Green?** *Please write in below*



## 5. Managing the Council's Financial Affairs

The way council services are funded has been subject to review by central government for several years. The Government was expected to publish a 4-year spending review in 2019, together with proposals for a new approach to social care funding. Instead, a one-year spending settlement was announced, and we expect to learn what that means for Cheshire East Council before Christmas.

The council aims to provide sustainable services, meaning they can be maintained over time without relying on funding sources that may be only temporary. We await information on sustainable funding beyond 2022.

Uncertainty over government settlements not only impacts on grants but also affects Council Tax and Business Rates income, which makes up about 95% of the council's net funding. The council has limited reserves to manage this level of uncertainty so must prepare for a position that can be managed locally and complies with the requirement to set a balanced budget.

If government announcements during the consultation period allow the level of savings to be reduced, then this will be considered alongside all the other feedback received. If it is possible to reduce the level of savings required, it will be important for the council to understand the thoughts of local people, partners, businesses, staff and Councillors through this consultation

But if funding remains in line with the forecasts in this consultation document, the level of savings will be required in full and any proposals to make changes will need to be balanced by alternative savings or compensating income. If the announcement leaves us in a worse position, it is likely that we will need to make savings to the services we really want to protect.

As part of managing the Council's finances in a responsible way the Council reviews the technical elements of the budget to ensure funding is provided to front line services. This means understanding the implications of investment and borrowing as well as recognising variations in the tax base and contribution from local businesses. This element of budget management also recognises the impact of proposals on the Council's reserves.

Central Budgets and Funding Activity	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m
<p>To ensure openness and transparency the Council identifies the use of reserves and other impacts of the Council's balance sheet and how this affects the overall requirement to raise Council Tax to fund local services in a sustainable way.</p> <p>Over the period 2021 to 2025 the Council will add an appropriate amount to general reserves (c.£2m) to reflect the increasing size of the budget and the associated risks from managing demand led services. However, at the same time, built up reserves for Capital Spending and the Collection Fund will be utilised to manage the impact of COVID-19 and ongoing costs of borrowing to fund infrastructure costs (£5m).</p> <p>Costs of Capital Financing will still increase significantly over the medium term though (costing £23m over 4yrs).</p> <p>Any costs of redundancy will also be covered by Central Budgets.</p> <p>The previous strategy for year-on-year increases to contributions to the pensions fund has created a more sustainable position and contributions do not need to continue increasing which will save money over the MTFS compared to the previous strategy (saving £20m over 4yrs).</p> <p>Council Tax provides the most significant funding source for local services and cumulative increase over the MTFS will be significant (providing £47m over four years).</p> <p>It also expected that government grants will reduce from 2022/23 which will reduce income by a cumulative c.£10m over the three years.</p> <p>If government settlements are better than forecast the benefits will be recognised within the Council's funding of local priorities and not reflected in Central Budgets.</p>				
Savings and Income	-12.973	-9.840	-8.067	-10.440
Investments and Costs	8.284	6.655	3.951	4.213
Net Central Budget Items	-4.689	-3.185	-4.116	-6.227

**Generally speaking, would you prefer next year's budget shortfall to be made up through money saving proposals, through an increase in council tax, or through increased prices for services?**

**I would prefer next year's budget shortfall to be made up...** *Please tick one box only*

- ☐ ...through further money saving proposals
- ☐ ...through higher increases in Council Tax
- ☐ ...through increased prices for services

**Do you have any final comments to make about this budget consultation?** *Please write in below*

## About you

It would help us to check that we are providing services fairly if you would answer the questions below. Information you give will be used to see if there are any differences in views for different groups of people, and to check if services are being delivered in a fair and accessible way. You do not need to answer any of the following questions if you do not wish to.

