

Electoral Review Sub-Committee

Agenda

Date: Monday, 30th October, 2023
Time: 9.30 am
Venue: Committee Suite 1, 2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road,
Sandbach CW11 1HZ

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

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

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

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

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

3. **Minutes of Previous meeting** (Pages 3 - 8)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16th August 2023.

4. **Public Speaking / Open Session**

In accordance with paragraph 2.24 of the Committee Procedure Rules and the Appendix on Public Speaking, as set out in the Constitution, a total period of 15 minutes is allocated for members of the public to put questions to the Sub-Committee on any matter relating to this agenda. Each member of the public will be allowed up to two minutes to speak; the Chair will have discretion to vary this where he/she considers it appropriate.

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

Contact: Paul Mountford, Democratic Services
Tel: 01270 686472
E-Mail: paul.mountford@cheshireeast.gov.uk

5. **Cheshire East Electoral Review** (Pages 9 - 208)

To consider the Council's draft council size submission and make recommendations to the Corporate Policy Committee. To consider and approve the final version of the electorate forecasting methodology report.

THERE ARE NO PART 2 ITEMS

Membership: Councillors J Bratherton, C Browne (Vice-Chair), J Clowes, S Corcoran (Chair), C O'Leary, J Pearson, F Wilson and R Kain (Associate Non Voting Member)

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Electoral Review Sub-Committee**
held on Wednesday, 16th August, 2023 in Room R1 & R2 - Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach, CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillors J Bratherton, C Browne, J Clowes, S Corcoran, S Edgar (for Cllr Pearson), C O'Leary and F Wilson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance
Nick Billington, Economic Research and Intelligence Officer
Peter Jones, Senior Lawyer
Laura Bateman, Senior Project Officer
Paul Mountford, Democratic Services

Apologies

Councillor J Pearson

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**RESOLVED**

That Councillor S Corcoran be appointed Chair.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**RESOLVED**

That Councillor C Browne be appointed Vice-Chair.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4 PUBLIC SPEAKING / OPEN SESSION

There were no public speakers.

5 CHESHIRE EAST ELECTORAL REVIEW

The Sub-Committee considered a report on the background to, and proposed work associated with, the Boundary Commission for England review of Cheshire East Council's electoral arrangements.

The report explored what would be required of the Council in response to the review, and what representations the Council might wish to make.

The Sub-Committee was advised that the Boundary Commission's review would focus on:

- How many councillors the Council should have.
- How many Council wards there should be, where their boundaries should be, and what the wards should be called.
- How many councillors should represent each ward.

The Commission was undertaking the review because the Council now met both of its intervention criteria as detailed in the report.

The purpose of the electoral review was to ensure that:

- The Council's wards were in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- New wards would leave each councillor representing roughly the same number of voters as other councillors elsewhere in the authority.
- New wards, as far as possible, would reflect community interests and identities, with identifiable boundaries.
- New wards promoted effective and convenient local government.

The Sub-Committee's attention was drawn to the timetable for, and stages of, the Commission's review, as set out in the report to the Corporate Policy Committee on 11th July 2023.

Information would be sought from the Council, including electoral forecasts and other data and documents. A model had therefore been prepared which had generated forecasts of future electorate numbers up to the end of 2029, for various geographical tiers. Officers had also prepared a detailed technical report that explained the forecasting methodology, and were preparing the other data and documents that the Commission required.

The Commission would decide how many councillors should be elected to the Council in the future. This decision would be based on information received from the Council (the Council-size submission), and any other representations made. The Commission's view on Council size would be informed by:

- The governance arrangements of the Council
- The Council's scrutiny functions
- The representational role of Councillors
- Future trends and plans for the Council

- The Borough's geography, community characteristics, demographic pressures and any other relevant constraints, challenges, issues or changes

In addition to the Council size submission, which the Commission had asked to be made in draft by 13 November 2023, the Council was also asked to submit proposed warding patterns.

There would be a period of public consultation on warding patterns (23rd January to 1st April 2024), following which draft recommendations would be made upon the Council's electoral arrangements. Consultation on the draft recommendations would follow. The review process could take 12-18 months to conclude. The Commission's recommendations would then be published and would be subject to approval by Parliament. The new arrangements for Cheshire East would then take effect in May 2027.

The Commission had provided some examples of what might be described as "best practice" submissions. The Commission had also identified CIPFA "nearest neighbours" as reference points for the Council's Council-size submission. Details were appended to the report.

The officers recommended that the best examples of these submissions be used as a guide for the approach to be taken by Cheshire East Council. With regard to Council-size, it was proposed that officers adopt a similar approach to that of Central Bedfordshire. With regard to warding arrangements, it was proposed that officers follow the example of Nuneaton and Bedworth.

It was not anticipated that the Council would undertake any consultation work on the review, except internally with its own Members.

The Sub-Committee had a preliminary discussion on the number of elected members that the Council should have in the future. Members acknowledged the need to keep an open mind on the matter and to consider all of the relevant evidence before reaching a conclusion. However, it was noted that there was significant population growth projected for Cheshire East. Therefore, members felt that the number of councillors should perhaps either remain the same or increase.

In response to questions by members in relation to council size, officers commented that:

- Housing forecasts were based on expected future housing developments and not local plan targets. This was the most realistic forecast of future housing completions available.
- The electoral register was one of the documents required by the Boundary Commission as part of the Council's submission and officers were satisfied as to its accuracy. However, a caveat could be included in the Council's submission that there were pockets of communities in particular places that were not accurately represented in terms of the electoral register.

Officers advised that they would be seeking the Sub-Committee's agreement under the next item to conduct a survey of all members regarding their workload. The aim would be to use the survey results to provide evidence as part of the Council's submission to the Boundary Commission. The Sub-Committee agreed that a survey would be helpful but that the purpose and importance of the survey should be made clear to members.

With regard to future warding arrangements, members felt that wards should perhaps comprise one or two ward members but not three. However, it was important that wards were based on discrete communities and should not be enlarged beyond those communities simply to add additional members.

There was some concern expressed over the use of roads to define ward boundaries, particularly in urban areas, as this did not necessarily reflect local communities and often led to practical difficulties with local residents. Members asked if this could be taken into account when considering future ward boundaries. Officers understood the point but reminded members that the Council had been encouraged to use clearly identifiable physical features such as roads to delineate boundaries during the community governance review.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That the Sub-Committee

1. notes the contents of the report;
2. endorses the proposed actions set out within the report and instructs the officer Project Board to progress them;
3. endorses the methodology adopted for the production of electoral forecasts;
4. agrees that the officer Project Board should adopt an approach to the production of a draft Council size submission, and warding arrangements submission, which is informed by the approaches adopted in the best examples of comparator submissions supplied by the Commission to the Council, and in particular agrees that:
 - a. with regard to Council size, officers should adopt a similar approach to that of Central Bedfordshire, in respect of the Cheshire East submission, albeit using the Commission's proforma for this purpose; and
 - b. with regard to warding arrangements, officers should adopt a similar approach to that of Nuneaton and Bedworth, in respect of the Cheshire East submission;

5. agrees that the officer Project Board should develop a work programme which will provide for the submission to the Commission of electoral forecasts, the other data and documents listed in the Commission's Information Request Pack, draft Council size submission, and warding arrangements submission; and
6. agrees that suitable dates for future meetings of the Sub-Committee should be identified, these to take place during the summer and autumn of this year, but acknowledging the need for flexibility to be adopted, so as to allow informal meetings of the Sub-Committee to take place from time to time, and for meeting dates to be added or removed from the list of those identified.

Members then discussed the dates for future meetings up to mid-November and agreed on the following:

Friday, 22nd September 2023 at 3.30 pm (hybrid meeting) – informal meeting to provide an update for members.

Friday, 6th October 2023 at 12 noon – to consider the draft council size submission.

Wednesday, 15th or Thursday, 16th November 2023 (am or pm) – to recommend the final draft council size submission to the Corporate Policy Committee.

It was also noted that a special meeting of the Corporate Policy Committee may need to be held on 30th or 31st October to approve the draft council size submission to the Boundary Commission.

[Note: since the Sub-Committee's meeting, officers had held further discussions with the Boundary Commission and the Commission had agreed that the draft submission may be delivered to them on the day of publication of the report to the scheduled Corporate Policy Committee meeting on 22nd November. This obviated the need for a special meeting of the Committee.]

6 CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL ELECTORAL REVIEW PROJECT MANAGEMENT PRODUCTS

The Sub-Committee considered a report which provided details of the project management arrangements, process and timeline that were proposed in order for the Council to fulfil its responsibility as 'consultee' in the electoral review and deliver appropriate submissions to the Commission in relation to council size and warding arrangements within the required timescales.

Following discussion under the previous item, members were asked to agree that officers conduct a survey of all members in relation to their workloads.

There was a brief discussion about whether it would be appropriate to issue a press release following the meeting. It was agreed that the matter would be raised with the Communications Team.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That the Sub-Committee

1. notes the following project management products which will guide the work of the officer Project Board:
 - a. the Governance Arrangements (Appendix A)
 - b. The Draft Product Initiation Document (Appendix B)
 - c. the Product Breakdown Structure (Appendix C)
 - d. the work in progress Project Plan (Appendix D)
2. endorses the High-Level Timeline (Appendix E); and
3. authorises the Head of Democratic Services and Governance to make such adjustments to the Project Plan as he considers necessary as the review progresses; and
4. agrees that a survey of all members be undertaken to establish workloads, and authorises the Head of Democratic Services and Governance, following consultation with Group Leaders, to conduct the survey.

7 WORK PROGRAMME

The Sub-Committee considered its work programme which covered the period of the electoral review.

The work programme would be updated to reflect the decisions taken at the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 11.37 am

Councillor S Corcoran (Chair)

Electoral Review Sub-Committee**30 October 2023****Cheshire East Electoral Review****Report of: David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance****Report Reference No: ER/7/23-24****All Cheshire East Council wards are affected****Purpose of Report**

1. To invite the Sub-Committee to consider and approve the Council's draft council size submission for recommendation to the Corporate Policy Committee, subject to any further content which may be brought to the Sub-Committee at its meeting on 16th November.
2. To recommend the final version of the electorate forecasting methodology report for approval.
3. In responding to the review, the Council will be fulfilling its Corporate Plan objective, to be "open" by providing strong community leadership and by working transparently with residents, businesses and partners, to deliver the Council's ambitions within the Borough.

Executive Summary

4. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (the Commission) is an independent body set up by Parliament. Its main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England. The Commission is undertaking a review of the Council's electoral arrangements. This Council is being asked to respond to the review as a consultee. The Commission will ultimately determine the outcome of the review, and its recommendations will be laid before Parliament for approval.
5. The review is in two stages. The first stage addresses the size of the Council: the number of councillors that Cheshire East Council should have in future. The second stage addresses the warding arrangements: the

number of wards, their boundaries and the number of councillors for each ward.

6. This report deals with the first stage of the review. It presents, for the Sub-Committee's consideration and approval, the Council's draft council size submission.
7. The report also recommends for approval by the Sub-Committee the final version of the electorate forecasting methodology main report and its sister document, Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATION

The Sub-Committee is recommended:

1. to approve the draft council size submission for recommendation to the Corporate Policy Committee on 30th November 2023, subject to any further content which may be brought to the Sub-Committee at its meeting on 16th November; and
2. to approve the final version of the electorate forecasting methodology main report and its sister document, Appendix 1.

Background

8. The Sub-Committee was appointed by the Corporate Policy Committee at its meeting on 11 July 2023 'to make recommendations to the Corporate Policy Committee in respect of all matters relating to the Cheshire East Council Electoral Review'.
9. The Sub-Committee, at its meeting on 16th August 2023, considered a report on the background to, and proposed work associated with, the Boundary Commission for England's review of Cheshire East Council's electoral arrangements.
10. The Sub-Committee was advised that the Boundary Commission's review would focus on:
 - How many councillors the Council should have.
 - How many Council wards there should be, where their boundaries should be, and what the wards should be called.
 - How many councillors should represent each ward.
11. The Commission would decide how many councillors should be elected to the Council in the future. This decision would be based on information received from the Council (the Council-size submission), and any other

representations made. The Commission's view on Council size would be informed by:

- The governance arrangements of the Council
- The Council's scrutiny functions
- The representational role of Councillors
- Future trends and plans for the Council
- The Borough's geography, community characteristics, demographic pressures and any other relevant constraints, challenges, issues or changes

12. Information would be sought from the Council, including electoral forecasts and other data and documents. A model had therefore been prepared which had generated forecasts of future electorate numbers up to the end of 2029, for various geographical tiers. Officers had also prepared a detailed technical report that explained the forecasting methodology, and were preparing the other data and documents that the Commission required.
13. The Commission had provided some examples of what might be described as "best practice" submissions. The Commission had also identified CIPFA "nearest neighbours" as reference points for the Council's Council-size submission.
14. The Sub-Committee, at its meeting on 16th August 2023, endorsed the methodology adopted for the production of electoral forecasts. It also agreed that the officers should adopt an approach to the production of a draft council size submission, and warding arrangements submission, which is informed by the approaches adopted in best examples of comparator submissions supplied by the Commission to the Council. With regard to council size, officers were asked to adopt a similar approach to that of Central Bedfordshire.
15. The Sub-Committee also asked officers to conduct a survey of all members regarding their workload. The aim would be to use the survey results to provide evidence as part of the Council's submission to the Boundary Commission.
16. At a subsequent informal meeting of the Sub-Committee on 22nd September 2023, members considered and endorsed a report on the electoral forecast methodology and results. The final version of the electorate forecasting methodology main report, and its sister document Appendix 1, are attached for the Sub-Committee's formal approval.

17. At the informal meeting on 22nd September 2023, members also considered and endorsed a first draft of the council size submission. Officers undertook to ensure that each subsequent draft of the submission would show clearly, by the use of tracked changes, any changes agreed by members to the previous draft.
18. A revised draft council size submission is attached to this report for the Sub-Committee's consideration. There are two versions of the submission attached: a clean copy for ease of reference and a tracked change version, showing those sections of the submission that have been added, deleted or changed since the Sub-Committee's informal meeting on 22nd September.
19. The Corporate Policy Committee will be recommended to approve the Council's draft council size submission at its meeting on 30th November 2023. The Sub-Committee has another meeting on 16th November which will provide a further opportunity to agree any further changes to the submission before it is presented to the Committee. The Boundary Commission has asked for earlier sight of the draft submission and has agreed that the Council could provide the draft submission by 22nd November, the date of publication of the agenda for the Corporate Policy Committee. Any feedback from the Commission prior to the Corporate Policy Committee's meeting will be considered by the Sub-Committee, and any further comments by the Sub-Committee on the feedback will be reported to the Committee.
20. The Corporate Policy Committee will also be recommended to authorise the Electoral Review Sub-Committee:
 - a. to make any further changes to the council size submission following the Committee's meeting, arising from any amendments agreed by the Committee and/or any feedback received from the Boundary Commission following the Committee's meeting; and
 - b. to recommend the final council size submission to full Council for approval. Council would be asked to authorise the Sub-Committee to make any final changes to the submission which may arise following approval by Council, prior to submission to the Boundary Commission by its deadline of 18th December.

Consultation and Engagement

21. It is not anticipated that the Council will undertake any consultation work on the review, except internally, with its own Members. The review is being led by the Commission, not the Council, and the Commission has a clearly identified programme of consultation which it is understood will

include the list of stakeholders that the Commission has requested from the Council.

Reasons for Recommendations

22. The recommendation of this report seeks to ensure that the Council responds to the Boundary Commission's review of the Council's electoral arrangements in a timely way in accordance with the timetable laid down by the Commission.
23. In responding to the review, the Council will be fulfilling its Corporate Plan objective of being "open" by providing strong community leadership and by working transparently with residents, businesses and partners, to deliver the Council's ambitions within the Borough.

Other Options Considered

- 24 The Council could choose not to engage with the Commission's review, but this would be an unhelpful approach and would deprive the Council of the important opportunity to make submissions, and to influence its electoral arrangements which will apply from 2027.
- 25 *Impact assessment:*

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing (ie do not engage with the review)	The Council would be deprived of the important opportunity to make representations	The review would not secure the benefit of the Council's input as the key respondent. The resulting electoral review order, which will be implemented in 2027 would not be informed by the Council's views.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 26 The main piece of legislation governing the review is the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). This consolidates and amends provisions previously contained in the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 1992 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

- 27 Section 56 of the 2009 Act requires that the Commission carry out reviews ‘from time to time’, of every principal local authority in England and make recommendations about electoral arrangements (but not their external boundaries) (Period Electoral Reviews or PERs). In addition, the Commission can at any time review the arrangements for all or any parts of a principal local authority’s area if it appears to the Commission to be desirable.
- 28 Subsections 56(1) and (4) require the Commission to recommend whether a change should be made to the electoral arrangements for that area. Electoral arrangements include the total number of councillors to be elected to the council (known as ‘council size’); the number and boundaries of wards/divisions; the number of councillors to be elected for each ward/division; and the name of any ward/division.
- 29 In making its recommendations, Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act requires the Commission to have regard to—
- (a) the need to secure that the ratio of the number of local government electors to the number of members of the district council to be elected is, as nearly as possible, the same in every electoral area of the council,
 - (b) the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities and in particular—
 - (i) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable, and
 - (ii) the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any local ties,
 - (c) the need to secure effective and convenient local government,

Further information on the legal implications of the review can be found in the Commission’s Technical Guidance:

<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-03/technical-guidance-2021.pdf>

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 30 There will be no impact on the council’s Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The proposal will be funded from within existing Democratic Services budgets, aided by internal officer resource contributions from various other departments, and it is not anticipated that any external spend will be required in order for the Council to respond to the review.

Policy

- 31 The key policy implication of this report is that, in responding to the review, the Council will be meeting one of its most fundamentally important objectives: providing strong community leadership and by working transparently with residents, businesses and partners, to deliver the Council's ambitions within the Borough. In doing so, the Council will be fulfilling the objective of empowering and caring about people within the Borough. The electoral representation of the Council is of key importance in this regard.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 32 Given that this report is a response to the Commission's review of the Council's electoral arrangements, and that it simply recommends the means by which the Sub-Committee will make recommendations upon Council size, there would appear to be no equality, diversity and inclusion implications.
- 33 However, in developing its recommendations, the Sub-Committee will be mindful of these important considerations. Undoubtedly, the Commission will be equally mindful of these matters when making its final recommendations on the Council's electoral arrangements.

Human Resources

- 34 There are no direct human resources implications.

Risk Management

- 35 There are no direct risk management implications arising from this report, other than the matters referred to within it. However, the risks associated with any decision of the Council not to engage with the review are set out above.

Rural Communities

- 36 There are no direct implications arising from the recommendations of this report in respect of rural communities, however, there will be such implications as the work in response to the review gets underway. These will be addressed in future reports.

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

- 37 There are no such direct implications.

Public Health

- 38 No direct public health implications arise from the recommendations of this report.

Climate Change

- 39 There are no direct climate change implications, which arise from the recommendations of this report.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Contact Officer: Brian Reed Brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Background Papers:	Background Papers: Report to Corporate Policy Committee, 11 July 2023 Local Government Boundary Commission for England website
Appendices	Electorate forecasting methodology main report and Appendix. Draft council size submission (clean copy and tracked change copy)

Cheshire East Council

Council Size Submission: Template

[Cheshire East Council]

Contents

How to Make a Submission.....2

About You3

Reason for Review (Request Reviews Only)3

The Context for your proposal.....3

Local Authority Profile7

Council Size12

Other Issues.....27

Summary.....27

Appendix 1: Cheshire East main settlements 31

Appendix 2: Rural and urban areas of Cheshire East 32

Appendix 3: Deprivation in Cheshire East..... 33

Appendix 4: Committee names, types, sizes and frequency of meetings 34

Appendix 5: Council sizes and ratios for Cheshire East and similar local authorities 35

Appendix 6: Workload per councillor, by council size 36

Appendix 7: Member Survey results 38

How to Make a Submission

It is recommended that submissions on future governance arrangements and council size follow the guidance provided and use the format below as a template. Submissions should be treated as an opportunity to focus on the future needs of the council and not simply describe the current arrangements. **Submissions should also demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been considered in drawing up the proposal and why you have discounted them.**

The template allows respondents to enter comments directly under each heading. It is not recommended that responses be unduly long; as a guide, it is anticipated that a 15 to 20-page document using this template should suffice. Individual section length may vary depending on the issues to be explained. Where internal documents are referred to URLs should be provided, rather than the document itself. It is also recommended that a table is included that highlights the key paragraphs for the Commission's attention.

'Good' submissions, i.e. those that are considered to be most robust and persuasive, combine the following *key success components* (as set out in the guidance that accompanies this template):

- Clarity on objectives
- A straightforward and evidence-led style
- An understanding of local place and communities
- An understanding of councillors' roles and responsibilities

Cheshire East Council notes on the colour coding and abbreviations used in this draft response:

- **Blue font** = draft text intended for inclusion in the submission to the Commission.
- **Yellow shading** = brief notes on contributions still awaited, other content still to be confirmed and any important notes regarding redrafting work.

About You

The respondent should use this space to provide the Commission with a little detail about who is making the submission, whether it is the full Council, Officers on behalf of the Council, a political party or group, a resident group, or an individual (*delete from final version*).

This submission is made on behalf of Cheshire East Council, following its approval by Full Council on 13 December 2023. [Wording of previous sentence based on assumption about future decision, so may need amending.]

Under the Council's Constitution, Full Council is responsible for "approving the Council's response to any issues or proposals in relation to local government boundaries including Electoral Wards, the conduct of elections and community governance functions".

On 11 July 2023, in order to inform the Council decision, the Council's Corporate Policy Committee appointed an Electoral Review Sub-Committee to make recommendations upon all matters relating to the Boundary Commission's Review. These recommendations were considered by the Corporate Policy Committee, prior to the Committee making recommendations to Council. On 30 November 2023, in order to ensure that the Council could comply with the Boundary Commission's deadlines for depositing the final Council size submission, the Committee delegated authority to the Sub-Committee to finalise the submission, taking into account any comments from the Commission, or any final amendments which the Committee might suggest. [Wording of previous sentence based on assumption about future decision, so may need amending.]

As the Council has a Committee system of decision-making governance, the Sub-Committee and Council committees are required to reflect the Council's overall political proportionalities.

Officers advised the Sub-Committee, Committee and Council throughout the Review process.

Reason for Review (Request Reviews Only)

Not applicable to Cheshire East Council.

The Context for your proposal

Your submission gives you the opportunity to examine how you wish to organise and run the council for the next 15 - 20 years. **The consideration of future governance arrangements and council size should be set in the wider local and national policy context.** The Commission expects you to challenge your current arrangements and determine the most appropriate arrangements going forward. In providing context for your submission below, please demonstrate that you have considered the following issues.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Q: When did your Council last change/reorganise its internal governance arrangements and what impact on effectiveness did that activity have?

The Council was created on 1 April 2009 following local government reorganisation in Cheshire. Initially it had a Leader and Cabinet system of decision-making governance. However, on 19 November 2020, the Council resolved to implement a Committee system model of governance (following consideration of this report: [Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Council, 19/11/2020 14:00 \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](#)). This governance change took effect in May 2021. This was a choice made by Council following a change of political control in May 2019 and a subsequent period of 18 months of careful consideration of the proposed change in governance. One of the aims behind the change in decision-making arrangements was to ensure political proportionality in the making of decisions which had previously been the responsibility of the majority Council political group.

The Council's political proportionality arrangements must comply with relevant legislation. The Council's "service committees", which decide those matters which were previously the responsibility of the Council's Cabinet, have a membership comprising members of the Council's three main political groups.

Much work went into the design of the new committee structure and the new committee responsibilities. As set out in the Design Principles which Council adopted:

- The new form of governance (Committee system) will be modern, open, transparent and easy to understand. It will include arrangements that enable people to easily find out about how decisions are made. Committee meetings will be held in public by cross party (politically proportionate) committees.
- The new arrangements are intended to ensure that decisions are made quickly, to meet the needs of the Council and local community.
- The number of committees and meetings will be kept to a minimum, and technology used to provide instant access to information and avoid unnecessary paperwork.
- There will be a process to deal with those rare instances where urgent decisions are needed. This process will be clear and, in most cases, open to the public.

Council decision-making and business planning arrangements are working effectively and are delivering services in line with the Council's policy framework as set out in the Council's Constitution. The key strategic document is the Council's Corporate Plan which covers the period 2021-2025. All Committee decision reports state how the decision supports achievement of the priorities of the Corporate Plan. Resources to support decisions are determined through the Council's budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Organisational performance against Corporate Plan priorities is reported to the Corporate Policy Committee on a quarterly basis. Each individual staff member has a personal development review, setting objectives which link into a Service Plan, Directorate Plan and the Corporate Plan. This ensures that everyone can

see the “golden thread” of how their work contributes to the overall success of the Council. The Council’s Corporate Plan is currently being refreshed and a revised plan is scheduled to be launched by 1 April 2024.

Whilst, following a resolution to do so, the Council could not choose to change its decision-making arrangements for a period of five years, the way in which its Committee system operates could be changed: for example, by making changes to the number of service committees and their functions/ responsibilities, or to the Council’s Constitution, so as to improve the Council’s Committee system arrangements.

The Council’s committee structure has already been reviewed, resulting in the removal of one sub-committee from the structure. A further review of the structure is taking place, taking into account the Council’s Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the Design Principles. Full Council has already considered the Council’s planning committee structure and a proposal to reduce the number of planning committees from three to two and a further report will be considered by Council in due course. This demonstrates that the existing arrangements are being assessed against the Design Principles agreed by Council, in order to ensure that they are effective.

It also demonstrates that the Council actively reviews its arrangements in order to ensure that they are generally fit for purpose.

Q: To what extent has transference of strategic and/or service functions impacted on the effectiveness of service delivery and the ability of the Council to focus on its remaining functions?

The management of the Council’s involvement in wholly owned companies, which are referred to in the Council’s Constitution as ‘ASDVs’ (Alternative Service Delivery Vehicles), is overseen by the Council’s Finance Sub-Committee, the responsibilities of which are set out in paragraph 2.6 of chapter 2, part 4 of the Constitution. A small number of Cheshire East Council services are shared with Cheshire West and Chester Council, for example ICT and transactional services such as payroll. Cheshire East Council must take decisions by a politically proportionate committee, or by an officer with delegated powers from the Council to do so.

These shared service arrangements are delivered in line with the responsibilities of the Shared Services Joint Committee, whose purpose is “to oversee the management of those services which are provided on a Cheshire wide basis on behalf of Cheshire West and Chester Council and Cheshire East Council to ensure effective delivery of such services and to provide strategic direction.” The Committee is administered on alternate years by each Council.

Q: Have any governance or capacity issues been raised by any Inspectorate or similar?

The Council received a report following a Joint Targeted Area Inspection in September 2022. Although this did not identify governance or capacity issues for the Council directly, it did find strategic weaknesses in the Local Safeguarding Childrens Partnership, a multi-agency

partnership of which the Council is a member. Over the past year the Partnership have been progressing an Improvement Plan to address the challenges identified.

A Public Interest Report on the impact of the council's culture and governance arrangements during 2014-2018 was published in January 2023. The issues identified during this period led to the Council transitioning its governance arrangements from the Leader and Cabinet system to the current Committee system. The Public Interest Report states that "it is clear that the Council has done a great deal to move on from this period in its relatively short lifetime".

Q: What influence will local and national policy trends likely have on the Council as an institution?

Policy trends, and any necessary changes in strategy, are managed in accordance with the Council's constitution and governance arrangements. Current policy challenges include the impact of the cancellation of the HS2 route from Birmingham to Manchester, the dissolution of Local Enterprise Partnerships, the development of Integrated Health and Social Care systems, and the Levelling up/ devolution agenda. Any influences of these emerging policies are presented through the decision-making processes of the Council.

Discussions around a potential Cheshire devolution agreement are at an early stage, but any clear proposals across Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington would be decided through Council.

Q: What impact on the Council's effectiveness will your council size proposal have?

It will maintain sufficient provision to ensure that:

- Members and Committees have sufficient time and resources to consult residents and other stakeholders adequately and make informed, evidence-based decisions. The Council's recent survey of Members (summarised later in this submission) shows a large proportion (over a third) of Members currently feel they have insufficient capacity to undertake their duties properly.
- Council services are scrutinised through the relevant service committee.
- The scrutiny committee is limited to examining external partnerships of health, crime and disorder and flooding.
- Members have sufficient time to engage with residents, businesses, town/ parish councils and external partner organisations, and to tackle casework, rather than having little or no time spare outside of Committee meetings and preparation for those meetings.
- Members have sufficient time to assess and address the needs of the Borough's most vulnerable residents, such as those in deprived areas of Cheshire East and older people/ children.
- Councillor workloads are manageable enough to attract a diverse array of people (different age groups, social/ ethnic groups, household types, occupations, etc), who can offer a broader range of skills/ experience and be more representative of the local community.
- Rural wards cover a manageable area with communities that councillors can reach within a reasonable travel time and adequately serve.
- Rural ward Members representing large numbers of parishes have adequate time to meet and support their parish councils.

Local Authority Profile

Please provide a short description of the authority and its setting, in particular the local geography, demographics and community characteristics. This should set the scene for the Commission and give it a greater understanding of any current issues. The description should cover all of the following:

- Brief outline of area - are there any notable geographic constraints for example that may affect the review?
- Rural or urban - what are the characteristics of the authority?
- Demographic pressures - such as distinctive age profiles, migrant or transient populations, is there any large growth anticipated?
- Community characteristics – is there presence of “hidden” or otherwise complex deprivation?
- Are there any other constraints, challenges, issues or changes ahead?

Further to providing a description, the Commission will be looking for a submission that demonstrates an understanding of place and communities by putting forth arguments on council size based upon local evidence and insight. For example, how does local geography, demographics and community characteristics impact on councillor casework, workload and community engagement?

Current population and general overview of the Borough¹

Cheshire East is the third largest unitary authority (in population terms) in the North West, with a population of 398,800 at the time of the 2021 Census and 400,500² as of mid-2021. It covers an area of 1,166 square kilometres.

The whole of Cheshire East is parished. Following the Community Governance Review changes that came into effect in April 2023, there are 12 town councils, 90 parish councils and four parish meetings. A number of parishes group themselves together for administrative purposes. In total, there are 120 parishes in the Borough.

The Borough has very good transport links: nearly all its towns are close to the M6 or M56 and all but one have a train station. These transport links, along with the Borough’s attractive rural areas and proximity to major cities such as Manchester, contribute to its overall economic strength, with major employers such as Bentley and AstraZeneca located in Cheshire East and many highly-qualified workers choosing to live here.

Cheshire East also contains attractions and institutions that are of national or international importance³:

¹ Except where specified otherwise, the population data cited in this section are from 2021 Census tables, Office for National Statistics (ONS), NOMIS.

² Mid-year population estimates for 2021, ONS, December 2022.

³ Visitor number figures taken from the data files (covering 2017-22) released as part of the 2022 Annual Survey of Visits to Visitor Attractions, VisitBritain & VisitEngland, July 2023.

- Tatton Park is one of England's 20 most popular "paid" visitor attractions, with around 700,000 to 800,000 visitors a year.
- The Jodrell Bank Observatory site, which is part of the world-renowned Jodrell Bank Centre for Astrophysics. The site receives up to 150,000 or more visitors a year.

Lyme Park & Gardens also has large numbers of visitors (over 325,000 in 2022), as do Quarry Bank Mill & Gardens (nearly 250,000) and the Peak District National Park area of the Borough.

The Borough consists of several towns of varying sizes, along with an extensive rural area covering many villages and smaller settlements. As the 2021 Census results show, Crewe (population 75,700)⁴ and the town of Macclesfield (population 53,200) are the largest conurbations. The other main centres of population are the towns of Alsager, Congleton, Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow (each with populations between 12,000 and 30,000) and Bollington and Handforth (with populations of 7,000 to 8,000). (For a map showing the geographical areas these settlement figures relate to, see Appendix 1.⁵) However, nearly two fifths of the population (38.9%, based on 2021 Census data) live in rural areas⁶ and these rural areas include some sparsely populated and in some cases relatively isolated settlements, particularly in the areas to the west of Nantwich and to the east of Macclesfield. (For a map showing how these rural areas are defined, see Appendix 2.)

The Peak District National Park covers an extensive area of Cheshire East, including parts of three Borough wards (Gawsworth, Poynton East and Pott Shrigley, and Sutton). Some of the parishes in the Peak Park area are geographically large and include some very isolated hamlets, often at high elevations. Settlements at high altitudes, along with physical barriers, geographical distance and the level (or lack) of local infrastructure, amenities and service provision mean that some of these rural communities have quite different interests and ties than do other parts of the same Borough ward. This can add to the workload faced by Members in this part of the Borough.

Compared to England as a whole, Cheshire East has a relatively old population, with 22.5% of residents aged 65 and above as of mid-2021 (against the England average of 18.5%).⁷ The population is somewhat older still in rural parts of the Borough (where 24.9% are aged 65 and above). This is likely to increase the demands on rural ward Members, given the presence of many elderly residents (whose age and health may restrict their ability to travel) in more remote areas where transport links are limited.

⁴ This "Crewe" definition covers the whole of Crewe Town Council, but also the whole residential population of the parishes of Rope, Willaston, Wistaston and Woolstanwood, most of the residential population in the parish of Leighton, and parts of the parish of Shavington (the Gresty Brook parish ward and the part of the Chatsworth Park housing estate).

⁵ In this submission, the geographical definitions used for each settlement are (except where stated otherwise) those set out in Appendix 6 of the Cheshire East 'LDF Background Report: Determining the Settlement Hierarchy', Cheshire East Council, November 2010. For all towns apart from Crewe, these Settlement Hierarchy definitions correspond very broadly to the areas covered by Cheshire East's town councils.

⁶ The rural-urban classification used here is the 2015 Rural-Urban Classification produced by the Research & Consultation Team, Cheshire East Council.

⁷ Mid-year population estimates for 2021, ONS, December 2022.

Only 5.6% of the Borough's population classify themselves as non-white, compared to an England average of 19.0%. However, the non-white proportion is significantly higher in the towns of Handforth (13.3%), Wilmslow (11.5%), Crewe (8.6%) and Alderley Edge (7.8%), reflecting the ethnic diversity of these urban areas of the Borough. [Extra wording at end of this paragraph added, to reflect feedback from a Policy Briefing Member about the general ethnic diversity of towns such as Crewe and the fact that their ethnic composition is not limited to a small number of specific communities (such as the East Timorese) that are highlighted later in this section.]

Like many other parts of the UK, Cheshire East saw a significant inflow of migrants from Eastern Europe in the early 2000s. Many are still living in the Borough and are very heavily concentrated in Crewe.

Crewe is one of several UK towns where there is a significant East Timorese community.⁸ Local community leaders estimate that as many as 2,000 East Timorese live in Crewe.⁹ 2021 Census statistics (using the number of Portuguese passport-holding residents as a proxy) suggest a lower, but still very large number of East Timorese (around 900) living in the town's six wards (and predominantly in Crewe South).

In some parts of the Borough, particularly areas of deprivation, evidence suggests that electoral registration rates are relatively low and therefore elector numbers significantly understate the volume of work that Members face. An indication of these geographical variations in electoral registration rates can be obtained by calculating, for each Borough ward, the ratio of the electorate to the adult (age 18 and above) resident population. For this purpose, the Borough Council has used 2021 Census population data and the closest matching date for which Electoral Register data were available (December 2020¹⁰). For the Borough as a whole, this ratio is 0.96, but for five wards, including four of Crewe's six wards (all of which contain neighbourhoods that rank among England's most deprived 20%), it is below 0.90¹¹ and is only 0.79 in Crewe Central and Crewe South.¹²

Recent and future population growth

Evidence from the 2011 and 2021 Censuses indicates that, between 2011 and 2021, Cheshire East's population increased by 7.7%, which was above the England average (6.6%). Whilst the population rose in the vast majority of the Borough's main 24 settlements (see the map in

⁸ 'Backing themselves: East Timorese labour migrants in Oxford', COMPAS, 14th April 2015: <https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2015/backing-themselves-east-timorese-labour-migrants-in-oxford/>

⁹ Source: Public Health Team, Cheshire East Council, August 2023.

¹⁰ Census Day 2021 was 21st March 2021.

¹¹ Sources: [1] Electoral Register data, Cheshire East Council. [2] 2021 Census tables, Office for National Statistics (ONS), NOMIS; [3] English Indices of Deprivation 2019, Ministry of Communities and Local Government (now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities), September 2019.

¹² These ratios should be seen only as indicative of registration rates, given that (a) the population and electoral data relate to dates a few months apart, (b) Census Day 2021 coincided with a COVID-19 lockdown and hence affected some people's Census responses about their place of residence and (c) ONS made minor adjustments to some 2021 Census statistics prior to publication, in order to avoid disclosing personal information about individuals.

Appendix 1 for a list and definition of these settlements), this growth rate varied significantly across the Borough, largely reflecting the geographical distribution of new housing developments. Shavington (up 46.5%), Chelford (25.3%), Sandbach (22.0%), Holmes Chapel (19.0%), Alsager (13.7%), Audlem (11.9%) and Disley (11.3%) all saw population increases of more than 10%. In absolute terms, population growth during 2011-21 was greatest in Sandbach (3,900) and Crewe (3,000). (These figures are based on settlement boundary definitions developed by the Borough Council in 2010 – and shown in Appendix 1 – so some would be much higher still if adjusted to include new housing developments that have expanded the Borough's main urban areas outwards.) [Some revisions have been made to this paragraph in order to reflect feedback from a Policy Briefing Member about (a) the significance of recent housing/ population growth in the Crewe area in absolute terms, and (b) the need for clarity over the identities and geographical definitions of other (unnamed) towns and settlements that the commentary refers to.]

The Office for National Statistics' latest (2018-based) subnational population projections (SNPPs)¹³ provide the most recently published official statistics on projected future population numbers at local authority level. However, these projections were released in early 2020 and the 2021 Census evidence now available indicates that the SNPPs have (so far) been significantly underestimating Cheshire East's population growth since 2018.

For Cheshire East, the 2018-based SNPPs projected that the population would increase from 380,800 (2018) to 387,000 by 2021 and would not exceed 400,000 until 2029. However, ONS' population estimate for mid-2021 (published in December 2022 and factoring in the 2021 Census evidence) puts the mid-2021 population at 400,500. In other words, it appears that, even by mid-2021, the 2018-based SNPPs were under-estimating the Borough's population by around 13,500 (about 3.4%).

Furthermore, the 2018-based SNPPs' projected population growth for 2021-29 equates to an annual average growth rate of 0.44%. It is reasonable to question whether the growth rate over this period will turn out to be that low, given that:

- (a) Population growth in Cheshire East has historically been somewhat higher, averaging 0.78% a year between 2011 and 2021 and 0.52% a year between 2001 and 2011.¹⁴
- (b) Cheshire East's high volumes of housing completions, which began in the later 2010s, have continued up to 2023 and may persist beyond that. During the 10 years from 2011/12 to 2020/21 inclusive, net completions averaged 1,740 per annum and in 2021/22 they reached 2,779.¹⁵ Furthermore, the Borough Council housing database actual housing completions figures and forecasts used for this Review's electorate forecasting work point to around 2,300 net completions between April 2022 and March 2023, with 2,700 more forecast for the period April to December 2023 and an average of around 2,100 a year forecast for the calendar years 2024 to 2029.

¹³ 'Subnational population projections for England: 2018-based', ONS, March 2020.

¹⁴ ONS mid-year population estimates (December 2022 release).

¹⁵ The historic housing completions figures quoted here relate to 12-month periods running from April to March.

In contrast, the population forecasts produced in 2015 by Opinion Research Services (ORS) for the Local Plan Strategy, which are based on the level of housing provision proposed (and later adopted) for the 2010-30 Local Plan Strategy, indicated that Cheshire East's population would reach 401,100 by mid-2021 (close to ONS' mid-2021 estimate of 400,500).

Hence the Borough Council believes that ORS' forecasts are currently the most reliable indicator of likely future population change, up to 2029. With this in mind, it should be noted that the ORS forecasts¹⁶ predict that:

- the Borough's population will reach 404,300 in 2022 and 424,500 by 2029;
- whilst the total population will increase by 5.8% between 2021 and 2029, the number of residents aged 65 and above will grow by 20.5%.

The ORS forecasts for the Local Plan did not produce population forecasts below local authority level. However, the electorate forecasts produced for this Review are heavily informed by the Borough's forecasts of future housing development, which provide a guide as to the scale and geographical distribution of housing and population growth up to 2029. These housing forecasts indicate that the total number of residential properties across the Borough will increase by around 8% between July 2023 and December 2029, but with wide variations between Borough wards, ranging from less than 0.5% in some wards to around 50% in Brereton Rural and Leighton. Members in Borough wards with the highest housing growth rates will face increased workloads, both in the short term (as they are required to deal with issues arising during the construction work on the new housing sites) and in the longer term (because of the larger electorates arising from a much-increased local housing stock).

Deprivation¹⁷

Despite its economic strengths, Cheshire East contains some of England's most deprived neighbourhoods, most of them in Crewe, but with some in other (mainly urban) parts of the Borough (see the map in Appendix 3). Furthermore, some areas of Cheshire East rank among England's worst 1% for specific kinds of deprivation.

The latest (2019) English Indices of Deprivation shows that, of Cheshire East's 234 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs), 18 (7.7%) ranked among the 20% most deprived LSOAs in England for overall deprivation.¹⁸ These included 13 (more than quarter) of the 47 LSOAs in Crewe, as well as two LSOAs in Macclesfield and one each in Alsager, Congleton and Wilmslow. Of the 18 LSOAs that are among England's most deprived 20% for overall deprivation, four (three in Crewe and one in Macclesfield) rank among the worst (most deprived) 10% of LSOAs nationally and one of these (in Crewe) ranks among the worst 5% nationally.

¹⁶ Population and housing forecasts produced by Opinion Research Services (ORS) for the Cheshire East Housing Development Study 2015, ORS, June 2015.

¹⁷ English Indices of Deprivation 2019, Ministry of Communities and Local Government (now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities), September 2019. The figures cited here are based on the numbers and boundaries of Cheshire East Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in existence at the time the 2019 Indices were produced, rather than to the revised LSOA boundaries that came into being in the wake of the 2021 Census evidence.

¹⁸ In this context, "overall deprivation" means the English Indices of Deprivation's Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

There are five LSOAs in the Borough which are within England's most deprived 1% for one of Indices of Deprivation's sub-domains. Four of these – all in rural areas - are in the worst 1% of the Barriers to Housing & Services domain's 'Geographical Barriers' sub-domain (which measures the proximity of key services, such as a GP surgery and a general store/ supermarket). The other one, in Crewe, is in the worst 1% for the Education, Skills & Training Deprivation domain's 'Children and Young People' sub-domain (which measures the educational performance of young people).

Council Size

The Commission believes that councillors have three broad aspects to their role.

These are categorised as: **Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulatory and Partnerships), and Community Leadership.**

Submissions should address each of these in turn and provide supporting evidence. Prompts in the boxes below should help shape responses.

Strategic Leadership

Respondents should provide the Commission with details as to how elected members will provide strategic leadership for the authority.