**Which of the following best describes how you are you responding to this consultation:** *Please tick one box only*

- ☐ On behalf of a group, organisation or club
- ☐ On behalf of a local business
- ☐ As an individual (e.g. local resident)
- ☐ As an elected Cheshire East Ward Councillor, or Town/Parish Councillor
- ☐ Other (please write in):

**If you wish to, please give the name of the group, organisation, club or business you are responding on behalf of:** *Please write in below*

**What is your home postcode?** We ask this so we can be sure we have obtained a range of views from across the borough *Please write in below*

**What is your gender identity?** *Please tick one box only*

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe (please write in the box below):

**What age group do you belong to?** *Please tick one box only*

- ☐ 16-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ 65-74
- ☐ 75-84
- ☐ 85 and over
- ☐ Prefer not to say

**Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?** This includes problems related to old age. *Please tick one box only*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

**What is your ethnic origin?** *Please tick one box only*

- ☐ White British / English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / Irish
- ☐ Any other White background
- ☐ Mixed: White and Black Caribbean / African / Asian
- ☐ Asian / Asian British
- ☐ Black African / Caribbean / Black British
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe (please write in the box below):

**Which of the following best describes your religious belief / faith?** *Please tick one box only*

- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Christian
- ☐ Hindu
- ☐ Jewish
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ Sikh
- ☐ None
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe (please write in the box below):

**Do you look after, or give any help or support to, anyone because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age?** *Please tick one box only*

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, 9 hours a week or less
- ☐ Yes, 10 to 19 hours a week
- ☐ Yes, 20 to 34 hours a week
- ☐ Yes, 35 to 49 hours a week
- ☐ Yes, 50 or more hours a week

**Survey finishes.**

This page is intentionally left blank



# Our Vision **An open, fairer, greener Cheshire East**

## Open

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

## Fair

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

## Green

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

## Our Priorities

### An open and enabling organisation

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

### A council which empowers and cares about people

- Reduce health inequalities across the borough
- Reduce the reliance on long-term care by improving services closer to home and providing more extra care facilities, including dementia services
- A commitment to protect the most vulnerable people in our communities
- Safeguard our children from abuse, neglect and exploitation
- All children to have the best start in life with ongoing opportunities to maximise their potential
- Increase the life opportunities for young adults and adults with additional needs
- Be the best corporate parents and improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people
- A collaborative way of working with partners to support communities to achieve their full potential

### A thriving and sustainable place

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

## Our Values



This page is intentionally left blank

\*Important Note: Proposals marked **RED** / **AMBER** have been identified as those only being considered for consultation and any subsequent implementation if the Local Government Funding Settlement does not sufficiently increase the funding to Cheshire East Council. **RED** items would be removed first where possible.