Responses should also indicate how many members will be required for this role and why this is justified. **Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic	
Governance Model	<div> <div>Key lines of explanation</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What governance model will your authority operate? e.g. Committee System, Executive or other?</i> ➤ <i>The Cabinet model, for example, usually requires 6 to 10 members. How many members will you require?</i> ➤ <i>If the authority runs a Committee system, we want to understand why the number and size of the committees you propose represents the most appropriate for the authority.</i> ➤ <i>By what process does the council aim to formulate strategic and operational policies? How will members in executive, executive support and/or scrutiny positions be involved? What particular demands will this make of them?</i> ➤ <i>Whichever governance model you currently operate, a simple assertion that you want to keep the current structure does not in itself, provide an explanation of why that structure best meets the needs of the council and your communities.</i> </div>
	<div> <div>Analysis</div> <p>The key strategic document for the Council is the Corporate Plan, which was adopted in 2021: Corporate Plan (cheshireeast.gov.uk). The policy framework for the Council is contained within the Council's Constitution: Cheshire East Council Constitution</p> </div>

		<p>The Council proposes that its Committee system model of governance be retained, given the evidence (cited earlier in this submission) that this model has proved to be effective.</p> <p>Chapter 2, Part 4 of the Council’s Constitution shows the responsibilities of all of the Council’s committees, from the service committees of 13 Members, which make decisions previously made by the Council’s Cabinet, and the Scrutiny Committee of 13 Members, to the regulatory committees, such as the planning and licensing committees, which have 12 and 15 Members respectively. In total, there are 23 committees. 14 of these are “standing committees” (those appointed by Council, not including sub-committees, outside organisations or working groups). Appendix 4 of this submission lists each committee, its number of Members and gives an indication (based on the 12-month period ending mid July 2023) of the frequency of its meetings. More detailed information on the Council committees can be seen here: cheshire-east-council-constitution-chapter-2-july-2023-v2.pdf (cheshireeast.gov.uk)</p> <p>A structure chart of the Council’s committees can be seen in Chapter 2, Part 1 of the Constitution. From time to time, the standing committees appoint sub-committees to undertake specific work. One example of this is the appointment by the Corporate Policy Committee, of the Electoral Review Sub-Committee, which was specifically appointed to make recommendations to the Committee in respect of the Boundary Commission’s review of the Council’s electoral arrangements.</p> <p>Upon the introduction of the Committee system of governance, the Council retained many of its standing committees. When the arrangements changed, the Council’s Cabinet was replaced by six “service committees” of 13 Members and a Finance Sub-Committee of eight Members.</p> <p>For the committees which were retained under the new governance arrangements, the approach taken was not simply to replicate the previous structure and membership numbers for convenience.</p> <p>The committee structure and number of committees have been found to be robust and effective (taking into account committee workloads and the need for political balance).</p> <p>The Council actively pursues change, where this is felt to be needed. In particular, as noted earlier, the planning committee structure is currently under review, with a proposal to reduce the number of planning committees from three to two.</p>
--	--	---

		<p>Turning to the six service committees and the Finance Sub-Committee, which replaced the Council's Cabinet under its previous governance arrangements, the Council recognises that it must also keep these under review. This was noted in the report to Full Council on 19 November 2020, in relation to the Design Principles (referred to above).</p> <p>Indeed, the Council has already agreed one change to the original service committee structure and their responsibilities, by removing the Public Rights of Way Sub-Committee, and by empowering the Council's Highways and Transport Committee to take over its functions.</p> <p>Officers continue to explore whether the number and size of the service committees should change and, in doing so, are guided by the Design Principles referred to. In the light of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, agreed by Council in February 2023, officers are exploring whether savings can be made by reducing the number of service and regulatory committees.</p> <p>In short, the Council is (and can demonstrate that it is) prepared to make changes to the Committee structure and membership numbers of committees, where required to ensure that the Council is effective and efficient in making decisions.</p> <p>The member survey evidence possibly suggests a shortage of capacity among Members. It is not clear if this relates to the size and number of Members on each committee or other factors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although there are, on average, approximately two standing committee places per Councillor, 29 Members sit on only one (and two are on none at all). • As shown in Table 1 below, the number of committee positions (including all types of committees) averages out at 2.6 per Member. However, Members' capacity to undertake committee work depends on their commitments to other meetings and the roles they fill within local partner organisations. As Table 1 also indicates, the number of non-committee positions averages out at around one working group/ board/ panel, one town/ parish councillor position (62 of the Council's 82 Members are town/ parish councillors) and one other outside organisation per Member. Hence there is an overall average (including committee positions) of 5.6 positions per Member, but with some Members holding many more positions than that (one, for example, is appointed to 10 outside organisations).
--	--	---

- As noted later in this submission, there are existing difficulties in filling some committee positions, notably the Licensing Act Sub-Committee.

As these issues appear to stem, at least in part, from a shortage of capacity, not from the model of governance, the Council believes that they are best addressed through ongoing reviews of and adjustments to the committee structure.

Table 1: Summary of Members' internal and external positions

	Number of positions	Number of Members involved	Average number of positions held per Member**	Highest number of positions held by any one Member
Standing committees	167	80	2.0	5
of which: involved in making 'major' decision-making committees*	86	64	1.0	4
Other committees (including sub-committees)	50	38	0.6	2 to 4***
Working groups/ boards/ panels	78	40	1.0	5
Outside organisations (excluding town and parish councils)	98	50	1.2	10
Town and parish councils	70	62	0.9	3

*Figures for 'major' decision-making committees relate to membership of the six service committees and the Finance Sub-Committee (which comprise some but not all of the standing committees). Apart from this, all the categories listed in Table 1 are mutually exclusive.

**The averages shown in the fourth column are averaged across all Members, including those not involved in the specified type of meeting/ organisation: that is, they are calculated by dividing each of the figures in the second column by 82.

***The figure for the highest number of "other" (non-standing) committee positions depends on the allocation of positions on the General Licensing Sub-Committee and Licensing Act Sub-Committee (whose membership is drawn from the 15-Member Licensing Committee), as one Licensing Committee Member also belongs to two of the "other" committees.

It can also be seen from the Council's decision-making structure that the Council has large committee memberships and, therefore, high levels of engagement in the decision-making process by the Council's

		members. The Council believes that this is a feature of Committee system decision-making, in comparison with lower levels of engagement of “backbench” members in the decision-making processes of Leader and Cabinet forms of governance.
Portfolios	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How many portfolios will there be? ➤ What will the role of a portfolio holder be? ➤ Will this be a full-time position? ➤ Will decisions be delegated to portfolio holders? Or will the executive/mayor take decisions?
	Analysis	Not applicable to the Council in the strict sense of a portfolio holder under a Leader and Cabinet style of decision-making governance. However, the chairs and vice chairs of the Council’s service committees, as well as the lead opposition members, have key roles as a consequence of these positions. The chairs of the service committees are all members of the Council’s Corporate Policy Committee, which deals with the overarching policy matters, and has power to determine matters which cross over the responsibilities of one or more of the service committees.
Delegated Responsibilities	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What responsibilities will be delegated to officers or committees? ➤ How many councillors will be involved in taking major decisions?
	Analysis	<p>Chapter 2, Part 2 of the Council’s Constitution sets out the decision-making arrangements of the Council: cheshire-east-council-constitution-chapter-2-july-2023-v2.pdf (cheshireeast.gov.uk). This Chapter includes the delegations to committees and to officers of the Council and committees’ terms of reference.</p> <p>As noted earlier in this submission, the Council keeps its decision-making arrangements under review. The Corporate Policy Committee appointed a Constitution Working Group (CWG) of Councillors to undertake this role, and it meets regularly throughout the year. Since the introduction of the Committee system of governance, the CWG has received reports on revisions to the Constitution, outside bodies and the committee structure. Whilst, upon review by the CWG, it has been decided that no changes should be made to the Council’s decision-making arrangements in certain instances, the following changes have been made:</p> <p>Agenda for Council on Wednesday, 19th July, 2023, 11.00 am Cheshire East Council Agenda for Council on Wednesday, 27th April, 2022, 11.00 am Cheshire East Council Agenda for Corporate Policy Committee on Thursday, 15th June, 2023, 10.30 am Cheshire East Council</p> <p>The CWG has a worklist of items for consideration in the future, which includes reviewing the committee structure, schemes of delegation, terms of reference of committees and timing of meetings.</p>

	<p>This demonstrates that the Council is constantly examining whether or not its decision-making arrangements, including delegation of powers to committees and officers, are fit for purpose. The recent transfer of the Public Rights of Way Committee’s responsibilities to the Highways and Transport Committee, and the ongoing consideration of the planning committee structure, is evidence of this process working effectively.</p> <p>“Major” decisions may be best defined as those undertaken by the Council’s service committees, which make those decisions previously made by the Council’s Cabinet. As shown in Table 1 above, there are 86 Councillor places on these committees.</p> <p>However, the Audit and Governance Committee also has responsibilities in fulfilling its terms of reference, namely: audit, assurance and reporting; review of governance, risk and control arrangements; and promotion of high standards of ethical behaviour. The same is true of the planning committees, which are responsible for determining large scale major development applications, major mineral or waste development applications, and other matters with strategic or significant policy implications.</p> <p>Full Council is also involved in deciding matters of key importance: those which are stipulated by legislation or otherwise, such as the Budget and Policy Framework, statutory officer appointments, and the Local Plan.</p> <p>Turning to the powers of officers, reference is made earlier in this submission to the relevant delegations. Taking all of the above issues and the Committee system Design Principles into consideration, and in the light of the regular examination of the Council’s decision-making arrangements, the Council firmly believes that the responsibilities delegated to committees, the number of members involved in making major decisions and the powers delegated to officers should not change, except where the continuing process of review of the committee structure and responsibilities determines that this should be the case.</p>
--	--

Accountability

Give the Commission details as to how the authority and its decision makers and partners will be held to account. The Commission is interested in both the internal and external dimensions of this role. **Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic	
-------	--

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Internal Scrutiny	The scrutiny function of authorities has changed considerably. Some use theme or task-and-finish groups, for example, and others have a committee system. Scrutiny arrangements may also be affected by the officer support available.
<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How will decision makers be held to account?</i> ➤ <i>How many committees will be required? And what will their functions be?</i> ➤ <i>How many task and finish groups will there be? And what will their functions be? What time commitment will be involved for members? And how often will meetings take place?</i> ➤ <i>How many members will be required to fulfil these positions?</i> ➤ <i>Explain why you have increased, decreased, or not changed the number of scrutiny committees in the authority.</i> ➤ <i>Explain the reasoning behind the number of members per committee in terms of adding value.</i>
Analysis	<p>As the Council operates a Committee system of governance, the Council's service committees are expected to undertake self-scrutiny through performance monitoring etc. However, the Council recognises that the work of its service committees needs to develop, in order fully embrace their internal scrutiny role. Indeed, further training is being planned for the Council's service committee members in this role, which will take place during winter 2023.</p> <p>The Committees are able to establish Task and Finish Groups/ Working Groups as and when required. These can be established for internal scrutiny purposes: for example, to review the effectiveness of policy etc. A maximum of three to four per committee at any one time is recommended. Usually they consist of around three to eight Members.</p> <p>Since the inception of the Council up until the introduction of the Committee system, the Council had four bespoke scrutiny</p>

	<p>committees, with a dedicated Scrutiny Team of officers who were specialists in scrutiny work. There is now no longer dedicated officer scrutiny support. The absence of resource for internal scrutiny will place new and challenging demands upon the knowledge, skills and time of service committee Members.</p> <p>The Council now has one externally focussed Scrutiny Committee (13 Members), which is responsible for the Council's statutory scrutiny functions including health, crime and disorder and flooding.</p> <p>In response to the establishment of Integrated Care Systems (ICS), the nine Merseyside and Cheshire local authorities agreed several actions to ensure that joint health scrutiny arrangements in Cheshire and Merseyside are fit to meet the challenge of the new statutory arrangements. A standing joint health scrutiny committee has been established to take on the Authorities' collective statutory responsibility to oversee and scrutinise the operation of the ICS at Cheshire and Merseyside level. The host Authority for this committee is Knowsley BC Browse meetings - Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System Joint Health Scrutiny Committee - Knowsley Council</p> <p>The overarching role of the Joint Committee is to scrutinise the work of the ICS in the discharge of its statutory responsibilities and functions at Cheshire and Merseyside level in order to support their effective exercise and, where appropriate, to make reports or recommendations to the ICS. It also considers any proposals for changes in health services that not only impact all nine local authority areas but are also considered to be a substantial change by each of the nine.</p>
--	--

Statutory Function		This includes planning, licencing and any other regulatory responsibilities. Consider under each of the headings the extent to which decisions will be delegated to officers. How many members will be required to fulfil the statutory requirements of the council?
Planning	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members?</i> ➤ <i>Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated?</i> ➤ <i>Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee?</i> ➤ <i>Will executive members serve on the planning committees?</i> ➤ <i>What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?</i>
	Analysis	<p>The Strategic Planning Board (SPB), which meets around nine times a year, considers larger, more strategic planning applications. The other two planning committees are area planning committees – North and South (each holds 10-12 meetings a year) – which consider the remaining applications that are not covered by the scheme of delegation or are ‘called in’ by a Member for the Committee to determine. There are 12 Members on each of the three committees, although (as noted earlier in this submission) there has been a Member vacancy on one of these (the Southern Planning Committee) since May 2023.</p> <p>As part of the Council’s drive to reduce the costs of democracy and develop more efficient decision-making, the Corporate Policy Committee has recently approved a proposal (subject to a final decision by Full Council in December 2023) to reduce the number of planning committees from three to two.</p> <p>Cheshire East is consistently among the top 10 busiest local authorities in England for planning applications (ranked seventh for</p>

		<p>2020-22) and by far the busiest in the North West region.¹⁹ With 17.8 applications per 1,000 population in 2020-22, Cheshire East is similar to comparable authorities such as Dorset or the East Riding of Yorkshire.²⁰</p> <p>2% of applications are determined by the committees. This proportion has remained fairly consistent over the past four years. On average there are between three and six applications for consideration on each area planning committee agenda and two to three on SPB. As the Local Plan has been progressed and larger schemes are being developed out, the number of applications considered by SPB has fallen in recent years.</p> <p>Average time duration for each of the three committees' meetings is four hours (excluding Members' reading/ preparation time and the occasional site visit). However, meetings can last far longer and this is a particular issue for Cheshire East: during the 12 months to mid July 2023, there were five planning committee meetings in excess of five hours, with one SPB meeting lasting six hours 40 minutes.</p> <p>As parts of the Borough fall within the Peak District National Park, Members' workloads are higher because of the need to understand and adhere to two separate planning regimes.</p>
Licensing	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<p>➤ How many licencing panels will the council have in the average year?</p> <p>➤ And what will be the time commitment for members?</p> <p>➤ Will there be standing licencing panels, or will they be ad-hoc?</p>

¹⁹ Planning/ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities data.

²⁰ Rates based on data from 'Population and household estimates for England and Wales: Census 2021' (the first release of results from the 2021 Census of Population for England and Wales), Office for National Statistics (ONS), 28th June 2022).

		➤ <i>Will there be core members and regular attendees, or will different members serve on them?</i>
	Analysis	<p>The statutory requirements of the Licensing Act 2003 requires that the Council have a Licensing Committee with 10 to 15 Members. As required by the Constitution, the Council has a Licensing Committee with 15 Members. This is scheduled to meet around five times a year, but in practice tends to meet only twice a year.</p> <p>The majority of business is conducted at the sub-committee level. There are two standing sub-committees:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The General Licensing Sub-Committee (GLSC), which has five Members. It is scheduled to meet monthly, but due to a lack of business it has met only once in the last 18 months. 2. The Licensing Act Sub-Committee (LASC), which has three Members. It meets on an ad hoc basis and the frequency of meetings varies a lot. During the current year, it has so far met only twice but sometimes (like last year) there can be 15-20 or more meetings a year. <p>Most Licensing Committee meetings last less than an hour. The Sub-Committee meetings tend to last half a day.</p> <p>Given the ad hoc nature of LASC meetings and the limited statutory timescale that they can be called within, it can be difficult to populate them with Members. Therefore officers would not advocate reducing the number of Members on the full Committee.</p>
Other Regulatory Bodies	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<p>➤ <i>What will they be, and how many members will they require?</i></p> <p>➤ <i>Explain the number and membership of your Regulatory Committees with respect to greater delegation to officers.</i></p>
	Analysis	Not applicable: no other such bodies.

External Partnerships	Service delivery has changed for councils over time, and many authorities now have a range of delivery partners to work with and hold to account.
<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Will council members serve on decision-making partnerships, sub-regional, regional or national bodies? In doing so, are they able to take decisions/make commitments on behalf of the council?</i> ➤ <i>How many councillors will be involved in this activity? And what is their expected workload? What proportion of this work is undertaken by portfolio holders?</i> ➤ <i>What other external bodies will members be involved in? And what is the anticipated workload?</i>
Analysis	<p>There are at present 54 outside bodies (excluding school governing bodies and local resident associations) which require or expect the Council to appoint representatives. The total number of appointments made to such bodies (excluding school governing bodies) is 98: an average of 1.2 per Member (see Table 1 above). The total number of outside body meetings Members are required to attend per year is around 300: Appointments to Outside Organisations - report v3 final.pdf (cheshireeast.gov.uk)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some councillors also are School Governors in their Borough wards. • Members are also appointed to the governing bodies of wholly-owned Council companies, which meet frequently: Report Template v5.1 (cheshireeast.gov.uk) • The Police & Crime Panel requires the councillor appointed to attend many meetings and liaise with other public bodies in the local area: report.pdf (cheshireeast.gov.uk) • Councillors are also on the Cheshire Fire & Rescue Authority, which meets frequently: report.pdf (cheshireeast.gov.uk) • Councillors sit on the Fostering and Adoption Panels, which

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

	<p>also meet frequently: Report.pdf (cheshireeast.gov.uk)</p> <p>Based on the responses to the Members survey undertaken by Cheshire East in September-October 2023 (to inform this Review), it is estimated that, over a typical three-month period, Members spend an average of 2.4 hours/ week on dealing with work for outside bodies that the Council has appointed them to.</p> <p>As set out in detail earlier in this submission, Cheshire East also shares some services, such as ICT and payroll, with Cheshire West and Chester Council.</p>
--	---

Community Leadership

The Commission understands that there is no single approach to community leadership and that members represent, and provide leadership to, their communities in different ways. The Commission wants to know how members are required to provide effective community leadership and what support the council offers them in this role. For example, does the authority have a defined role and performance system for its elected members? And what support networks are available within the council to help members in their duties? The Commission also wants to see a consideration of **how the use of technology and social media by the council as a whole, and by councillors individually, will affect casework, community engagement and local democratic representation. Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic		Description
Community Leadership	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ In general terms how do councillors carry out their representational role with electors?➤ Does the council have area committees and what are their powers?➤ How do councillors seek to engage with their constituents? Do they hold surgeries, send newsletters, hold public meetings or maintain blogs?➤ Are there any mechanisms in place that help councillors interact with young people, those not on the electoral register, and/or other minority groups and their representative bodies?➤ Are councillors expected to attend community meetings, such as parish or resident’s association meetings? If so, what is their level of involvement and what roles do they play?

		<p>➤ <i>Explain your approach to the Area Governance structure. Is your Area Governance a decision-making forum or an advisory board? What is their relationship with locally elected members and Community bodies such as Town and Parish Councils? Looking forward how could they be improved to enhance decision-making?</i></p>
	Analysis	<p>Areas of the Borough are covered by local Neighbourhood Partnership meetings, which are chaired by councillors.</p> <p>A regular “members bulletin” digital newsletter is issued to Members from the communications and media team, to support Members with their community engagement.</p> <p>The Council have a Youth Council, supported by a participation officer, which Members can attend to discuss subjects with children and young people. The participation officer can also enable engagement with cared-for children, local schools and other community groups.</p> <p>62 Members (76%) are also members of the town and parish councils within Cheshire East. This impacts on the affected Members’ workloads and how much capacity they have to support residents. Whilst their membership of these bodies is legally separate from their role on and membership of Cheshire East Council, many Members see the role as a dual one: not only to discharge town and parish council business, but also acting as a conduit through which the voice of town and parish councils can be heard, at Borough Council level, and via which important Cheshire East Council issues can be raised in town and parish council meetings. Therefore, town and parish council membership cannot be divorced from the issue of Cheshire East Members’ workloads.</p> <p>Town and parish councils are supported by the Cheshire Association of Local Councils (CHALC). CHALC are commissioned by the Council to facilitate engagement through the Council’s Communities Team. A Town and Parish Councils Network has been established to support communication and engagement between Cheshire East Council and local councils.</p> <p>Many councillors are involved in local community and voluntary sector organisations.</p> <p>The Leader of the Council chairs the Cheshire East Leaders Board, which is group of Chief Executives from a range of key organisations across Cheshire East including the NHS, Police, Fire, housing providers, colleges and local businesses.</p>

Casework	Key lines of explanation	<p>➤ <i>How do councillors deal with their casework? Do they pass it on to council officers? Or do they take a more in-depth approach to resolving issues?</i></p> <p>➤ <i>What support do members receive?</i></p> <p>➤ <i>How has technology influenced the way in which councillors work? And interact with their electorate?</i></p> <p>➤ <i>In what ways does the council promote service users' engagement/dispute resolution with service providers and managers rather than through councillors?</i></p>
	Analysis	<p>Since the inception of the Council, Members have largely taken responsibility for their own casework and for the means by which they deal with it. However, some support is provided to Members in dealing with resident queries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Members' Enquiries Service is a service administered by the Council's Democratic Service, which enables Members to raise "ward-based, service-related" enquiries via a central email address. Officers then provide a unique reference number for each enquiry and send them to the relevant Council service for response. Reminders are issued if responses are overdue. This is clearly a key facility for Members in dealing with casework. • The Members' Secretary is an officer based in Democratic Services whose work is largely based upon support for Members. This facility is used by Members to deal with a range of queries, including casework which doesn't fall within the scope of the Members' Enquiries Service. • The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, together with the chairs and vice chairs of the service committees also have personal assistant support. But, whilst these Members have access to the Members' Enquiries Service and Members' Secretary, there will undoubtedly be some casework which finds its way to them via their personal assistant. <p>The Council encourages residents to take up queries and complaints with officers, as opposed to directly with Members, when the opportunity presents itself. But residents and Members see their direct relationship, lines of communication and accessibility within the community to be of key importance in the democratic process. Hence it is not anticipated that current patterns of resident/ Member engagement will significantly change.</p> <p>Based on the responses to the Members survey undertaken by Cheshire East in September-October 2023 (to inform this Review), it is estimated that, over a typical three-month period, Members spend an average of 7.3 hours/ week on casework/ ward issues, but nearly half (46%) said they spent an average of more than eight hours a week on this type of work.</p>

Other Issues

Respondent may use this space to bring any other issues of relevance to the attention of the Commission.

The Council has no issues to raise here.

Summary

In following this template respondents should have been able to provide the Commission with a robust and well-evidenced case for their proposed council size; one which gives a clear explanation as to the governance arrangements and number of councillors required to represent the authority in the future.

Use this space to summarise the proposals and indicate other options considered. Explain why these alternatives were not appropriate in terms of their ability to deliver effective Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulation and Partnerships), and Community Leadership.

One useful guide to appropriate council size is the average (Borough-wide) electors-per-councillor ratio and how this compares to local authorities that are similar to Cheshire East in terms of population and character, as these are councils that are likely to have a broadly similar workload to Cheshire East. The data table in Appendix 5 shows how Cheshire East's electors-per-councillor ratio (3,800 as of December 2022) compares to those for similar councils. For eleven of the other 16 authorities in this table, the LGBCE has published Electoral Review final recommendations within the last six years (January 2018 onwards); for three others, a Review is underway and has already reached a stage where the LGBCE has published its provisional view on the appropriate council size. Hence for 14 of these other 16 authorities (all except the East Riding of Yorkshire and North Somerset), the council size and electors-per-councillor ratios take account of recent LGBCE judgements.

As Appendix 5 indicates, the Borough's ratio is broadly in line with those for most of these 'similar' authorities and particularly with those seven councils (indicated by the shaded rows in Appendix 5) that have a population within 20% of Cheshire East's. These seven councils' ratios range from 3,200 to 4,000, or from 3,400 to 4,000 if the LGBCE's proposals from ongoing reviews are taken as the most up-to-date guide to these authorities' appropriate council size. However, it is notable that for the nine authorities (shown in bold in Appendix 5) that are identified by CIPFA as a 'nearest neighbours' of Cheshire East, the ratios cover a much wider range, from 3,200 (Solihull) to 5,000 (Cornwall). Of the 17 authorities listed in Appendix 5, Cornwall is one of two (along with Buckinghamshire) for which the ratio exceeds 4,000.

If, as the electorate forecasts for this Review indicate, the Borough's electorate grows to 337,300 by 2029, that would mean a ratio of 4,100 in 2029 if the current number of seats is left unchanged. Hence, if its size remains at 82 seats and allowing for electorate growth in similar authorities up to 2029, Cheshire East's ratio is likely to remain within the range of ratios for those similar authorities, but is likely to err increasingly towards the high end of that range, exceeded perhaps only by two of the other authorities listed in Appendix 5 (Cornwall and Buckinghamshire).

Another indication as to the appropriate council size is data on Members' overall workloads. The bulk of the evidence on this comes from the Council's recent survey of Members, which was undertaken to provide important data that would inform the Council's response to the Electoral Review. This survey was open from 8th September until 4th October 2023 and 57% (47) of Cheshire East's 82 Members responded.

Key survey findings that highlight workload levels are as follows²¹:

- 38% of the respondents (18 out of 47) had been a Member for a year or less, but 36% (17) had served for six years or more.
- The respondents had, on average, 2.7 committee positions (close to the average of 2.6 for all 82 Members). 63% (29 out of 47) had been appointed by the Council to one or more outside bodies.
- It was estimated from the survey responses that, over a typical three-month period, Members spend an average of 26.6 hours a week on council business. (The commentary further below, on the data table in Appendix 6, breaks down the 26.6 hours/ week into its component parts.)
- As an indication of the ranges reported in workload levels (rather than just averages), it is notable that:
 - Some Members (though only a small minority) said it took six to eight hours to travel from home to some of their committees' locations and some (three) reported spending an average of more than eight hours preparing for certain committees' meetings.
 - Nearly half (46%, or 21 respondents out of 46) spent an average of more than eight hours a week dealing with casework/ ward issues.
 - Nearly a quarter (24%, or 11 out of 45) spent an average of more than twenty hours a week dealing with their areas of additional responsibility (such as committee chair/ vice-chair, Group Leader or town/ parish councillor).
- 62% (29 out of 47) were town/ parish councillors, which was lower than the proportion for Cheshire East Members as a whole (76%).
- 64% (30 out of 47) said they spent more time on council business than they had expected when they were first elected.
- 70% of Members (33 out of 47) reported that their workload levels had risen by more than a fifth since they were first elected, of whom ten (21% of all the respondents) reported an increase of more than 60%.
- 33% (15 out of 46) felt "very over occupied".
- 60% (27 out of 45) said workload demands were high at all days and times of the week, rather than being limited to certain parts of the week.
- 70% (32 out of 46) said workload demands had a "significant" or "very significant" impact on their work-life balance and wellbeing.
- 36% (17 out of 47) had insufficient time and capacity to carry out their duties properly.
- In response to an invitation for general comments, a number of respondents expressed a view that Member workloads make it either impossible or very difficult for full-time workers to serve as Members. Some said they could undertake the role only because they were not in a paid job, while some others reported having to switch to part-time employment/ reduced hours and hence reduced pay, to accommodate council business.

²¹ As indicated by the summary that follows, the sample sizes were below 47 in some cases, due to some questions not being answered by or not being applicable to some Members.

These survey results provide compelling evidence both that the Borough Council and its Members are frequently unable to serve and support residents, business and partner organisations effectively, and that workload trends – also bearing in mind the expected growth in housing, population and the number of electors up to 2029 - will exacerbate this situation.

The estimate of average hours worked per week on council business (26.6), which itself excludes some Members' work²², also demonstrates how a Member's work (allowing for substantial variations from this high average) often equates to a full-time role in itself. This means serving as a Borough ward councillor is not a practical option for many people in full-time paid employment.

The full results from this survey can be found in Appendix 7.

However, in determining the optimal council size, it is important to consider potential alternative sizes and the workload implications these would have. The data table in Appendix 6 therefore presents key measures of Cheshire East councillors' workloads, in terms of Committee work and current and future numbers of electors, for various council sizes (from 77 up to 87 seats). This includes workload statistics derived from the Members survey, as well as others derived from the Council's administrative records.

As Appendix 6 shows:

- The Borough's Members currently hold an average of 2.6 positions, in addition to attending Full Council. Members hold, on average, a total of 5.6 positions (2.6 on committees and 3 elsewhere) when working groups/ boards/ panels and outside organisations (including town and parish councils) are factored in. It is estimated that, over a typical three-month period, they spend an average of 26.6 hours/ week on council business, of which 3.8 hours are on preparing for, travelling to/ from and attending committee meetings, 7.3 hours on casework/ ward issues, 13.1 on additional responsibilities (including any town/ parish councillor positions) and 2.4 on work for outside bodies that the Council has appointed them to.
- Currently (as of July 2023), the average number of electors per councillor is 3,800 and this is forecast to increase to 4,100 by 2029 as a result of the expected growth in the number of electors.

Taken together, the evidence from Appendices 5 to 7 provides an indication as to what would be an appropriate increase in the number of councillors. Looking at the evidence from Appendix 5:

²² In response to the final question in the survey, which invited general comments, some Members noted that the questionnaire did not ask about time spent in parish council meetings, or in Member training, or on site visits, dealing with emails and phone calls, social media monitoring work (to help keep track of local residents' key issues) or follow-up work. It is clear, therefore, that at least some respondents did not include these activities in the estimates the time they spent on council business (though others may have allowed for these in their responses). This is an indication that the survey statistics may, if anything, understate Members' workload levels.

- The seven authorities that are closest in size to Cheshire East all have electors-per-councillor ratios in the 3,400 to 4,000 range (allowing for the impact of LGBCE proposals from ongoing reviews) and 3,400 to 3,900 if the East Riding of Yorkshire (not reviewed since 2001) is excluded.
- The nine authorities identified by CIPFA as Cheshire East's nearest neighbours have ratios covering a much wider range - 3,200 to 5,000 - though it should be noted that the two with ratios in excess of 4,000 (Cornwall and Buckinghamshire) both have populations substantially (over a third) greater than Cheshire East's. If the Cornwall figure were adopted, the number of Councillors would be reduced significantly.

It is appreciated that these other authorities' populations and electorates will also grow in number over time and that the LGBCE's review decisions allow for some of those authorities' electors-per-councillor ratios increasing, within a few years, beyond the ranges quoted above. Allowing for this growth over the longer term and factoring in the evidence from the Members survey, a ratio of around 4,100 would allow Cheshire East Members to carry out their duties properly whilst preserving their wellbeing and a reasonable work-life balance. It is a suggested a ration as high as 5000:1 would not.

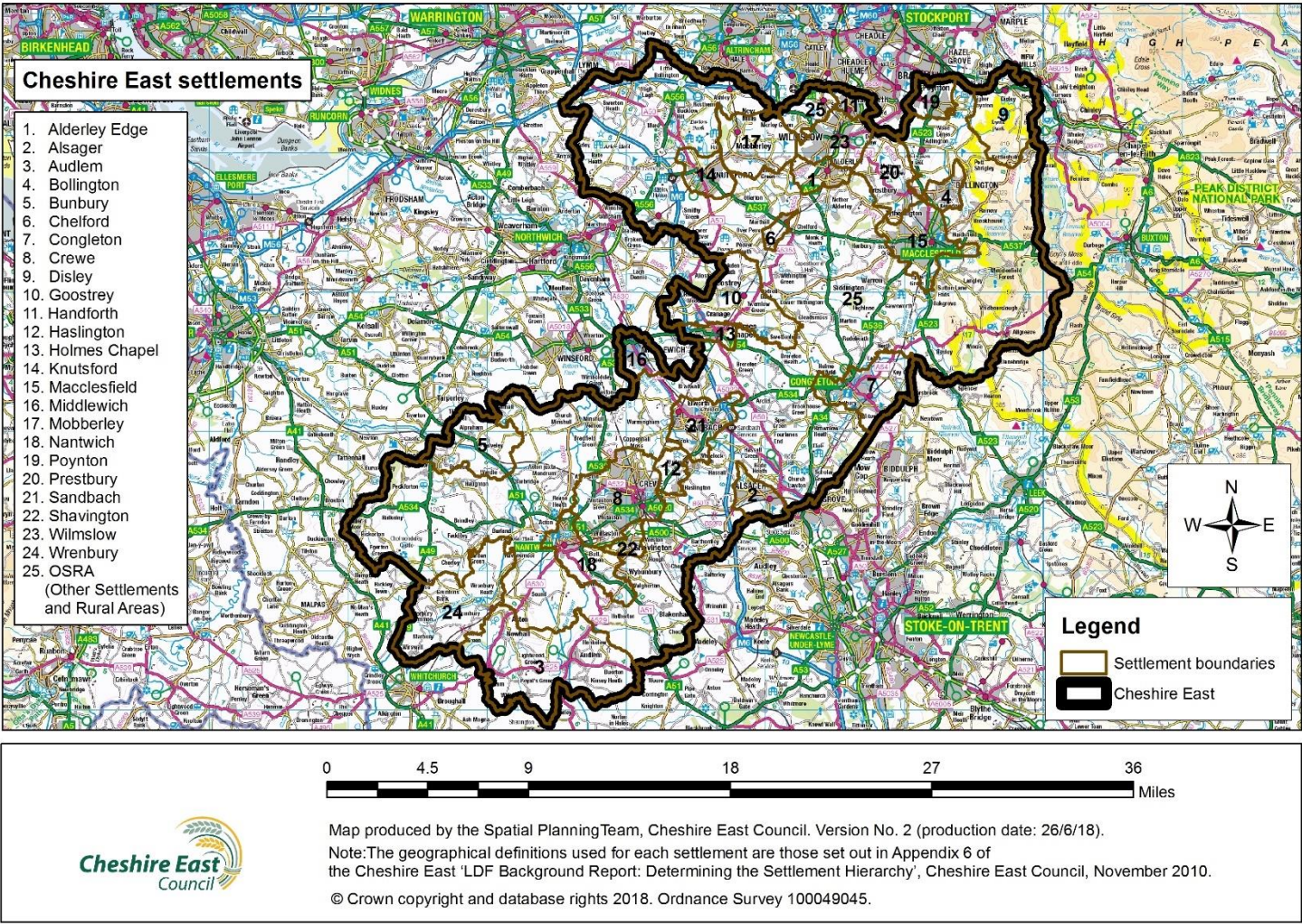
As noted above, the electorate forecasts indicate a ratio of 4,100 by 2029 if the current size (82 Members) is retained. It is considered that this would be sustainable and further reviews and adjustments to the committee structure could enable more efficient decision-making that reduces Members' workloads. However, a reduction from the current council size of 82 is likely to result in unsustainable pressures on Members that structural changes to the Committee system could not resolve.

Therefore the current size of 82 **[the provisionally-proposed council size figure]** continues to reflect sufficient capacity in terms of members to electorate ratio and still provides sufficient room for growth.

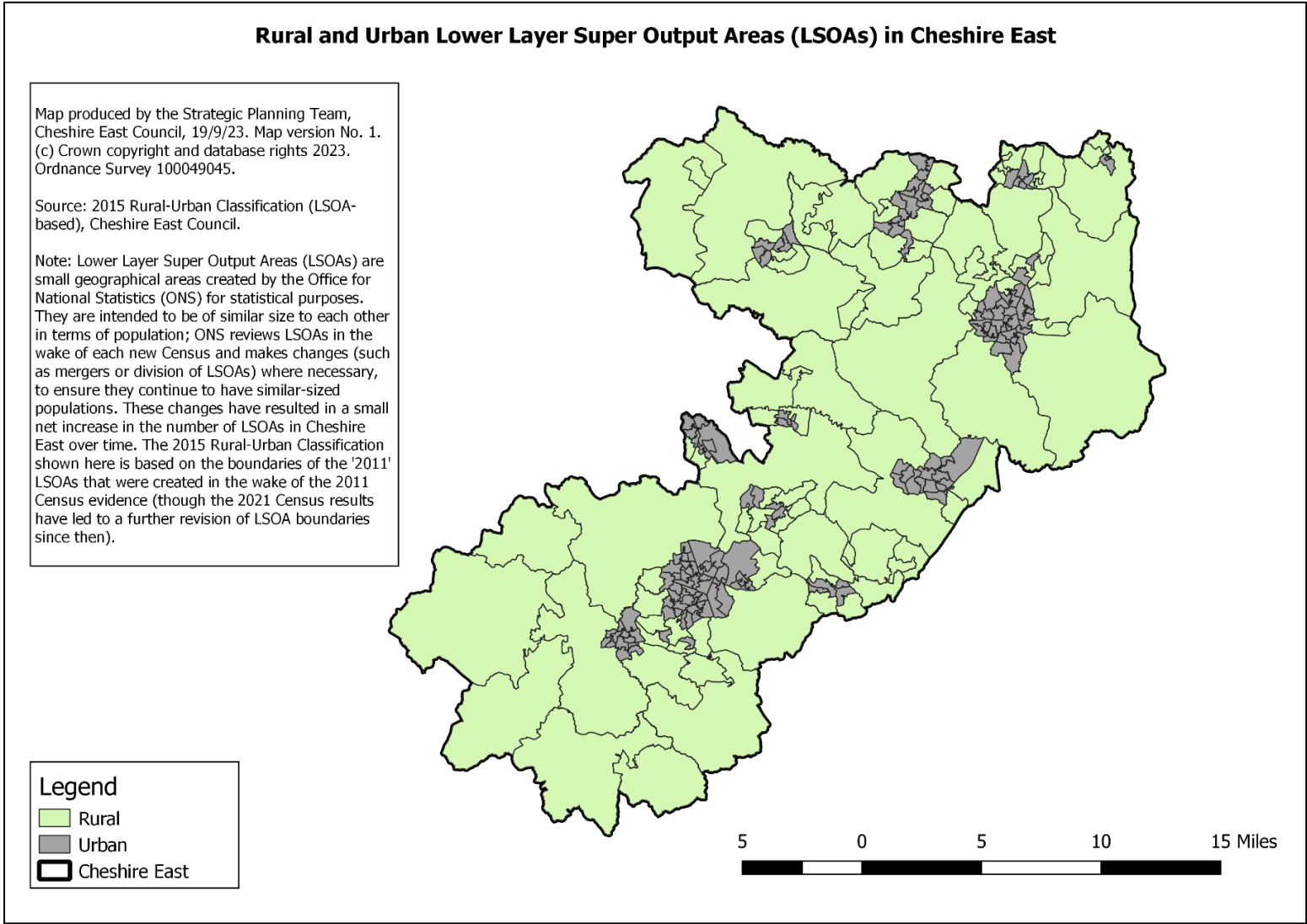
In reaching its decision about the appropriate council size, the Council has taken a long-term view, based upon what it understands of the likely national and local policy context, over the next 15-20 years, particularly in the context of an anticipated increased population and also the local impact of any sub regional devolution agreements.

In summary, having 82 **[the provisionally-proposed council size figure]** councillors would help to avoid the risks set out above and should ensure a diverse range of Members with complementary skills and backgrounds and who have sufficient time and resources to perform all their duties properly, without neglecting any local communities, vulnerable residents or partnership organisations. It would also help to ensure high quality, accountable service provision and efficient use of the Council's finances.

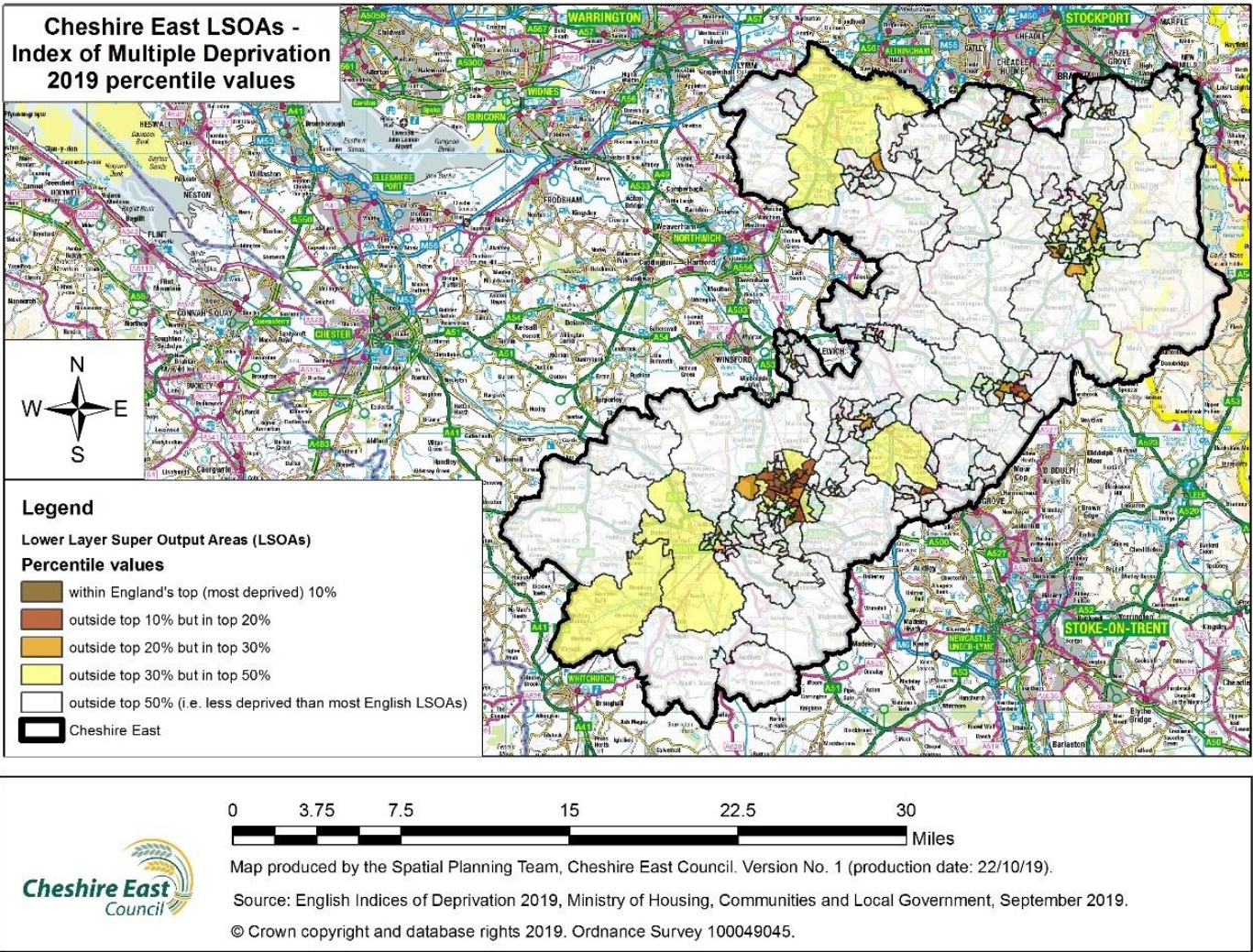
Appendix 1: Cheshire East main settlements



Appendix 2: Rural and urban areas of Cheshire East



Appendix 3: Deprivation in Cheshire East



Appendix 4: Committee names, types, sizes and frequency of meetings

	Committee name	Standing committee	Committee/ meeting category	Number of Members	Number of meetings held in last year
1	Adults and Health Committee	Yes	Service Committees	13	6
2	Children and Families Committee	Yes	Service Committees	13	8
3	Corporate Policy Committee	Yes	Service Committees	13	7
4	Economy and Growth Committee	Yes	Service Committees	13	6
5	Environment and Communities Committee	Yes	Service Committees	13	8
6	Finance Sub-Committee	Yes	Service Committees	8	6
7	Highways and Transport Committee	Yes	Service Committees	13	6
8	Licensing Committee	Yes	Regulatory (Licensing)	15	3
9	Northern Planning Committee	Yes	Regulatory (Planning)	12	12
10	Southern Planning Committee	Yes	Regulatory (Planning)	12	10
11	Strategic Planning Board	Yes	Regulatory (Planning)	12	9
12	Scrutiny Committee	Yes	Scrutiny Committees	13	4
13	Appointments Committee	Yes	Other Committees	8	0
14	Audit and Governance Committee	Yes	Other Committees	9	6
15	Cared For Children and Care Leaver Sub-Committee	No	Other Committees	12	5
16	Health and Wellbeing Board	No	Other Committees	4	5
17	General Appeals Sub-Committee	No	Other Committees	5*	7
18	Electoral Review Sub-Committee	No	Other Committees	10	N/A
19	Shared Services Joint Committee	No	Other Committees	3	4
20	Staffing Appeals Sub-Committee	No	Other Committees	3*	4
21	General Licensing Sub-Committee	No	Regulatory (Licensing)	5**	0
22	Licensing Act Sub-Committee	No	Regulatory (Licensing)	3**	10
23	Local Authority School Governor Nomination Sub-Committee	No	Other Meetings	5	4

*General Appeals Sub-Committee and Staffing Appeals Committee Members chosen from a pool of 10.

**General Licensing Act Sub-Committee and Licensing Act Sub-Committee Members chosen from among the 15 Licensing Committee Members.

Source: Democratic Services team administrative data (provided during July-October 2023). Notes: [1] Figures include reserves and non-voting members. [2] Figures in the last column based on meetings held in the 12-month period ending mid July 2023. [2] Electoral Review Sub-Committee not appointed until July 2023. [3] As noted in the “Licensing” section of this submission, the General Licensing Sub-Committee has met only once in the last 18 months, due to a lack of business.

Appendix 5: Council sizes and ratios for Cheshire East and similar local authorities

(Shaded rows indicate councils with a population that was within 20% of the Cheshire East as of 2021. Bold font indicates those authorities identified by CIPFA modelling (<https://www.cipfa.org/services/cipfastats/nearest-neighbour-model>) as most comparable to Cheshire East.)