	Note		Change from Previous Years Budget			
Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes			2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m
<b>Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of Council decision making</b>						
Local Election Costs			0.150			
			<b>0.150</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<b>Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation</b>						
Census 2021			-0.020			
			<b>-0.020</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<b>Support and sustain a financial future for the Council, through service development, improvement and transformation</b>						
Pay inflationary increase			4.591	3.825	3.907	3.998
Housing Benefit – Supported Accommodation			1.300			
Core Financial System			0.719	-0.459		
Mitigation of reduction in the Dedicated Schools Grant (Corporate Services)			0.117	0.042	0.033	0.027
B4B unachievable savings - HR & TSC Budget Shortfall - ADD TO CORE FINANCIAL SYSTEM			0.045			
Mitigation of the year-on-year reduction in the Dedicated Schools Grant (ICT) - ADD TO DSG			0.033	0.065	0.089	0.109
Direct Payments	A	*	-1.000			
Continuing Healthcare Reviews	A	*	-1.000	-1.000		
Prevention and Early Help Service – Reduction of frontline workers in Prevention	R	*	-0.265	-0.697		
Reduce the numbers of Business Support Staff in line with the repurposing of Children & Family Centres	R	*	-0.200			
Reduce Base budget assigned to Community Grants	A	*	-0.150			
Efficiency savings and Restructures within Corporate Services	A	*	-0.300	-0.250		
Review Terms and Conditions	A	*	-0.300	-0.100	-0.100	
Shared services review	A	*			-0.200	
Improved Debt Recovery and correcting budgeted court costs income targets to reflect actual levels	A	*	-0.290	0.225	0.050	0.050
Capital Programme Review			-1.000	1.000		
Member allowances and reduced mileage			-0.030			
Reduced travel and supplies and services for Early Help services			-0.026			
Reduce pensions budget to match latest forecasts			-0.140			
Review of corporate subscriptions			-0.035	-0.015		
Flexible Resourcing for Service Delivery for Regulatory Services			-0.050			
Urban Grass Cutting	A	*	-0.100			
Improving customer experience – Highways correspondence	A	*	-0.100			
Transfer of Congleton Visitor Information Centre			0.001	-0.020	-0.010	-0.020
Regulatory Services and Environmental Health ICT procurement				-0.009		
CCTV migration to wireless networks				-0.085		
Constellation Partnership			-0.040			
			<b>1.780</b>	<b>2.523</b>	<b>3.769</b>	<b>4.164</b>
<b>Maximise commercial opportunities for the Council</b>						
Orbitas income and management fee			0.032	0.021		
Public Rights of Way Resources (Revenue implications of Capital)			0.010			
Everybody Sport and Recreation Annual Management Fee	A	*	-0.043	-0.042	-0.041	-0.040
Commercial Workstream	A	*	-0.100			
Commercialisation of the Highway Service Contract	A	*	-0.080			
Brighter Futures Together Programme Customer Experience	A	*	-0.120	-0.133	-0.081	
Contract savings in the Peoples Directorate			-0.500			
Client Income in the Peoples Directorate			-0.100			
Establish an Education Psychologist traded service to enable a proactive early support and intervention offer				-0.025	-0.075	
Establish a traded service for non statutory elements of Attendance Service				-0.035	-0.035	
Review of governance of ASDVs and seeking increased opportunities for savings/ commercial opportunities			-0.315	-0.225	-0.100	
Increase income from hire of Children’s Centres			-0.010			
Ansa income generation and efficiencies - Food Waste Recycling			-0.259			
Strategic Leisure Review			0.000	-0.250		
			<b>-1.485</b>	<b>-0.689</b>	<b>-0.332</b>	<b>-0.040</b>
<b>Support and develop our workforce to be confident, motivated, innovative, resilient and empowered</b>						
Infrastructure Investment Programme (Revenue implications of Capital)			0.310	0.410	0.520	
Unified Communications (Revenue implications of Capital)			0.251	0.283	0.296	
People Directorate - ICT Procurements 2020-24 (Revenue implications of Capital)			0.060	0.063	0.066	0.019
Place Directorate - ICT Procurements 2020-24 (Revenue implications of Capital)			0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011
Corporate Directorate - ICT Procurements 2020-24 (Revenue implications of Capital)			0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002
Productivity and Efficiency in Adult Social Care	A	*		-1.000		
Estates Transformation - Office Accommodation			-0.044	-0.100	-0.460	
Prevention and Early Help Service – Locality working and changes to the management structure of the Family Service	R	*		-0.140		
Neighbourhood Estate Review			-0.090	-0.260		
Increased Useage of Digital Technology			-0.125			
To review of use of School Improvement Grant to provide capacity to support maintained schools			-0.060			
Reduce central training budget			-0.080			
			<b>0.235</b>	<b>-0.731</b>	<b>0.435</b>	<b>0.032</b>
<b>Open</b>			<b>0.660</b>	<b>1.103</b>	<b>3.872</b>	<b>4.156</b>

Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes			2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m
<b>Reduce health inequalities across the Borough</b>						
Pathfinder Cheshire East - Cheshire Community Action	A	*	-0.100			
Mental Health Floating Support	A	*	-0.120			
			<b>-0.220</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<b>Reduce the reliance on long term care by improving services closer to home and more extra care facilities, including those with dementia</b>						
Investment in Adult Social Care			4.000	4.000	4.000	4.000
Growth for Care Fees in Adult Social Care			2.441			
Extra Care Housing – Catering / Restaurant Provision			0.300			
Investment in Advocacy Service			0.112			
Direction of travel for the Communities Team to focus more on the Intervention and Prevention Agenda to make cost savings, growth and future cost avoidance	A	*	-0.750	-0.750		
Fund the Cygnet programme for cared for children from pupil premium	A	*	-0.015			
Day Opportunities, Redesign, Strategy and Savings	A	*	-0.030	-0.070	-0.150	
Mental Health Services Review	A	*	-1.000			
Review agreements linked to intermediate care beds	A	*	-0.268			
Reduced capacity in Family Information Service			-0.050			
Electronic Call Monitoring Reclamation			-0.245	-0.030		
Cheshire Care Record			-0.138			
Review the use of the Cheshire East Lifelong Learning Service grant to reduce the requirement of Council funding			-0.110			
To reduce costs of School Liaison and Governance service with less use of external support			-0.010			
			<b>4.237</b>	<b>3.150</b>	<b>3.850</b>	<b>4.000</b>
<b>Safeguarding our children from abuse, neglect and exploitation</b>						
Increase capacity in SEND service to meet continuing demands on the service			0.100			
Move to Integrated Early Help Locality Service model	R	*	-0.167			
Learning Disabilities Future Service Development and Review	A	*	-1.000	-1.000	-1.000	
Reduced travel and supplies and services for Early Help services			-0.032			
Reduction in cost of external placements for cared for children			-0.435	-1.571	-2.007	
			<b>-1.534</b>	<b>-2.571</b>	<b>-3.007</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<b>Increase the life opportunities for young adults and adults with additional needs</b>						
Development and Partnerships Service	A	*			-0.300	
			<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>-0.300</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<b>Be the best Corporate Parents and improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people</b>						
Investment in Cared for Children and Care Leavers			1.300	1.300	1.300	
			<b>1.300</b>	<b>1.300</b>	<b>1.300</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<b>A collaborative way of working with partners and families to support children to achieve their full potential</b>						
Reduction in contribution to Cheshire Youth Justice Service			-0.045			
			<b>-0.045</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<b>Fairer</b>			<b>3.738</b>	<b>1.879</b>	<b>1.843</b>	<b>4.000</b>
<b>A great place for people to live, work and visit</b>						
Development of a Transit Site (Revenue implications of Capital)			0.027			
Tatton Park			0.000	-0.006	-0.028	-0.046
Asset / Service Transfer			-0.150	-0.030	-0.020	
			<b>-0.123</b>	<b>-0.036</b>	<b>-0.048</b>	<b>-0.046</b>
<b>Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods</b>						
Fixed Penalty Income target			0.118			
Housing Services			-0.045			
			<b>0.073</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<b>To reduce the impact on our environment</b>						
Waste Contract Inflation and Tonnage Growth			0.810	0.644	0.657	0.613
Environment Strategy and Carbon Neutrality	A	*		0.020	-0.081	
Tree Risk Management				0.500		
Carbon Reduction - Replacement of existing illuminated signs and bollards with LED units	A	*		0.030	-0.004	-0.031
			<b>0.810</b>	<b>1.194</b>	<b>0.572</b>	<b>0.582</b>
<b>A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel</b>						
Parking Strategy (Revenue implications of Capital) - Subject to separate consultation	A	*	-0.327	-0.955		
Local Supported Buses - Subject to separate consultation	A	*	-0.117			
Community Transport			-0.025			
			<b>-0.469</b>	<b>-0.955</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<b>Greener</b>			<b>0.292</b>	<b>0.203</b>	<b>0.524</b>	<b>0.536</b>
<b>Total Proposed Budget Change</b>			<b>4.689</b>	<b>3.185</b>	<b>6.239</b>	<b>8.692</b>

Detailed List of Proposed Budget Changes			2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
			£m	£m	£m	£m
Increased Council Tax Base - % increase planned at 1.99%			-4.567	-4.694	-4.835	-4.979
Increase Council Tax Base - New Homes			-1.838	-2.365	-2.412	-2.461
Central Pension adjustment based on Actuary results			-4.567	-1.900	1.500	
Use of Earmarked Reserve - Collection Fund deficit			-2.000			2.000
Use of (-) / Contribution to (+) Earmarked Reserves - General			2.237	-0.881	-0.820	
Deficit on Collection Fund due to COVID-19			2.147			-2.000
Minimum Revenue Provision			2.000	3.977	1.024	1.000
Capital Receipts Income removed from base budget			1.000			
Reduced commercial growth in Business Rates Retention Scheme			0.700			
Bad Debt Provision			0.200			
Contribution to General Reserves				1.000		-1.000
Change to New Homes Bonus funding estimate				1.679	1.427	1.213
<b>Central Budget Items</b>			<b>-4.689</b>	<b>-3.185</b>	<b>-4.116</b>	<b>-6.227</b>
<b>Funding Deficit</b>			<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>2.123</b>	<b>2.465</b>
<b>Funding Deficit - Cumulative Position</b>			<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>2.123</b>	<b>4.589</b>
*Important Note: Proposals marked <b>RED</b> / <b>AMBER</b> have been identified as those only being considered for consultation and any subsequent implementation if the Local Government Funding Settlement does not sufficiently increase the funding to Cheshire East Council. <b>RED</b> items would be removed first where possible.						

This page is intentionally left blank