Name	Population (from 2021 Census)	Local government electors as of Dec 2022	Current number of councillors	Ratio of electors to councillors	New number of councillors proposed or recommended by LGBCE, if applicable (see Note [3] below)	New ratio, if applicable (see Note [3] below)
Buckinghamshire	553,100	412,800	147	2,800	97	4,300
Central Bedfordshire	294,200	219,900	63	3,500	N/A	N/A
Cheshire East	398,800	310,600	82	3,800	N/A	N/A
Cheshire West and Chester	357,200	262,600	70	3,800	N/A	N/A
Cornwall	570,300	431,200	87	5,000	N/A	N/A
Dorset	379,600	297,500	82	3,600	N/A	N/A
Durham	522,100	390,300	126	3,100	98	4,000
East Riding of Yorkshire	342,200	270,100	67	4,000	N/A	N/A
North Northamptonshire	359,500	264,500	78	3,400	68	3,900
North Somerset	216,700	165,500	50	3,300	N/A	N/A
Northumberland	320,600	251,600	67	3,800	69	3,600
Shropshire	323,600	250,100	74	3,400	74	3,400
Solihull	216,200	160,800	51	3,200	51	3,200
South Gloucestershire	290,400	212,000	61	3,500	N/A	N/A
Stockport	294,800	222,800	63	3,500	N/A	N/A
West Northamptonshire	425,700	298,500	93	3,200	76	3,900
Wiltshire	510,400	382,700	98	3,900	N/A	N/A

Sources: [1] List of comparable local authorities identified by CIPFA, LGBCE email to Cheshire East Council, 21st July 2023. [2] 'Population and household estimates for England and Wales: Census 2021' (the first release of results from the 2021 Census of Population for England and Wales), Office for National Statistics (ONS), 28th June 2022. [3] December 2022 local government elector data: 'Electoral statistics, UK, December 2022' data file from ONS' 'Electoral statistics for the UK' release, 20th April 2023: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/elections/electoralregistration/datasets/electoralstatisticsforuk> [4] Councillor numbers: LGBCE electoral data spreadsheet file, downloaded on 14th April 2023 from <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/electoral-data>

Notes: [1] These authorities are ones that were either identified by CIPFA as being comparable to Cheshire East, or which met all the following criteria: English unitary authority; a substantial rural area/ rural population; population (as of 2021) at least half that of Cheshire East, but no more than 50% greater than Cheshire East. [2] Ratios based on local government electorate as of December 2022. [3] Entries in the final two columns applicable only where a review is currently underway or changes from a concluded review have yet to take effect. These two columns take account of LGBCE review proposals and decisions published up to 11 October 2023.

Appendix 6: Workload per councillor, by council size

			Average number of hours spent per week (over a typical three-month period) – see 'CALCULATION APPROACH' note below						
Number of councillors	Average number of Committee positions per councillor (i)	Average number of positions held, including outside organisations (i, ii)	Committee work (iii)	Casework/ ward issues	Additional duties (iv)	Work for outside bodies (v)	Total (all council business) (vi)	Electors per councillor, July 2023	Electors per councillor, December 2023
77	2.8	6.0 (5.1)	4.0	7.8	14.0	2.6	28.3	4,087	4,381
78	2.8	5.9 (5.0)	3.9	7.7	13.8	2.5	27.9	4,034	4,325
79	2.7	5.9 (5.0)	3.9	7.6	13.6	2.5	27.6	3,983	4,270
80	2.7	5.8 (4.9)	3.8	7.5	13.5	2.5	27.2	3,934	4,217
81	2.7	5.7 (4.9)	3.8	7.4	13.3	2.4	26.9	3,885	4,165
82	2.6	5.6 (4.8)	3.8	7.3	13.1	2.4	26.6	3,838	4,114
83	2.6	5.6 (4.7)	3.7	7.2	13.0	2.4	26.3	3,791	4,064
84	2.6	5.5 (4.7)	3.7	7.1	12.8	2.4	25.9	3,746	4,016
85	2.6	5.4 (4.6)	3.6	7.0	12.7	2.3	25.6	3,702	3,969
86	2.5	5.4 (4.6)	3.6	6.9	12.5	2.3	25.3	3,659	3,923
87	2.5	5.3 (4.5)	3.5	6.9	12.4	2.3	25.0	3,617	3,877

CALCULATION APPROACH: Apart from Democratic Services team administrative data recording the average length of Committee meetings, the statistics on the average number of hours spent on council business are derived from the Members Survey undertaken in September-October 2023. As the survey questions asked Members to select a time band (e.g. "Up to two hours", "Two to four hours", etc), it has been assumed for the purposes of the above calculations that the time spent by Members on each activity will, on average, fall within the middle of the band they selected. For example, it is assumed for the above calculations that Members who spent "Four to six hours" a week on casework/ ward issues worked an average of five hours a week on these issues. In cases where Members picked a time band with no upper limit (e.g. "Over twenty hours"), the assumed average for the responses within that band is based on the overall distribution of times selected by the Members who answered that particular question. In particular:

- For preparation/ reading time for each committee meeting, nine hours was taken as a reasonable average to assume for those who said "More than eight hours". This was because only 2% of the committee meetings that Members reported on in the survey were within this band and so the average time taken in these cases is unlikely to be much more than eight.
- When asked about the average amount of time spent per week on casework/ ward issues, nearly half of respondents (46%) said "More than eight hours". Hence it was assumed that the average time for the respondents in this band would be significantly greater than eight. An average of 10 hours is therefore assumed, though this could potentially be an underestimate.

- Given that nearly a quarter (24%) of Members reported spending "Over twenty hours" on dealing with additional duties, it is assumed that the average time spent by the Members in this band is significantly above 20. Given the lack of information about how far beyond 20 hours these working hours might range, it has been assumed that the averages for Members in this band are evenly distributed between 21 and 25 and therefore average out at 23.

Sources: [1] Committee structure and meetings web pages (<http://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>). [2] Democratic Services Team, Cheshire East Council, July-September 2023. [3] Electorate forecasts produced by Cheshire East Council for the current electoral review. [4] Members Survey, September-October 2023.

Notes relating to specific data columns: (i) Figures for committee positions exclude Full Council, which meets an average of six times a year. (ii) For each council size, there are two figures given for the average number of positions held. The first figure (outside the brackets) includes all internal committees/ working groups/ boards/ panels and other outside organisations, including town/ parish council positions. However, the figures in brackets exclude town/ parish council positions. (iii) The figures for hours spent on Committee work include reading/ preparation and travel time as well as time spent in the actual meetings. (iv) 'Additional duties' includes the following roles: Committee chair/ vice-chair, Executive Board member, Group Leader, Group Administrator, Mayor, Town/ Parish Councillor. (v) 'Outside bodies' means only those that Members have been appointed to by the Borough Council. (vi) The figures in the 'Total (all council business)' column are the sum of those in the preceding four columns.

Appendix 7: Member Survey results

Overview

This Appendix sets out in detail the results from the Council's recent survey of Members, which was undertaken to inform the Council's response to the Electoral Review. This survey was open from 8th September until 4th October 2023 and 57% (47) of Cheshire East's 82 Members responded.

Assessment of the survey's representativeness

Comparisons of the survey data with the Council's administrative data suggest that those who responded were broadly representative of all 82 Members. For example, the 47 survey respondents had, on average, 2.7 committee positions (excluding Full Council), which closely matched the average shown in the administrative records (2.6). In addition, the proportion of survey respondents who said they had been appointed to outside bodies (63%) was close to the proportion for all 82 Members (with 50 of them, or 61%, being on such bodies). "Twin-hatted" Members (those who are also town or parish councillors) were a little under-represented: as noted earlier in this submission, 76% of all Members are twin-hatted, but only 62% (29) of the survey respondents were. In that respect, the survey responses may understate the average volume of work arising from town/ parish councillor positions. However, the survey respondents' answers (based on their personal estimates or recollections of meeting frequencies) indicated an average of 8.1 meetings per year for the committees they sat on, compared to administrative records showing this average to be 6.2 when all Members are included. Therefore the survey responses may overstate the average volume of work arising from committee positions. Taking all the survey sample's variances from the 82-Member "population" into account, though, there is no reason to think that the total workload levels indicated by the survey data are significantly skewed, either upwards or downwards, by who did or did not respond to the survey.

Other notes

The final survey question ("Do you believe that you currently have sufficient time and capacity to properly undertake your Councillor duties?") was followed by an invitation for Members to add any comments. To avoid potentially identifying individuals, these comments are not listed in full in this submission. However, some key points are cited in the 'Summary' section of the submission and the collective feedback from these open comments will be followed up internally.

Q1. Please provide your name and the name of the ward which you represent in the space below.			
Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Name (First name, Family name)	100.0%	47
2	Ward Name	100.0%	47
<i>answered</i>			47
<i>skipped</i>			0

Q2. How long have you been a ward Councillor?			
Please select one option only			
Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	1 year or less	38.3%	18
2	2 - 5 years	25.5%	12
3	6 - 10 years	14.9%	7
4	11 + years	21.3%	10
<i>answered</i>			47
<i>skipped</i>			0

Q3. What were your reasons for seeking election to Cheshire East Council?			
Please tick all that apply			
Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	To make a difference	91.5%	43
2	Develop my leadership skills	12.8%	6
3	Have a direct involvement in local decision making	85.1%	40
4	Improve my skills and knowledge	31.9%	15
5	Serve my ward/community	93.6%	44
6	The political "cut and thrust"	14.9%	7
7	Other (please specify):	10.6%	5
		<i>answered</i>	47
		<i>skipped</i>	0

Q4. In addition to your role as a ward Councillor, what other position(s) do you hold within the Council?			
Please tick all that apply			
Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Chair of Committee	27.7%	13
2	Vice Chair of Committee	19.1%	9
3	Executive Board member	6.4%	3
4	Group Leader	6.4%	3
5	Group Administrator	6.4%	3
6	Mayor	6.4%	3
7	Parish/ Town Councillor	61.7%	29
8	None	12.8%	6
9	Other (please specify):	29.8%	14
		<i>answered</i>	47
		<i>skipped</i>	0

Q5. On average, how much time per week do you spend dealing with your areas of additional responsibility?			
Please select one option only, and estimate your average weekly workload, over a typical three-month period			
Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Up to five hours	8.9%	4
2	Six to ten hours	26.7%	12
3	Eleven to fifteen hours	13.3%	6
4	Sixteen to twenty hours	22.2%	10
5	Over twenty hours	24.4%	11
6	N/A	4.4%	2
		<i>answered</i>	45
		<i>skipped</i>	2

Q6. Have you been appointed by the Council to any outside bodies?			
Please select one option only			
Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	63.0%	29
2	No	37.0%	17
		<i>answered</i>	46
		<i>skipped</i>	1

Q7. On average, how much time per week do you spend dealing with work for outside bodies?

Please select one option only, and estimate your average weekly workload, over a typical three-month period

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Up to five hours	45.5%	20
2	Six to ten hours	13.6%	6
3	Eleven to fifteen hours	2.3%	1
4	Sixteen to twenty hours	0.0%	0
5	Over twenty hours	0.0%	0
6	N/A	38.6%	17
<i>answered</i>			44
<i>skipped</i>			3

Q8. How many Committee(s) are you appointed to?

Please select one option only

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	1	12.8%	6
2	2	21.3%	10
3	3	46.8%	22
4	4	19.1%	9
<i>answered</i>			47
<i>skipped</i>			0

Q9. Thinking about the committees which you have been appointed to, how often do they meet?

If you are appointed to one Committee, please complete the first row, two Committees rows 1 and 2, three Committees 1, 2 and 3 and four Committees 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Answer Choice		Each month	Every other month	Quarterly	Twice a year	Ad hoc	N/A	Response Total
1	Committee 1	25	18	2	0	2	0	47
2	Committee 2	13	19	6	0	3	1	42
3	Committee 3	6	13	8	0	4	2	33
4	Committee 4	3	4	2	0	2	3	14
<i>answered</i>								47
<i>skipped</i>								0

Q10. Thinking about the committees to which you have been appointed to, at what time of the day are the meetings usually held?

If you are appointed to one Committee only, please complete the first row, two Committees rows 1 and 2, three Committees 1, 2 and 3 and four Committees 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Answer Choice		Morning	Afternoon	Evening	N/A	Response Total
1	Committee 1	33	13	0	1	47
2	Committee 2	23	15	0	2	40
3	Committee 3	14	15	1	2	32
4	Committee 4	3	7	0	2	12
<i>answered</i>						47
<i>skipped</i>						0

Q11. Thinking about the committees to which you have been appointed to, at which venue are the meetings usually held?						
If you are appointed to one Committee, please complete the first row, two Committees rows 1 and 2, three Committees 1, 2 and 3 and four Committees 1, 2, 3 and 4.						
Answer Choice		Municipal Buildings, Crewe	Town Hall, Macclesfield	Westfields, Sandbach	N/A	Response Total
1	Committee 1	5	10	31	1	47
2	Committee 2	2	11	27	2	42
3	Committee 3	1	2	25	5	33
4	Committee 4	0	1	8	4	13
					<i>answered</i>	47
					<i>skipped</i>	0

Q12. On average, how much time do you spend travelling from your home to each Committee location?								
If you are appointed to one Committee only please complete the first row, two Committees rows 1 and 2, three Committees 1, 2 and 3 and four Committees 1, 2, 3 and 4.								
Please estimate your average travel time, to each committee that you are appointed to, over a typical three-month period								
Answer Choice		Up to two hours	Two to four hours	Four to six hours	Six to eight hours	More than eight hours	N/A	Response Total
1	Committee 1	39	3	1	3	0	0	46
2	Committee 2	35	3	0	3	0	1	42
3	Committee 3	26	2	0	2	0	3	33
4	Committee 4	10	0	0	1	0	2	13
							<i>answered</i>	46
							<i>skipped</i>	1

Q13. On average, how much time per week do you spend preparing/ reading papers for a meeting?								
If you are appointed to one Committee only, please complete the first row, two Committees rows 1 and 2, three Committees 1, 2 and 3 and four Committees 1, 2, 3 and 4.								
Please estimate your average weekly workload over a typical three-month period								
Answer Choice		Up to two hours	Two to four hours	Four to six hours	Six to eight hours	More than eight hours	N/A	Response Total
1	Committee 1	17	17	7	3	3	0	47
2	Committee 2	15	17	6	2	0	2	42
3	Committee 3	15	10	3	1	0	3	32
4	Committee 4	4	7	0	0	0	2	13
							<i>answered</i>	47
							<i>skipped</i>	0

Q14. On average, how much time per week do you spend dealing with case work/ ward issues?			
Please select one option only and estimate your average weekly workload over a typical three-month period			
Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Up to two hours	6.5%	3
2	Two to four hours	10.9%	5
3	Four to six hours	13.0%	6
4	Six to eight hours	23.9%	11
5	More than eight hours	45.7%	21
		<i>answered</i>	46
		<i>skipped</i>	1

Q15. On average, how much time per week do you spend (if you are able to tell) on dealing with *unregistered voters?			
*"unregistered voters" i.e. those who are eligible to vote, but who choose not to be on the Electoral Register, or inadvertently fail to get themselves on the Register			
Please select one option only and estimate your average weekly workload over a typical three-month period			
Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Up to two hours	17.8%	8
2	Two to four hours	4.4%	2
3	Four to six hours	4.4%	2
4	Six to eight hours	0.0%	0
5	More than eight hours	0.0%	0
6	Don't know	73.3%	33
		<i>answered</i>	45
		<i>skipped</i>	2

Q16. Is the time you spend on council business (work as a Councillor) what you expected when you first became a Councillor?

Please select one option only

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	36.2%	17
2	No – I spend more time on council business	63.8%	30
3	No – I spend less time on council business	0.0%	0
		answered	47
		skipped	0

Q17. Has the time you spend on council business (work as a Councillor) increased from when you were first elected?

Please select one option only

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	89.4%	42
2	No	10.6%	5
		answered	47
		skipped	0

Q18. If yes, by how much has your workload increased?

Please select one option only

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Up to 20%	21.4%	9
2	21 - 40%	33.3%	14
3	41 - 60%	21.4%	9
4	61 - 80%	9.5%	4
5	81 - 100%	14.3%	6
<i>answered</i>			42
<i>skipped</i>			5

Q19. When considering what you believe to be a reasonable expectation of a Councillor, and taking into account work/life balance and other considerations, do you consider that your workload as a Councillor keeps you:

Please select one option only

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Under occupied	0.0%	0
2	Appropriately occupied	21.7%	10
3	A little over occupied	45.7%	21
4	Very over occupied	32.6%	15
<i>answered</i>			46
<i>skipped</i>			1

Q20. When are workload (working as a Councillor) demands placed on you the most?

Please tick all that apply

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	All days/ times of the week	60.0%	27
2	Monday - Friday daytime	35.6%	16
3	Monday - Friday evening	13.3%	6
4	Saturday – daytime	11.1%	5
5	Saturday – evening	0.0%	0
6	Sunday – daytime	11.1%	5
7	Sunday – evening	4.4%	2
answered			45
skipped			2

Q21. Do your workload demands impact upon your work-life balance and wellbeing?

Please select one option only

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	76.1%	35
2	No	23.9%	11
answered			46
skipped			1

Q22. If yes, how significant is this impact?

Please select one option only

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Not at all significant	9.8%	4
2	Significant	73.2%	30
3	Very significant	4.9%	2
4	N/A	12.2%	5
<i>answered</i>			41
<i>skipped</i>			6

Q23. Do you believe that you currently have sufficient time and capacity to properly undertake your Councillor duties?

Please select one option only

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	63.8%	30
2	No	36.2%	17
If you have any comments, please use the space provided below			33
<i>answered</i>			47
<i>skipped</i>			0

Cheshire East Council

Council Size Submission: Template

[Cheshire East Council]

Contents

How to Make a Submission.....	2
About You	3
Reason for Review (Request Reviews Only)	3
The Context for your proposal.....	3
Local Authority Profile	8
Council Size	15
Other Issues.....	33
Summary.....	33
Appendix 1: Cheshire East main settlements	41
Appendix 2: Rural and urban areas of Cheshire East	42
Appendix 3: Deprivation in Cheshire East.....	43
Appendix 4: Committee names, types, sizes and frequency of meetings	44
Appendix 5: Council sizes and ratios for Cheshire East and similar local authorities	45
Appendix 6: Workload per councillor, by council size	46
Appendix 7: Member Survey results	48

How to Make a Submission

It is recommended that submissions on future governance arrangements and council size follow the guidance provided and use the format below as a template. Submissions should be treated as an opportunity to focus on the future needs of the council and not simply describe the current arrangements. **Submissions should also demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been considered in drawing up the proposal and why you have discounted them.**

The template allows respondents to enter comments directly under each heading. It is not recommended that responses be unduly long; as a guide, it is anticipated that a 15 to 20-page document using this template should suffice. Individual section length may vary depending on the issues to be explained. Where internal documents are referred to URLs should be provided, rather than the document itself. It is also recommended that a table is included that highlights the key paragraphs for the Commission's attention.

'Good' submissions, i.e. those that are considered to be most robust and persuasive, combine the following *key success components* (as set out in the guidance that accompanies this template):

- Clarity on objectives
- A straightforward and evidence-led style
- An understanding of local place and communities
- An understanding of councillors' roles and responsibilities

Cheshire East Council notes on the colour coding and abbreviations used in this draft response:

- **Blue font** = draft text intended for inclusion in the submission to the Commission.
- **Yellow shading** = brief notes on contributions still awaited, other content still to be confirmed and any important notes regarding redrafting work.

About You

The respondent should use this space to provide the Commission with a little detail about who is making the submission, whether it is the full Council, Officers on behalf of the Council, a political party or group, a resident group, or an individual *(delete from final version)*.

This submission is made on behalf of Cheshire East Council, following its approval by Full Council on 13 December 2023. [Wording of previous sentence based on assumption about future decision, so may need amending.]

Under the Council's Constitution, Full Council is responsible for "approving the Council's response to any issues or proposals in relation to local government boundaries including Electoral Wards, the conduct of elections and community governance functions".

On 11 July 2023, in order to inform the Council decision, the Council's Corporate Policy Committee appointed an Electoral Review Sub-Committee to make recommendations upon all matters relating to the Boundary Commission's s-r Review. These recommendations were considered by the Corporate Policy Committee, prior to the Committee making recommendations to Council. On 30 November 2023, in order to ensure that the Council could comply with the Boundary Commission's deadlines for depositing the final Council-size submission, the Committee delegated authority to the Sub-Committee to finalise the submission, taking into account any comments from the Commission, or any final amendments which the Committee might suggest. [Wording of previous sentence based on assumption about future decision, so may need amending.]

As the Council has a Committee system of decision-making governance, the Sub-Committee and Council committees are required to reflect the Council's overall political proportionalities.

Officers advised the Sub-Committee, Committee and Council throughout the Review process.

Reason for Review (Request Reviews Only)

Not applicable to Cheshire East Council.

The Context for your proposal

Your submission gives you the opportunity to examine how you wish to organise and run the council for the next 15 - 20 years. **The consideration of future governance arrangements and council size should be set in the wider local and national policy context.** The Commission expects you to challenge your current arrangements and determine the most appropriate arrangements going forward. In providing context for your submission below, please demonstrate that you have considered the following issues.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

- ~~• When did your Council last change/reorganise its internal governance arrangements and what impact on effectiveness did that activity have?~~
- ~~• To what extent has transference of strategic and/or service functions impacted on the effectiveness of service delivery and the ability of the Council to focus on its remaining functions?~~
- ~~• Have any governance or capacity issues been raised by any Inspectorate or similar?~~
- ~~• What influence will local and national policy trends likely have on the Council as an institution?~~
- ~~• What impact on the Council's effectiveness will your council size proposal have?~~

Q: When did your Council last change/reorganise its internal governance arrangements and what impact on effectiveness did that activity have?

The Council was created on 1 April 2009 following local government reorganisation in Cheshire. ~~From that date, the Council~~ Initially it had a Leader and Cabinet system of decision-making governance.

However, on 19 November 2020, the Council resolved to implement a Committee system model of governance (following consideration of this report: [Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Council, 19/11/2020 14:00 \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](#)). This governance change took effect in May 2021. This was a choice made by Council following a change of political control in May 2019 and a subsequent period of 18 months of careful consideration of the proposed change in governance, ~~after the May 2019 local elections.~~ One of the aims behind the change in decision-making arrangements was to ensure political proportionality in the making of decisions which had previously been the responsibility of the majority Council political group.

The Council's political proportionality arrangements must comply with relevant legislation. The Council's "service committees", which decide those matters which were previously the responsibility of the Council's Cabinet, have a membership comprising members of the Council's three main political groups.

~~The proposed change to a Committee system of governance had been very carefully considered by the Council over a period of 18 months prior to the decision of Council to move to the new arrangements.~~ Much work went ~~had gone~~ into the design of the new committee structure and the new committee responsibilities. As set out in the Design Principles which Council adopted:

- The new form of governance (Committee system) will be modern, open, transparent and easy to understand. It will include arrangements that enable people to easily find out about how decisions are made. Committee meetings will be held in public by cross party (politically proportionate) committees.
- The new arrangements are intended to ensure that decisions are made quickly, to meet the needs of the Council and local community.

- The number of committees and meetings will be kept to a minimum, and technology used to provide instant access to information and avoid unnecessary paperwork. ~~Paper copies will be provided upon request by Members.~~
- There will be a process to deal with those rare instances where urgent decisions are needed. This process will be clear and, in most cases, open to the public.
- ~~The Committee system of governance has been in operation for approaching three years. Whilst some Members of the Council might prefer a Leader and Cabinet system, no strongly argued substantive views or evidence seems to have been put forward or requested which might question the effectiveness of the current governance arrangements.~~

Council decision-making and business planning arrangements are working effectively and are delivering services in line with the Council's Corporate Plan, and budget policy framework as set out in the Council's Constitution. The key strategic document is the Council's Corporate Plan which covers the period 2021-2025. All Committee decision reports state how the decision supports achievement of the priorities of the Corporate Plan. Resources to support decisions are determined through the Council's budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Organisational performance against Corporate Plan priorities is reported to the Corporate Policy Committee on a quarterly basis. Each individual staff member has a personal development review, setting objectives which link into a Service Plan, Directorate Plan and the Corporate Plan. This ensures that everyone can see the "golden thread" of how their work contributes to the overall success of the Council. The Council's Corporate Plan is currently being refreshed and a revised plan is scheduled to be launched by 1 April 2024.

Whilst, following a resolution to do so, the Council could not choose to change its decision-making arrangements for a period of five years, the way in which its Committee system operates could be changed: for example, by making changes to the number of service committees and their functions/ responsibilities, or to the Council's Constitution, so as to improve the Council's Committee system arrangements.

The Council's committee structure has already been reviewed, resulting in the removal of one sub-committee from the structure. A further review of the structure is taking place, taking into account the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the Design Principles. Full Council has already considered the Council's planning committee structure and a proposal to reduce the number of planning committees from three to two and a further report will be considered by Council in due course. This demonstrates that the existing arrangements are being assessed against the Design Principles agreed by Council, in order to ensure that they are effective.

It also demonstrates that the Council actively reviews its arrangements in order to ensure that they are generally fit for purpose.

Q: To what extent has transference of strategic and/or service functions impacted on the effectiveness of service delivery and the ability of the Council to focus on its remaining functions?

The management of the Council's involvement in wholly owned companies, which are referred to in the Council's Constitution as 'ASDVs' (Alternative Service Delivery Vehicles), is overseen by the Council's Finance Sub-Committee, the responsibilities of which are set out in paragraph 2.6 of chapter 2, part 4 of the Constitution.

A small number of Cheshire East Council services are shared with Cheshire West and Chester Council, for example ICT and transactional services such as payroll. Cheshire East Council **must take** decisions by a politically proportionate committee, or by an officer with delegated powers from the Council to do so.

These shared service arrangements are delivered in line with the responsibilities of the Shared Services Joint Committee, whose purpose is "to oversee the management of those services which are provided on a Cheshire wide basis on behalf of Cheshire West and Chester Council and Cheshire East Council to ensure effective delivery of such services and to provide strategic direction." The Committee is administered on alternate years by each Council. The Design Principles sought to emphasise the need for a new governance model which would reflect modern best practice, maximise the use of information technology, and ensure streamlined, efficient and quick decision-making. They were not intended to replicate every element of a traditional Committee system which used to operate prior to the Local Government Act 2000, but sought to facilitate the provision of a bespoke modern Committee system to meet the contemporary needs of Cheshire East Council and its residents.

Whilst, following a resolution to do so, the Council could not choose to change its decision-making arrangements for a period of five years, the way in which its Committee system operates could be changed. For example, the number of service committees and their functions/responsibilities could be changed. Other changes could be made to the Council's Constitution, in the same way as currently takes place, so as to improve the Council's Committee system arrangements.

Indeed, the Council's committee structure has already been reviewed, resulting in the removal of one sub-committee from the structure. A further review is taking place, which will examine the structure again, taking into account the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Design Principles. At the time of preparation of this submission, Full Council had already considered the Council's planning committee structure and a proposal to reduce the number of planning committees from three to two and a further report will be considered by Council in due course. This demonstrates that the existing arrangements are being assessed against the Design Principles agreed by Council, in order to ensure that they are effective.

It also demonstrates that the Council actively reviews its arrangements in order to ensure that they are generally fit for purpose. One of the considerations relating to the planning committee structure was that there continues to be a member vacancy on one of the committees, which has subsisted since May 2023. This difficulty in filling committee positions provides some evidence of the workload of the Council's members.

A survey of the Council's members has also been undertaken

Q: Have any governance or capacity issues been raised by any Inspectorate or similar?

The Council received a report following a Joint Targeted Area Inspection in September 2022. Although this did not identify governance or capacity issues for the Council directly, it did find strategic weaknesses in the Local Safeguarding Childrens Partnership, a multi-agency partnership of which the Council is a member. Over the past year the Partnership have been progressing an Improvement Plan to address the challenges identified.

A Public Interest Report on the impact of the council's culture and governance arrangements during 2014-2018 was published in January 2023. The issues identified during this period led to the Council transitioning its governance arrangements from the Leader and Cabinet system to the current Committee system. The Public Interest Report states that "it is clear that the Council has done a great deal to move on from this period in its relatively short lifetime".

Q: What influence will local and national policy trends likely have on the Council as an institution?

Policy trends, and any necessary changes in strategy, are managed in accordance with the Council's constitution and governance arrangements. Current policy challenges include the impact of the cancellation of the HS2 route from Birmingham to Manchester, the dissolution of Local Enterprise Partnerships, the development of Integrated Health and Social Care systems, and the Levelling up/ devolution agenda. Any influences of these emerging policies are presented through the decision-making processes of the Council.

Discussions around a potential Cheshire devolution agreement are at an early stage, but any clear proposals across Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington would be decided through Council.

Q: What impact on the Council's effectiveness will your council size proposal have?

It will maintain sufficient provision to ensure ensure that:

- Members and Committees have sufficient time and resources to consult residents and other stakeholders adequately and make informed, evidence-based decisions. The Council's recent survey of Members (summarised later in this submission) shows a large proportion (over a third) of Members currently feel they have insufficient capacity to undertake their duties properly.
- Council services are are scrutinised through the relevant service committee. subjected to thorough scrutiny and shortcomings addressed promptly and effectively.
- The scrutiny committee is limited to examining external partnerships of health, crime and disorder and flooding. Other local services (ones not provided by the Council, such as health, fire and police) are also properly scrutinised.
- Members have sufficient time to engage with residents, businesses, town/ parish councils and external partner organisations, and to tackle casework, rather than having little or no time spare outside of Committee meetings and preparation for those meetings.
- Members have sufficient time to assess and address the needs of the Borough's most vulnerable residents, such as those in deprived areas of Cheshire East and older people/ children.

- Councillor workloads ~~are remain~~ manageable enough to attract a diverse array of people (different age groups, social/ ~~and~~ ethnic groups, household types, occupations, etc), who can offer a broader range of skills/ ~~and~~ experience and ~~who will~~ be more representative of the local community.
- Rural wards cover a manageable area with communities that councillors can reach within a reasonable travel time and adequately serve.
- Rural ward Members representing large numbers of parishes have adequate time to meet and support their parish councils.

~~In reaching its decision about the appropriate council size, the Council has taken a long term view, based upon what it understands of the likely national and local policy context, over the period of the next 15-20 years.~~

Local Authority Profile

Please provide a short description of the authority and its setting, in particular the local geography, demographics and community characteristics. This should set the scene for the Commission and give it a greater understanding of any current issues. The description should cover all of the following:

- Brief outline of area - are there any notable geographic constraints for example that may affect the review?
- Rural or urban - what are the characteristics of the authority?
- Demographic pressures - such as distinctive age profiles, migrant or transient populations, is there any large growth anticipated?
- Community characteristics – is there presence of “hidden” or otherwise complex deprivation?
- Are there any other constraints, challenges, issues or changes ahead?

Further to providing a description, the Commission will be looking for a submission that demonstrates an understanding of place and communities by putting forth arguments on council size based upon local evidence and insight. For example, how does local geography, demographics and community characteristics impact on councillor casework, workload and community engagement?

Current population and general overview of the Borough¹

Cheshire East is the third largest unitary authority (in population terms) in the North West, with a population of 398,800 at the time of the 2021 Census and 400,500² as of mid-2021. It covers an area of 1,166 square kilometres.

The whole of Cheshire East is parished. Following the Community Governance Review changes that came into effect in April 2023, there are 12 town councils, 90 parish councils and four parish meetings. A number of parishes group themselves together for administrative purposes. In total, there are ~~124~~ 120 parishes in the Borough.

¹ Except where specified otherwise, the population data cited in this section are from 2021 Census tables, Office for National Statistics (ONS), NOMIS.

² Mid-year population estimates for 2021, ONS, December 2022.

The Borough has very good transport road and rail links; nearly all its towns are close to the M6 or M56 and all but one have a train station. These transport links, along with the Borough's ~~its~~ attractive rural areas and proximity to major cities such as Manchester, contribute to its overall economic strength, with major employers such as Bentley and AstraZeneca located in Cheshire East and many highly-qualified workers choosing to live here. ~~The M6 runs along a north-south path through the centre of the Borough, connecting the area to Staffordshire, Birmingham and the rest of the West Midlands conurbation, Lancashire and Cumbria. The M56 provides access to Greater Manchester, Merseyside and North Wales. Most of Cheshire East's towns are relatively close to one of these motorways and all but one of its towns (Middlewich) have a train station.~~

Cheshire East also contains attractions and institutions that are of national or international importance³:

- Tatton Park is one of England's 20 most popular "paid" visitor attractions, with around 700,000 to 800,000 visitors a year. ~~The Borough Council is responsible for the management and financing of the Park and part-funds its operating costs.~~
- The Jodrell Bank Observatory site, which is part of including the Discovery Centre and the world-famous Lovell Radio Telescope, is one of the main sites occupied by the world-renowned Jodrell Bank Centre for Astrophysics. The site Discovery Centre sometimes receives up to 150,000 or more visitors a year.

~~Other historic sites also bring in large numbers of visitors – most notably Lyme Park & Gardens also has large numbers of visitors (over 325,000 visitors in 2022), as do and Quarry Bank Mill & Gardens (nearly 250,000) – and as does the Peak District National Park area of the Borough.~~

The Borough consists of several towns of varying sizes, along with an extensive rural area covering many villages and smaller settlements. As the 2021 Census results show, Crewe (population 75,700)⁴ and the town of Macclesfield (population 53,200) are the largest conurbations. ~~(The "Crewe" population figure quoted here includes the large number of residents living in the parishes of Leighton, Willaston and Wistaston, as well as the area covered by Crewe Town Council.)~~ The other main centres of population are the towns of Alsager, Congleton, Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow (each with populations between 12,000 and 30,000) and Bollington and Handforth (with populations of 7,000 to 8,000). (For a map showing the geographical areas these settlement figures relate to, see Appendix 1.⁵)

³ Visitor number figures taken from the data files (covering 2017-22) released as part of the 2022 Annual Survey of Visits to Visitor Attractions, VisitBritain & VisitEngland, July 2023.

⁴ This "Crewe" definition covers the whole of Crewe Town Council, but also the whole residential population of the parishes of Rope, Willaston, Wistaston and Woolstanwood, most of the residential population in the parish of Leighton, and parts of the parish of Shavington (the Gresty Brook parish ward and the part of the Chatsworth Park housing estate).

⁵ In this submission, the geographical definitions used for each settlement are (except where stated otherwise) those set out in Appendix 6 of the Cheshire East 'LDF Background Report: Determining the Settlement Hierarchy', Cheshire East Council, November 2010. For all towns apart from Crewe, these Settlement Hierarchy definitions correspond very broadly to the areas covered by Cheshire East's town councils.

However, nearly two fifths of the population (38.9%, based on 2021 Census data) live in rural areas⁶ and these rural areas include some sparsely populated and in some cases relatively isolated settlements, particularly in the areas to the west of Nantwich and to the east of Macclesfield. (For a map showing how these rural areas are defined, see Appendix 2.)

The Peak District National Park covers an extensive area of Cheshire East, including parts of three Borough wards (Gawsworth, Poynton East and Pott Shrigley, and Sutton), ~~and several parishes.~~ Some of the parishes in the Peak Park area are geographically large and include some very isolated hamlets, often at high elevations. Settlements at high altitudes, along with physical barriers, geographical distance and the level (or lack) of local infrastructure, amenities and service provision mean that some of these rural communities have quite different interests and ties than do other parts of the same Borough ward. ~~(also a feature in some other parts of the Borough) present their own distinct local challenges that add to the demands on local Members, such as keeping roads open and transporting agricultural goods in bad weather. In some cases, factors such as physical barriers, geographical distance, local infrastructure and the level (or lack) of amenities and local service provision mean that some of these rural communities have quite different interests and ties to other parts of the same Borough ward. This range and variation in characteristics and needs, even within the same Borough ward,~~ This can add to the workload faced by Members in this part of the Borough.

Compared to England as a whole, Cheshire East has a relatively old population, with 22.5% of residents aged 65 and above as of mid-2021 (against the England average of 18.5%).⁷

The population is somewhat older still in rural parts of the Borough (where 24.9% are aged 65 and above). This is likely to increase the demands on rural ward Members, given the presence of many elderly residents (whose age and health may restrict their ability to travel) in more remote areas where transport links are limited.

~~The Census data indicate that the Borough's population is less ethnically diverse than many other local authorities, with o~~Only 5.6% of the Borough's population classifying themselves as non-white, compared to an England average of 19.0%. However, the non-white proportion is significantly higher in the towns of Handforth (13.3%), and Wilmslow (11.5%), ~~than elsewhere and also well above the Borough average in Crewe (8.6%) and Alderley Edge (7.8%), reflecting the ethnic diversity of these urban areas of the Borough.~~ [Extra wording at end of this paragraph added, to reflect feedback from a Policy Briefing Member about the general ethnic diversity of towns such as Crewe and the fact that their ethnic composition is not limited to a small number of specific communities (such as the East Timorese) that are highlighted later in this section.]

⁶ The rural-urban classification used here is the 2015 Rural-Urban Classification produced by the Research & Consultation Team, Cheshire East Council.

⁷ Mid-year population estimates for 2021, ONS, December 2022.

Like many other parts of the UK, Cheshire East saw a significant inflow of migrants from Eastern Europe in the early 2000s. Many are still living in the Borough and are very heavily concentrated in Crewe. ~~As of 2021, the proportion of residents born in one of the 'EU8' or 'EU2' Eastern European countries exceeded 15% in three of the town's six Borough wards (compared to an England average of around 3%).~~

~~Evidence published in 2015 by the University of Oxford's COMPAS migration research centre identifies Crewe is as one of several UK towns where there is a significant East Timorese community.⁸ (Many East Timorese have had the right to a Portuguese passport, allowing them to live and work in UK as Portuguese citizens.) Local community leaders estimate that there could be as many as 2,000 East Timorese living in Crewe.⁹ 2021 Census statistics (using the number of Portuguese passport-holding residents as a proxy perhaps an undercount) suggest a lower, but still very large number of East Timorese (around 900) living in : they show the town's six wards (and predominantly in Crewe South). include around 900 residents with Portuguese passports.~~

~~There is also a small but significant Gypsy/ Irish Traveller community (345 people as of Census Day 2021), with two thirds of them living either in Crewe or in the towns of Congleton, Sandbach and Middlewich.~~

~~In some parts of the Borough, particularly areas of deprivation, evidence suggests that electoral registration rates are relatively low and therefore elector numbers significantly understate the volume of work that Members face. An indication of these geographical variations in electoral registration rates can be obtained by calculating, for each Borough ward, the ratio of the electorate to the adult (age 18 and above) resident population. For this purpose, the Borough Council has used 2021 Census population data and the closest matching date for which Electoral Register data were available (December 2020¹⁰). For the Borough as a whole, this ratio is 0.96, but for five wards, including four of Crewe's six wards (all of which contain neighbourhoods that rank among England's most deprived 20%), it is below 0.90¹¹ and is only 0.79 in Crewe Central and Crewe South.¹²~~

Recent and future population growth

Evidence from the 2011 and 2021 Censuses indicates that, between 2011 and 2021, Cheshire East's population increased by 7.7%, which was above the England average (6.6%). Whilst the population rose in the vast majority of the Borough's main 24 settlements (see the map in

⁸ 'Backing themselves: East Timorese labour migrants in Oxford', COMPAS, 14th April 2015: <https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2015/backing-themselves-east-timorese-labour-migrants-in-oxford/>

⁹ Source: Public Health Team, Cheshire East Council, August 2023.

¹⁰ Census Day 2021 was 21st March 2021.

¹¹ Sources: [1] Electoral Register data, Cheshire East Council. [2] 2021 Census tables, Office for National Statistics (ONS), NOMIS; [3] English Indices of Deprivation 2019, Ministry of Communities and Local Government (now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities), September 2019.

¹² These ratios should be seen only as indicative of registration rates, given that (a) the population and electoral data relate to dates a few months apart, (b) Census Day 2021 coincided with a COVID-19 lockdown and hence affected some people's Census responses about their place of residence and (c) ONS made minor adjustments to some 2021 Census statistics prior to publication, in order to avoid disclosing personal information about individuals.

Appendix 1 for a list and definition of these settlements), this ~~rate-growth rate~~ varied significantly across the Borough, largely reflecting the geographical distribution of new housing developments. Shavington (up 46.5%), Chelford (25.3%), Sandbach (22.0%), Holmes Chapel (19.0%), Alsager (13.7%), Audlem (11.9%) and Disley (11.3%) all saw population increases of more than 10%. In absolute terms, population growth during 2011-21 was greatest in Sandbach (3,900) and Crewe (3,000). (These figures are based on settlement boundary definitions developed by the Borough Council in 2010 – and shown in Appendix 1 –, so some – such as the Sandbach figure – would be much higher still if adjusted to include new housing developments that have expanded the Borough’s main urban areas outwards.) ~~These high-growth settlements are generally ones where major housing developments have occurred between 2011 and 2021. Conversely, population levels fell slightly (in each case by less than 200) in Alderley Edge, Haslington and Poynton.~~ [Some revisions have been made to this paragraph in order to reflect feedback from a Policy Briefing Member about (a) the significance of recent housing/ population growth in the Crewe area in absolute terms, and (b) the need for clarity over the identities and geographical definitions of other (unnamed) towns and settlements that the commentary refers to.]

~~As for future population change, the~~ The Office for National Statistics’ latest (2018-based) subnational population projections (SNPPs)¹³ provide the most recently published official statistics on projected future population numbers at local authority level ~~and may understandably be regarded by some as the most reliable source to refer to~~. However, these projections were released in early 2020 and the 2021 Census evidence now available indicates that the SNPPs have (so far) been significantly underestimating Cheshire East’s population growth since 2018.

For Cheshire East, the 2018-based SNPPs projected that the population would increase from 380,800 (2018) to 387,000 by 2021 and would not exceed 400,000 until ~~2029 after 2028 (its projection for 2029 is 400,900)~~. However, ONS’ population estimate for mid-2021 (published in December 2022 and factoring in the 2021 Census evidence) puts the mid-2021 population at 400,500. In other words, it appears that, even by mid-2021, the 2018-based SNPPs were under-estimating the Borough’s population by around 13,500 (about 3.4%).

Furthermore, the 2018-based SNPPs’ projected population growth for 2021-29 equates to an annual average growth rate of 0.44%. It is reasonable to question whether the growth rate over this period will turn out to be that low, given that:

- (a) Population growth in Cheshire East has historically been somewhat higher, averaging 0.78% a year between 2011 and 2021 and 0.52% a year between 2001 and 2011.¹⁴
- (b) ~~The Cheshire East’s~~ high volumes of housing completions, ~~(which began in the later 2010s, and will have contributed to the 2011-21 population-growth rate)~~, have continued up to 2023 and may persist beyond that. During the 10 years from 2011/12 to 2020/21 inclusive, net completions averaged 1,740 per annum. ~~However, in 2021/22 (a year which mostly falls after the mid-2021 date of ONS’ latest mid-year~~

¹³ ‘Subnational population projections for England: 2018-based’, ONS, March 2020.

¹⁴ ONS mid-year population estimates (December 2022 release).

~~population estimates) and in 2021/22 they reached 2,779.¹⁵ Furthermore, the Borough Council housing database actual housing completions figures and forecasts used for this Electoral Review's electorate forecasting work point to around 2,300 net completions between April 2022 and March 2023, with and 2,700 more forecast for the period April to December 2023 and an average of around 2,100 a year forecast for the calendar years 2024 to 2029. For the six-year period from January 2024 to December 2029, the housing forecasts indicate an average of around 2,100 net completions a year.~~

~~Looking at the evidence available to date, in contrast, the population forecasts produced in 2015 by Opinion Research Services (ORS) for the Local Plan Strategy, which are would appear to provide the most accurate projection or forecast of actual population change up to 2021. The ORS forecast—based on the level of housing provision proposed (and later adopted) for the 2010-30 Local Plan Strategy, indicated —was that Cheshire East's population would reach 401,100 by mid-2021 (close to ONS' mid-2021 estimate of 400,500).~~

Hence the Borough Council believes that ORS' forecasts are currently considered to be the most reliable indicator of likely future population change, up to 2029. With this in mind, it should be noted that the ORS forecasts¹⁶ predict that:

- the Borough's population will reach 404,300 in 2022 and 424,500 by 2029;
- whilst the total population will increase by 5.8% between 2021 and 2029, the number of residents aged 65 and above will grow by 20.5%.

The ORS forecasts for the Local Plan did not produce population forecasts below local authority level. However, the electorate forecasts produced for this ~~Electoral~~ Review are heavily informed by the Borough's forecasts of future housing development, which and these latter forecasts provide a guide as to the scale and geographical distribution of housing and population growth up to 2029. These housing forecasts indicate that the total number of residential properties across the Borough will increase by around 8% between July 2023 and December 2029, but with wide variations. ~~However, the expected housing growth over that period (which is closely correlated with the expected 2023-29 electorate growth) varies widely between Borough wards, ranging from less than 0.5% in some wards to more than 15% in eight wards, with this growth expected to be around 50% in two of those wards (Brereton Rural and Leighton). Clearly those~~ Members in Borough wards with the highest housing growth rates will face increased workloads, both in the short term (as they are required to deal with issues arising during the construction work on the new housing sites) and in the longer term (because of the larger electorates arising from a much-increased local housing stock).

¹⁵ The historic housing completions figures quoted here relate to 12-month periods running from April to March.

¹⁶ Population and housing forecasts produced by Opinion Research Services (ORS) for the Cheshire East Housing Development Study 2015, ORS, June 2015.

Deprivation¹⁷

~~Despite its economic strengths, Cheshire East~~ ~~Although Cheshire East has relatively fewer pockets of deprivation than many other local authorities, it does contain~~ some of England's most deprived neighbourhoods, most of them in Crewe, but with some in other (mainly urban) parts of the Borough (see the map in Appendix 3Map 1). Furthermore, some areas of Cheshire East rank among England's worst 1% for specific kinds of deprivation.

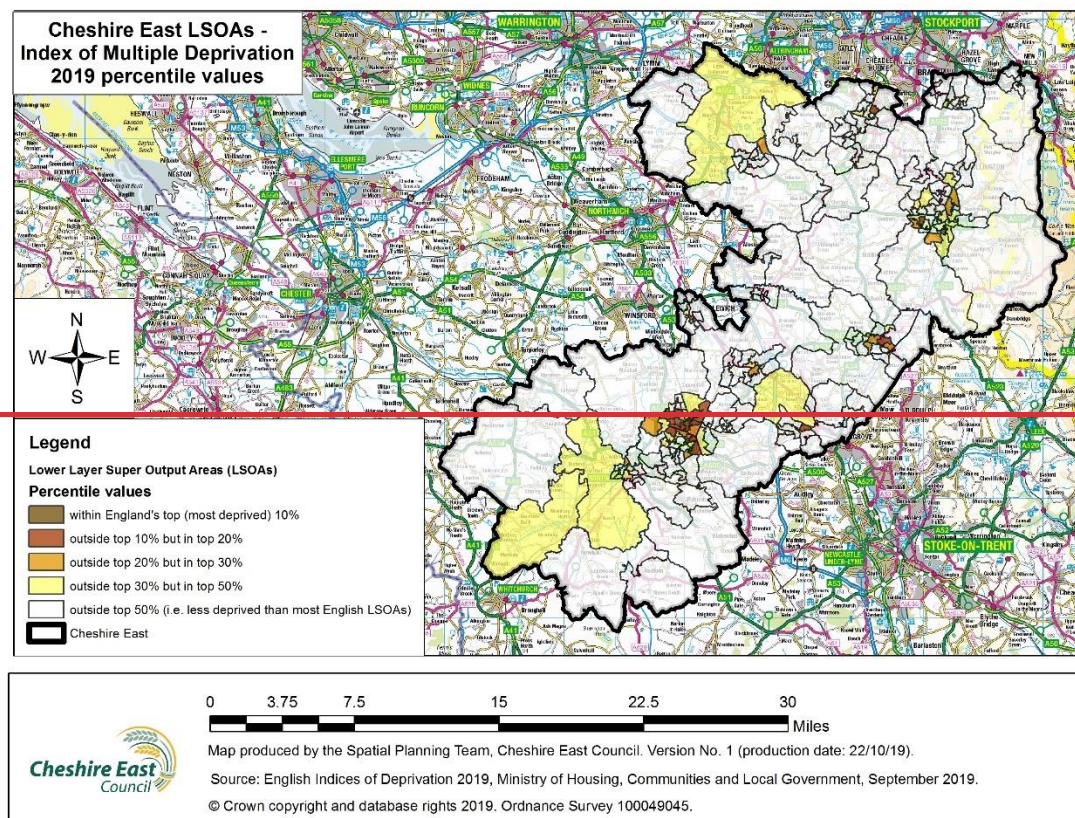
The latest (2019) English Indices of Deprivation shows that, of Cheshire East's 234 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs), 18 (7.7%) ranked among the 20% most deprived LSOAs in England for overall deprivation.¹⁸ These included 13 (more than quarter) of the 47 LSOAs in Crewe, as well as two LSOAs in Macclesfield and one each in Alsager, Congleton and Wilmslow. Of the 18 LSOAs that are among England's most deprived 20% for overall deprivation, four (three in Crewe and one in Macclesfield) rank among the worst (most deprived) 10% of LSOAs nationally and one of these (in Crewe) ranks among the worst 5% nationally.

There are five LSOAs in the Borough which are within England's most deprived 1% for one of Indices of Deprivation's sub-domains. Four of these – all in rural areas ~~and outside the Borough's main 24 settlements~~ – are in the worst 1% of the Barriers to Housing & Services domain's 'Geographical Barriers' sub-domain (which measures the proximity of key services, such as a GP surgery and a general store/ supermarket). The other one, ~~which is~~ in Crewe, is in the worst 1% for the Education, Skills & Training Deprivation domain's 'Children and Young People' sub-domain (which measures the educational performance of young people).

~~Map 1: Deprivation in Cheshire East~~

¹⁷ English Indices of Deprivation 2019, Ministry of Communities and Local Government (now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities), September 2019. The figures cited here are based on the numbers and boundaries of Cheshire East Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in existence at the time the 2019 Indices were produced, rather than to the revised LSOA boundaries that came into being in the wake of the 2021 Census evidence.

¹⁸ In this context, "overall deprivation" means the English Indices of Deprivation's Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).



Council Size

The Commission believes that councillors have three broad aspects to their role.

These are categorised as: **Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulatory and Partnerships), and Community Leadership.**

Submissions should address each of these in turn and provide supporting evidence. Prompts in the boxes below should help shape responses.

Strategic Leadership

Respondents should provide the Commission with details as to how elected members will provide strategic leadership for the authority.

Responses should also indicate how many members will be required for this role and why this is justified. **Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Topic	
Governance Model	<p>Key lines of explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What governance model will your authority operate? e.g. Committee System, Executive or other? ➤ The Cabinet model, for example, usually requires 6 to 10 members. How many members will you require? ➤ If the authority runs a Committee system, we want to understand why the number and size of the committees you propose represents the most appropriate for the authority. ➤ By what process does the council aim to formulate strategic and operational policies? How will members in executive, executive support and/or scrutiny positions be involved? What particular demands will this make of them? ➤ Whichever governance model you currently operate, a simple assertion that you want to keep the current structure does not in itself, provide an explanation of why that structure best meets the needs of the council and your communities.
	<p>Analysis</p> <p><u>The key strategic document for the Council is the Corporate Plan, which was adopted in 2021: Corporate Plan (cheshireeast.gov.uk). The policy framework for the Council is contained within the Council's Constitution: Cheshire East Council Constitution</u></p> <p><u>As indicated above, the Council operates a The Council proposes that its Committee system model of governance be retained, given the evidence (cited earlier in this submission) that this model has proved to be effective. See</u></p> <p><u>Chapter 2, Part 4 of the Council's Constitution, which shows the responsibilities of all of the Council's committees, from the service committees of 13 Members, which make decisions previously made by the Council's Cabinet, and the Scrutiny Committee of 13 mMembers, to the regulatory committees, such as the planning and licensing committees, which have these having 12 and 15 Members respectively. In total, there are 23 committees. 14 of these are "standing committees" (those appointed by Council, not including sub-committees, outside organisations or working groups). Appendix 4 of this submission lists each committee, its number of Members and gives an indication (based on the 12-month period ending mid July 2023) of the frequency of its meetings. More detailed information on the Council committees can be seen here:</u></p> <p><u>cheshire-east-council-constitution-chapter-2-july-2023-v2.pdf (cheshireeast.gov.uk)</u></p>

A structure chart of the Council's committees can be seen in Chapter 2, Part 1 of the Constitution.- From time to time, the "standing committees" ~~(those appointed by Council, not including sub-committees, outside organisations or working groups)~~ appoint sub-committees to undertake specific work. One example of this is the appointment by the Corporate Policy Committee, of the Electoral Review Sub-Committee, which was specifically appointed to make recommendations to the Committee in respect of the Boundary Commission's review of the Council's electoral arrangements.

~~Taking into account only the standing committees, there are 167 committee places to fill, from a total of 82 Cheshire East Councillors; on average, approximately two committee places per Councillor. However, as shown by the table below, 31 Members have fewer than two standing committee places. This is possibly due to Councillor workload, capacity or employment issues.~~

Number of Members	Number of standing committee positions held
2	0
29	1
24	2
21	3
5	4
4	5

~~Much work, however, is undertaken by the Council's sub-committees and working groups, as well as outside organisations. As indicated by the data in Table 2 (in the Summary section of this submission), the Borough's Members currently hold an average of 2.6 Committee positions, in addition to attendance at Full Council.~~

~~Whilst it is accepted that the Commission's review relates only to Cheshire East Council's electoral arrangements, it is worthy of note that X Cheshire East Councillors are also members of the Borough's town and parish councils and play an important part in representing Cheshire East Council views in that capacity. The following link provides details of our 82 Councillors: Your Councillors | Cheshire East Council These can be filtered by name, political party, political group or ward.~~

		<p>Upon the introduction of the Committee system of governance, the Council retained many of its these standing committees. When the arrangements changed, the Council's Cabinet was replaced by <u>six "service committees" of 13 Members and a Finance Sub-Committee of eight Members</u>. seven "service committees" of 13 members each (except for the Finance Sub-Committee which has eight members but is, in theory, a service committee).</p> <p>For the committees which were retained under the new governance arrangements, the approach taken was not simply to replicate the previous structure and membership numbers for convenience. The Council has been in existence since 2009, and therefore has experience of the way in which this number of committees operate and perform, taking into account their memberships.</p> <p>The committee structure and number of committees have been found to be robust and effective <u>(taking into account committee workloads and the need for political balance)</u>. the workloads of each committee, as well as the need to ensure that there is an appropriate political balance on each body.</p> <p>However, the Council actively pursues change, where this is felt to be needed. At the time of writing this submission, the plan in particular, as noted earlier, the planning committee structure is currently remains under review, with a proposal to reduce the number of planning committees from three to two. The fact that the review is taking place in itself, demonstrates the willingness and openness of the Council to make changes where these might be beneficial to the Council and its residents.</p> <p>Turning to the <u>six seven service committees and the Finance Sub-Committee</u>, which replaced the Council's Cabinet under its previous governance arrangements, the Council recognises that it must <u>also</u> keep these under review. This was noted in the report to Full Council on 19 November 2020, in relation to the Design Principles (referred to above).</p> <p>Indeed, the Council has already agreed one change to the original service committee structure <u>and their responsibilities</u>, by removing the Public Rights of Way Sub-Committee, and by empowering the Council's Highways and Transport Committee to take over its functions.</p> <p>Officers continue to explore whether the number and size of the service committees should change and, in doing so, are guided by the Design Principles referred to. In the light of the Medium-Term Financial</p>
--	--	--

		<p>Strategy, agreed by Council in February 2023, officers are exploring whether savings can be made by reducing the number of service and regulatory committees.</p> <p>In short, the Council is (and can demonstrate that it is) prepared to make changes to the Committee structure and membership numbers of committees, where required to ensure that the Council is effective and efficient in making decisions. Subject to any further changes which may emerge over the coming months, the Council is satisfied with the structure and membership numbers of committees, firmly believing that these are right for the Council now, and into the future, insofar as this can be seen.</p> <p><u>The member survey evidence possibly suggests a shortage of capacity among Members. It is not clear if this relates to the size and number of Members on each committee or other factors.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Although there are, on average, approximately two standing committee places per Councillor, 29 Members sit on only one (and two are on none at all).</u> <u>As shown in Table 1 below, the number of committee positions (including all types of committees) averages out at 2.6 per Member. However, Members' capacity to undertake committee work depends on their commitments to other meetings and the roles they fill within local partner organisations. As Table 1 also indicates, the number of non-committee positions averages out at around one working group/ board/ panel, one town/ parish councillor position (62 of the Council's 82 Members are town/ parish councillors) and one other outside organisation per Member. Hence there is an overall average (including committee positions) of 5.6 positions per Member, but with some Members holding many more positions than that (one, for example, is appointed to 10 outside organisations).</u> <u>As noted later in this submission, there are existing difficulties in filling some committee positions, notably the Licensing Act Sub-Committee.</u> <p><u>As these issues appear to stem, at least in part, from a shortage of capacity, not from the model of governance, the Council believes that they are best addressed through ongoing reviews of and adjustments to the committee structure.</u></p>
--	--	--

Table 1: Summary of Members' internal and external positions

	<u>Number of positions</u>	<u>Number of Members involved</u>	<u>Average number of positions held per Member**</u>	<u>Highest number of positions held by any one Member</u>
<u>Standing committees</u>	<u>167</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>2.0</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>of which: involved in making 'major' decision-making committees*</u>	<u>86</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>1.0</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Other committees (including sub- committees)</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>0.6</u>	<u>2 to 4***</u>
<u>Working groups/ boards/ panels</u>	<u>78</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>1.0</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Outside organisations (excluding town and parish councils)</u>	<u>98</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>1.2</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Town and parish councils</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>0.9</u>	<u>3</u>

*Figures for 'major' decision-making committees relate to membership of the six service committees and the Finance Sub-Committee (which comprise some but not all of the standing committees). Apart from this, all the categories listed in Table 1 are mutually exclusive.

**The averages shown in the fourth column are averaged across all Members, including those not involved in the specified type of meeting/ organisation: that is, they are calculated by dividing each of the figures in the second column by 82.

***The figure for the highest number of "other" (non-standing) committee positions depends on the allocation of positions on the General Licensing Sub-Committee and Licensing Act Sub-Committee (whose membership is drawn from the 15-Member Licensing Committee), as one Licensing Committee Member also belongs to two of the "other" committees.

It can also be seen from the Council's decision-making structure that the Council has large committee memberships and, therefore, high levels of engagement in the decision-making process by the Council's members. The Council believes that this is a feature of Committee system decision-making, in comparison with lower levels of engagement of "backbench" members in the decision-making processes of Leader and Cabinet forms of governance.

Portfolios	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How many portfolios will there be? ➤ What will the role of a portfolio holder be? ➤ Will this be a full-time position? ➤ Will decisions be delegated to portfolio holders? Or will the executive/mayor take decisions?
	Analysis	<p><u>Not applicable to the Council in the strict sense of a portfolio holder under a Leader and Cabinet style of decision-making governance. However, the chairs and vice chairs of the Council's service committees, as well as the lead opposition members, have key roles as a consequence of these positions. The chairs of the service committees are all members of the Council's Corporate Policy Committee, which deals with the overarching policy matters, and has power to determine matters which cross over the responsibilities of one or more of the service committees.</u></p>
Delegated Responsibilities	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What responsibilities will be delegated to officers or committees? ➤ How many councillors will be involved in taking major decisions?
	Analysis	<p>Chapter 2, Part 2 of the Council's Constitution sets out the decision-making arrangements of the Council: cheshire-east-council-constitution-chapter-2-july-2023-v2.pdf (cheshireeast.gov.uk). This Chapter includes the delegations to committees and to officers of the Council <u>and committees' terms of reference.</u></p> <p>The information providedAs noted earlier in this submission, illustrates that the Council keeps its decision-making arrangements under review. Indeed, the The Corporate Policy Committee appointed a Constitution Working Group (CWG) of Councillors to undertake this role, and it meets regularly throughout the year. to do this. Since the introduction of the Committee system of governance, the <u>CWG Constitution Working Group</u> has received reports on X <u>revisions to the Constitution, outside bodies and the committee structure.</u> Whilst, upon review by the <u>CWG Constitution Working Group</u>, it has been decided that no changes should be made to the Council's decision-making arrangements in certain instances, the following changes have been made: X</p> <p><u>Agenda for Council on Wednesday, 19th July, 2023, 11.00 am Cheshire East Council</u> <u>Agenda for Council on Wednesday, 27th April, 2022, 11.00 am Cheshire East Council</u> <u>Agenda for Corporate Policy Committee on Thursday, 15th June, 2023, 10.30 am Cheshire East Council</u></p> <p>The Constitution Working Group <u>The CWG has a worklist of items for consideration in the future, which includes the following X reviewing the committee structure, schemes of delegation, terms of reference of committees and timing of meetings. The Council's Monitoring Officer is the "keeper of the Constitution" and</u></p>

		<p>he considers that the following further areas of work should be brought to the Constitution Working Group for consideration X.</p> <p>This consistent and ongoing process demonstrates that the Council is constantly examining whether or not its decision-making arrangements, including delegation of powers to committees and officers, are fit for purpose. The recent transfer of the Public Rights of Way Committee’s responsibilities to the Highways and Transport Committee, and the ongoing consideration of the planning committee structure, is evidence of this process working effectively.</p> <p>The recent example of the removal of the Public Rights of Way Committee, and the expansion of the responsibilities of the Highways and Transport Committee, and the ongoing consideration of the planning committee structure, is evidence of the challenge which the Council imposes on its governance arrangements.</p> <p>The information provided earlier in this submission shows that 80 of the Council’s members are members of committees. The Council believes that all decisions of committees could be regarded as “major”. However, looking solely at “Major” decisions may be best defined as those undertaken by the Council’s service committees, which make those decisions previously made by the Council’s Cabinet. As shown in Table 1 above, there are 86 Councillor places on these committees, although some Councillors are members of more than one service committee.</p> <p>Considering other Committees, However, the Audit and Governance Committee also has great responsibilities in fulfilling its terms of reference, namely: audit, assurance and reporting; review of governance, risk and control arrangements; and promotion of high standards of ethical behaviour.</p> <p>Audit, assurance and reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of governance, risk and control arrangements • Promotion of high standards of ethical behaviour • <p>The same is true of the planning committees, which are responsible for determining large scale major development applications, major mineral or waste development applications, applications involving a significant departure from policy, and other matters with strategic or significant policy implications, such as those relating to HS2.</p>
--	--	---

		<p>The terms of reference of the above committees can be seen in full here: cheshire-east-council-constitution-chapter-2-july-2023-v2.pdf (cheshireeast.gov.uk)</p> <p>Of course, all 82 Cheshire East Councillors are involved in the most major Council decisions, as part of their role as members of Full Council. Full Council is also involved in deciding decides those matters of key importance: those which are stipulated by legislation or otherwise, such as the Budget and Policy Framework, the appointment of the Head of Paid Service and the other statutory officer appointments, and the Local Plan. So, in this sense, all Councillors make “major” decisions.</p> <p>Turning to the powers of officers, reference is made earlier in this submission to the relevant delegations. Taking all of the above issues and the Committee system Design Principles into consideration, and in the light of the regular examination of the Council’s decision-making arrangements, the Council firmly believes that the responsibilities delegated to committees, and the number of members involved in making major decisions <u>and the powers delegated to officers</u> should not change, except where the continuing process of review of the committee structure and responsibilities determines that this should be the case.</p> <p>Again, for the same reasons, and unless Council determines that, there should be no change in the powers delegated to officers.</p>
--	--	--

Accountability

Give the Commission details as to how the authority and its decision makers and partners will be held to account. The Commission is interested in both the internal and external dimensions of this role. **Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic	
Internal Scrutiny	The scrutiny function of authorities has changed considerably. Some use theme or task-and-finish groups, for example, and others have a committee system. Scrutiny arrangements may also be affected by the officer support available.

<p>Key lines of explanation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How will decision makers be held to account? ➤ How many committees will be required? And what will their functions be? ➤ How many task and finish groups will there be? And what will their functions be? What time commitment will be involved for members? And how often will meetings take place? ➤ How many members will be required to fulfil these positions? ➤ Explain why you have increased, decreased, or not changed the number of scrutiny committees in the authority. ➤ Explain the reasoning behind the number of members per committee in terms of adding value.
<p>Analysis</p>	<p>As the Council operates a Committee system of governance, the Council's service committees are expected to undertake self-scrutiny <u>through performance monitoring etc.</u>, as was the case prior to the enactment of the Local Government Act 2000.</p> <p>However, the Council recognises that the work of its service committees needs to develop, in order fully embrace their internal scrutiny role.- Indeed, further training is being planned for the Council's service committee members in this role, <u>which will take place during winter 2023.</u></p> <p><u>The Committees are able to establish Task and Finish Groups/ Working Groups as and when required. These can be established for internal scrutiny purposes: for example, to review the effectiveness of policy etc. A maximum of three to four per committee at any one time is recommended. Usually they consist of around three to eight Members.</u></p> <p>Since the inception of the Council up until the introduction of the Committee system, the Council had three <u>four</u> bespoke scrutiny committees, with a dedicated Scrutiny Team of officers who were specialists in scrutiny work. Due to the change in function of the</p>

	<p>Council's remaining Scrutiny Committee, which is now restricted to external health, crime and flooding scrutiny, tThere is now no longer dedicated officer scrutiny support. The absence of resource for internal scrutiny will place new and challenging demands upon the knowledge, skills and time of service committee Members.</p> <p><u>The Council now has one externally focussed Scrutiny Committee (13 Members), which is responsible for the Council's statutory scrutiny functions including health, crime and disorder and flooding.</u></p> <p><u>In response to the establishment of Integrated Care Systems (ICS), the nine Merseyside and Cheshire local authorities agreed several actions to ensure that joint health scrutiny arrangements in Cheshire and Merseyside are fit to meet the challenge of the new statutory arrangements. A standing joint health scrutiny committee has been established to take on the Authorities' collective statutory responsibility to oversee and scrutinise the operation of the ICS at Cheshire and Merseyside level. The host Authority for this committee is Knowsley BC Browse meetings - Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System Joint Health Scrutiny Committee - Knowsley Council</u></p> <p><u>The overarching role of the Joint Committee is to scrutinise the work of the ICS in the discharge of its statutory responsibilities and functions at Cheshire and Merseyside level in order to support their effective exercise and, where appropriate, to make reports or recommendations to the ICS. It also considers any proposals for changes in health services that not only impact all nine local authority areas but are also considered to be a substantial change by each of the nine.</u></p>
--	--

Statutory Function		This includes planning, licencing and any other regulatory responsibilities. Consider under each of the headings the extent to which decisions will be delegated to officers. How many members will be required to fulfil the statutory requirements of the council?
Planning	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members? ➤ Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated? ➤ Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee? ➤ Will executive members serve on the planning committees? ➤ What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?
	Analysis	<p>The Council currently has three planning committees. The Strategic Planning Board (SPB), which meets around nine times a year, considers the larger, more strategic planning applications. The other two <u>planning committees</u> are area planning committees – North and South (each holds 10-12 meetings a year) – which consider the remaining applications that are not covered by the scheme of delegation or are ‘called in’ by a Member for the Committee to determine. There are 12 Members on each of the three <u>C</u>ommittees, <u>although (as noted earlier in this submission) there has been a Member vacancy on one of these (the Southern Planning Committee) since May 2023.</u></p> <p>As part of the Council’s drive to reduce the costs of democracy and develop more efficient decision-making, the Corporate Policy Committee has recently approved a proposal (subject to a final decision by Full Council in December 2023) to reduce the number of planning committees from three to two.</p> <p>Cheshire East is consistently among the top 10 busiest local authorities in England for planning applications (it was ranked</p>

		<p>seventh 7th for in the period 2020-22) and by far the busiest in the North West region.¹⁹ In terms of applications relative to population, Cheshire East (With 17.8 applications per 1,000 population in 2020-22, Cheshire East) is similar to comparable authorities such as Dorset or, the East Riding of Yorkshire, Buckinghamshire, Shropshire and West Northamptonshire.²⁰</p> <p>The proportion 2% of applications are determined by the committees, as a percentage of overall decision making is XXX%. This proportion has remained fairly consistent over the past four years?. Committee agendas vary in size, but not significantly. On average there are it is usual for between three and sixX and X applications for consideration to be on each area planning committee agenda and two to three X to X on SPB. As the Local Plan has been progressed and larger schemes are being developed out, the number of applications considered by SPB has fallen in recent years.</p> <p>Average time duration for each of the three committees' meetings is four hours (excluding Members' reading/ preparation time and the occasional site visit). However, meetings can last far longer and this their duration is a particular issue for Cheshire East: for example, during the 12 months to mid July 2023, there were five planning committee meetings in excess of 5five hours, with one SPB meeting lasting 6six hours 40 minutes.</p> <p>As parts of the Borough fall within the Peak District National Park (see the Local Authority Profile section for further details), Members' workloads are higher because of the need to understand and adhere to two separate planning regimes.</p>
--	--	--

¹⁹ Planning/ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities data.

²⁰ Rates based on data from 'Population and household estimates for England and Wales: Census 2021' (the first release of results from the 2021 Census of Population for England and Wales), Office for National Statistics (ONS), 28th June 2022).

	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How many licencing panels will the council have in the average year? ➤ And what will be the time commitment for members? ➤ Will there be standing licencing panels, or will they be ad-hoc? ➤ Will there be core members and regular attendees, or will different members serve on them?
Licensing	Analysis	<p>The statutory requirements of the Licensing Act 2003 requires that the Council have a Licensing Committee <u>with 10 to</u> comprised of at least 10 and no more than 15 Members.</p> <p>As required by the Constitution, the Council has a Licensing Committee <u>with comprising</u> 15 Members. The Committee This is scheduled to meet around five <u>times a</u> occasions each year, but in practice tends to meet only twice a year.</p> <p>The majority of business is conducted at the sub-committee level. There are two standing sub-committees:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>The</u> General Licensing Sub-Committee (GLSC), which has five Members. It is scheduled to meet monthly, but due to a lack of business it has met <u>only</u> once in the last 18 months. 2. <u>The</u> Licensing Act Sub-Committee (LASC), which has three Members. The Sub-Committee It meets on an ad hoc basis and the frequency of meetings varies a lot. During the current year, it has so far met <u>only twice</u> two occasions. In contrast, but sometimes (like last year) there can be 15-20 or more meetings a year. last year it met approximately 15 times and has on occasion met over 20 times in a year. <p>Most Licensing Committee meetings last less than an hour. The Sub-Committee meetings tend to last half a day.</p>

		Given the ad hoc nature of LASC meetings and the limited statutory timescale that they can be called within, it can be difficult to populate them with Members. Therefore officers would not advocate reducing the number of Members on the full Committee.
Other Regulatory Bodies	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What will they be, and how many members will they require? ➤ Explain the number and membership of your Regulatory Committees with respect to greater delegation to officers.
	Analysis	Not applicable: no other such bodies.
External Partnerships		Service delivery has changed for councils over time, and many authorities now have a range of delivery partners to work with and hold to account.
Key lines of explanation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Will council members serve on decision-making partnerships, sub-regional, regional or national bodies? In doing so, are they able to take decisions/make commitments on behalf of the council? ➤ How many councillors will be involved in this activity? And what is their expected workload? What proportion of this work is undertaken by portfolio holders? ➤ What other external bodies will members be involved in? And what is the anticipated workload?
Analysis		<p>There are at present 54 outside bodies (excluding school governing bodies and local resident associations) which require or expect the Council to appoint representatives. The total number of appointments made to such bodies (excluding school governing bodies) is 98: that is, an average of 1.2 per Member <u>(see Table 1 above)</u>. Although the frequency of meetings for each outside body varies greatly, tThe estimated total number of outside body meetings Members are required to attend per year is around 300; adding a considerable number of meetings to the individual Councillor's workload: <u>Appointments to Outside Organisations - report v3 final.pdf (cheshireeast.gov.uk)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some councillors also are School Governors in their

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

	<p>Borough wards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 62 Councillors are also Town and Parish Councillors • Members are also appointed to the governing bodies of wholly-owned Council companies, which meet frequently: Report Template v5.1 (cheshireeast.gov.uk) • The Police & Crime Panel requires the councillor appointed to attend many meetings and liaise with other public bodies in the local area: report.pdf (cheshireeast.gov.uk) • Councillors are also on the Cheshire Fire & Rescue Authority, which meets frequently: report.pdf (cheshireeast.gov.uk) • TCouncillors sit on the Fostering and Adoption Panels, which also meet frequently: Report.pdf (cheshireeast.gov.uk) <p>The additional time commitment that each of these represents includes not only preparation, research and participation time, but also considerable travel time. Based on the responses to the Members survey undertaken by Cheshire East in September-October 2023 (to inform this Review), it is estimated that, over a typical three-month period, Members spend an average of 2.4 hours/ week on dealing with work for outside bodies that the Council has appointed them to.</p> <p><u>As set out in detail earlier in this submission, Cheshire East also shares some services, such as ICT and payroll, with Cheshire West and Chester Council.</u></p>
--	---

Community Leadership

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

The Commission understands that there is no single approach to community leadership and that members represent, and provide leadership to, their communities in different ways. The Commission wants to know how members are required to provide effective community leadership and what support the council offers them in this role. For example, does the authority have a defined role and performance system for its elected members? And what support networks are available within the council to help members in their duties? The Commission also wants to see a consideration of **how the use of technology and social media by the council as a whole, and by councillors individually, will affect casework, community engagement and local democratic representation. Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic		Description
Community Leadership	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In general terms how do councillors carry out their representational role with electors? ➤ Does the council have area committees and what are their powers? ➤ How do councillors seek to engage with their constituents? Do they hold surgeries, send newsletters, hold public meetings or maintain blogs? ➤ Are there any mechanisms in place that help councillors interact with young people, those not on the electoral register, and/or other minority groups and their representative bodies? ➤ Are councillors expected to attend community meetings, such as parish or resident's association meetings? If so, what is their level of involvement and what roles do they play? ➤ Explain your approach to the Area Governance structure. Is your Area Governance a decision-making forum or an advisory board? What is their relationship with locally elected members and Community bodies such as Town and Parish Councils? Looking forward how could they be improved to enhance decision-making?
	Analysis	<p><u>62 Members (76%) are "twin-hatted", being town/ parish councillors as well as Borough councillors. This impacts on the affected Members' workloads and how much capacity they have to support residents. Areas of the Borough are covered by local Neighbourhood Partnership meetings, which are chaired by councillors.</u></p> <p><u>A regular "members bulletin" digital newsletter is issued to Members from the communications and media team, to support Members with their community engagement.</u></p> <p><u>The Council have a Youth Council, supported by a participation officer, which Members can attend to discuss subjects with children and young people. The participation officer can also enable engagement with cared-for children, local schools and other community groups.</u></p> <p><u>62 Members (76%) are also members of the town and parish councils within Cheshire East. This impacts on the affected Members' workloads and how much capacity they have to support residents. Whilst their membership</u></p>

		<p><u>of these bodies is legally separate from their role on and membership of Cheshire East Council, many Members see the role as a dual one: not only to discharge town and parish council business, but also acting as a conduit through which the voice of town and parish councils can be heard, at Borough Council level, and via which important Cheshire East Council issues can be raised in town and parish council meetings. Therefore, town and parish council membership cannot be divorced from the issue of Cheshire East Members' workloads.</u></p> <p><u>Town and parish councils are supported by the Cheshire Association of Local Councils (CHALC). CHALC are commissioned by the Council to facilitate engagement through the Council's Communities Team. A Town and Parish Councils Network has been established to support communication and engagement between Cheshire East Council and local councils.</u></p> <p><u>Many councillors are involved in local community and voluntary sector organisations.</u></p> <p><u>The Leader of the Council chairs the Cheshire East Leaders Board, which is group of Chief Executives from a range of key organisations across Cheshire East including the NHS, Police, Fire, housing providers, colleges and local businesses.</u></p>
Casework	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How do councillors deal with their casework? Do they pass it on to council officers? Or do they take a more in-depth approach to resolving issues?</i> ➤ <i>What support do members receive?</i> ➤ <i>How has technology influenced the way in which councillors work? And interact with their electorate?</i> ➤ <i>In what ways does the council promote service users' engagement/dispute resolution with service providers and managers rather than through councillors?</i>
	Analysis	<p><u>Since the inception of the Council, Members have largely taken responsibility for their own casework and for the means by which they deal with it. However, some support is provided to Members in dealing with resident queries:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The Members' Enquiries Service is a service administered by the Council's Democratic Service, which enables Members to raise "ward-based, service-related" enquiries via a central email address. Officers then provide a unique reference number for each enquiry and send them to the relevant Council service for response. Reminders are issued if responses are overdue. This is clearly a key facility for Members in dealing with casework.</u>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The Members' Secretary is an officer based in Democratic Services whose work is largely based upon support for Members. This facility is used by Members to deal with a range of queries, including casework which doesn't fall within the scope of the Members' Enquiries Service.</u> • <u>The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, together with the chairs and vice chairs of the service committees also have personal assistant support. But, whilst these Members have access to the Members' Enquiries Service and Members' Secretary, there will undoubtedly be some casework which finds its way to them via their personal assistant.</u> <p><u>The Council encourages residents to take up queries and complaints with officers, as opposed to directly with Members, when the opportunity presents itself. But residents and Members see their direct relationship, lines of communication and accessibility within the community to be of key importance in the democratic process. Hence it is not anticipated that current patterns of resident/ Member engagement will significantly change.</u></p> <p><u>Based on the responses to the Members survey undertaken by Cheshire East in September-October 2023 (to inform this Review), it is estimated that, over a typical three-month period, Members spend an average of 7.3 hours/ week on casework/ ward issues, but nearly half (46%) said they spent an average of more than eight hours a week on this type of work.</u></p>
--	--	---

Other Issues

Respondent may use this space to bring any other issues of relevance to the attention of the Commission.

The Council has no issues to raise here.

Summary

In following this template respondents should have been able to provide the Commission with a robust and well-evidenced case for their proposed council size; one which gives a clear explanation as to the governance arrangements and number of councillors required to represent the authority in the future.

Use this space to summarise the proposals and indicate other options considered. Explain why these alternatives were not appropriate in terms of their ability to deliver effective Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulation and Partnerships), and Community Leadership.

Table 1 One useful guide to appropriate council size is the average (Borough-wide) electors-per-councillor ratio and how this compares to local authorities that are similar to Cheshire East in terms of population and character, as these are councils that are likely to have a broadly similar workload to Cheshire East. The data table in Appendix 5 shows how Cheshire East's electors-per-councillor ratio (3,800 as of December 2022) compares to those for similar councils (unitary authorities with a substantial rural population and a total population that is between 50% and 150% of Cheshire East's total, or which are identified by CIPFA as 'nearest neighbours' of Cheshire East). These are the authorities which are likely to have a broadly similar workload to Cheshire East. For 10 For eleven of the other 16 of the other 17 authorities in this table, the LGBCE has published Electoral Review final recommendations within the last six years (January 2018 onwards); for three five others, a Review is underway and has already reached a stage where the LGBCE has published its provisional view offered an initial view or draft recommendation on the appropriate council size. In other words, Hence for 14 of these other 16 for 15 of these 17 authorities (all except the East Riding of Yorkshire and North Somerset), the council size and electors-per-councillor ratios take account of recent LGBCE judgements.

As Appendix 5 Table 1 indicates, the Borough's ratio is broadly in line with those for most of these 'similar' authorities and particularly with those seven councils (indicated by the shaded rows in Appendix 5) that have a population within 20% of Cheshire East's, namely Cheshire West and Chester, Dorset, the East Riding of Yorkshire, North Northamptonshire, Northumberland, Shropshire and West Northamptonshire. These seven councils' ratios range from 3,200 to 4,000, or from 3,400 to 4,000 if the LGBCE's proposals from ongoing reviews are taken as the most up-to-date guide to these authorities' appropriate council size. However, it is notable that for the nine authorities (shown in bold in Appendix 5) that are identified by CIPFA as a 'nearest neighbours' of Cheshire East, the ratios cover a much wider range, from 3,200 (Solihull) to 5,000 (Cornwall). Of the 17 authorities listed in Appendix 5, Cornwall is one of two (along with Buckinghamshire) for which the ratio exceeds 4,000.

Table 1: Council sizes and ratios for Cheshire East and similar local authorities
(Shaded rows indicate councils with a population that was within 20% of the Cheshire East as of 2021. Bold font indicates those authorities identified by CIPFA modelling (<https://www.cipfa.org/services/cipfastats/nearest-neighbour-model>) as most comparable to Cheshire East.)

Name	Population (from 2021 Census)	Local government electors as of Dec 2022	Current number of councillors	Ratio of electors to councillors	New number of councillors proposed or recommended by LGBCE, if applicable (see Note [3] below)	New ratio, if applicable (see Note [3] below)
Buckinghamshire	553,100	412,800	147	2,800	97	4,300
Central Bedfordshire	294,200	219,900	63	3,500	N/A	N/A
Cheshire East	398,800	310,600	82	3,800	N/A	N/A
Cheshire West and Chester	357,200	262,600	70	3,800	N/A	N/A
Cornwall	570,300	431,200	87	5,000	N/A	N/A
Dorset	379,600	297,500	82	3,600	N/A	N/A
Durham	522,100	390,300	126	3,100	98	4,000

East Riding of Yorkshire	342,200	270,100	67	4,000	N/A	N/A
North Northamptonshire	359,500	264,500	78	3,400	68	3,900
North Somerset	216,700	165,500	50	3,300	N/A	N/A
Northumberland	320,600	251,600	67	3,800	69	3,600
Shropshire	323,600	250,100	74	3,400	74	3,400
Solihull	216,200	160,800	51	3,200	51	3,200
South Gloucestershire	290,400	212,000	61	3,500	N/A	N/A
Stockport	294,800	222,800	63	3,500	N/A	N/A
West Northamptonshire	425,700	298,500	93	3,200	76	3,900
Wiltshire	510,400	382,700	98	3,900	N/A	N/A

Sources:

[1] List of comparable local authorities identified by CIPFA, LGBCE email to Cheshire East Council, 21st July 2023.

[2] 'Population and household estimates for England and Wales: Census 2021' (the first release of results from the 2021 Census of Population for England and Wales), Office for National Statistics (ONS), 28th June 2022.

[3] December 2022 local government elector data: 'Electoral statistics, UK, December 2022' data file from the Office for National Statistics' 'Electoral statistics for the UK' release, 20th April 2023: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/elections/electoralregistration/datasets/electoralstatisticsforuk>

[4] Councillor numbers: LGBCE electoral data spreadsheet file, downloaded on 14th April 2023 from <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/electoral-data>

Notes:

[1] These authorities are ones that were either identified by CIPFA as being comparable to Cheshire East, or which met all the following criteria: English unitary authority; a substantial rural area/ rural population; population (as of 2021) at least half that of Cheshire East, but no more than 50% greater than Cheshire East.

[2] Ratios based on local government electorate as of December 2022.

[3] Entries in the final two columns applicable only where a review is currently underway or changes from a concluded review have yet to take effect. These two columns take account of LGBCE review proposals and decisions published up to the end of August 2023.

If, as the electorate forecasts for this Review indicate, the Borough's electorate grows to 337,300 by 2029, that would mean a ratio of 4,100 in 2029 if the current number of seats is left unchanged. Hence, if its size remains at 82 seats and allowing for electorate growth in similar authorities up to 2029, Cheshire East's ratio is likely to remain within the range of ratios for those similar authorities, but is likely to err increasingly towards the high end of that range, exceeded perhaps only by two of the other authorities listed in Appendix 5 (Cornwall and Buckinghamshire) on the high side.

Table 2-Another indication as to the appropriate council size is data on Members' overall workloads. The bulk of the evidence on this comes from the Council's recent survey of Members, which was undertaken to provide important data that would inform the Council's response to the Electoral Review. This survey was open from 8th September until 4th October 2023 and 57% (47) of Cheshire East's 82 Members responded.

Key survey findings that highlight workload levels are as follows²¹:

- 38% of the respondents (18 out of 47) had been a Member for a year or less, but 36% (17) had served for six years or more.
- The respondents had, on average, 2.7 committee positions (close to the average of 2.6 for all 82 Members). 63% (29 out of 47) had been appointed by the Council to one or more outside bodies.
- It was estimated from the survey responses that, over a typical three-month period, Members spend an average of 26.6 hours a week on council business. (The commentary further below, on the data table in Appendix 6, breaks down the 26.6 hours/ week into its component parts.)
- As an indication of the ranges reported in workload levels (rather than just averages), it is notable that:
 - Some Members (though only a small minority) said it took six to eight hours to travel from home to some of their committees' locations and some (three) reported spending an average of more than eight hours preparing for certain committees' meetings.
 - Nearly half (46%, or 21 respondents out of 46) spent an average of more than eight hours a week dealing with casework/ ward issues.
 - Nearly a quarter (24%, or 11 out of 45) spent an average of more than twenty hours a week dealing with their areas of additional responsibility (such as committee chair/ vice-chair, Group Leader or town/ parish councillor).
- 62% (29 out of 47) were town/ parish councillors, which was lower than the proportion for Cheshire East Members as a whole (76%).
- 64% (30 out of 47) said they spent more time on council business than they had expected when they were first elected.
- 70% of Members (33 out of 47) reported that their workload levels had risen by more than a fifth since they were first elected, of whom ten (21% of all the respondents) reported an increase of more than 60%.
- 33% (15 out of 46) felt "very over occupied".
- 60% (27 out of 45) said workload demands were high at all days and times of the week, rather than being limited to certain parts of the week.
- 70% (32 out of 46) said workload demands had a "significant" or "very significant" impact on their work-life balance and wellbeing.
- 36% (17 out of 47) had insufficient time and capacity to carry out their duties properly.
- In response to an invitation for general comments, a number of respondents expressed a view that Member workloads make it either impossible or very difficult for full-time workers to serve as Members. Some said they could undertake the role only because they were not in a paid job, while some others reported having to switch to part-time employment/ reduced hours and hence reduced pay, to accommodate council business.

These survey results provide compelling evidence both that the Borough Council and its Members are frequently unable to serve and support residents, business and partner organisations effectively, and that workload trends – also bearing in mind the expected growth in housing, population and the number of electors up to 2029 - will exacerbate this situation.

²¹ As indicated by the summary that follows, the sample sizes were below 47 in some cases, due to some questions not being answered by or not being applicable to some Members.

The estimate of average hours worked per week on council business (26.6), which itself excludes some Members' work²², also demonstrates how a Member's work (allowing for substantial variations from this high average) often equates to a full-time role in itself. This means serving as a Borough ward councillor is not a practical option for many people in full-time paid employment.

The full results from this survey can be found in Appendix 7.

However, in determining the optimal council size, it is important to consider potential alternative sizes and the workload implications these would have. The data table in Appendix 6 therefore presents key measures of Cheshire East councillors' workloads, in terms of Committee work and current and future numbers of electors, for various council sizes (from 77 up to 87 seats). This includes workload statistics derived from the Members survey, as well as others derived from the Council's administrative records.

Table 2: Committee workload per councillor, by council size

Number of councillors	Average number of Committee positions per councillor	Average number of Committee meetings per councillor per year	Average number of hours spent in Committee meetings per councillor per year	Electors per councillor, July 2023	Electors per councillor, December 2029
77	3.8	23.5	68.4	4,087	4,381
78	3.8	23.2	67.5	4,034	4,325
79	3.7	22.9	66.6	3,983	4,270
80	3.7	22.6	65.8	3,934	4,217
81	3.6	22.3	65.0	3,885	4,165
82	3.6	22.0	64.2	3,838	4,114
83	3.5	21.8	63.4	3,791	4,064
84	3.5	21.5	62.7	3,746	4,016
85	3.4	21.3	61.9	3,702	3,969
86	3.4	21.0	61.2	3,659	3,923
87	3.4	20.8	60.5	3,617	3,877

²² In response to the final question in the survey, which invited general comments, some Members noted that the questionnaire did not ask about time spent in parish council meetings, or in Member training, or on site visits, dealing with emails and phone calls, social media monitoring work (to help keep track of local residents' key issues) or follow-up work. It is clear, therefore, that at least some respondents did not include these activities in the estimates the time they spent on council business (though others may have allowed for these in their responses). This is an indication that the survey statistics may, if anything, understate Members' workload levels.

Sources:

[1] Committee structure and meetings web pages (<http://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecomminutes/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>)

[2] Democratic Services Team, Cheshire East Council, July-August 2023.

[3] Electorate forecasts produced by Cheshire East Council for the current electoral review.

Notes:

[1] Figures based on committee meetings for the 12-month period August 2022 to July 2023. Figures include only those committees that met at least once during that time.

[2] Figures include only the number of Members sitting on a committee at a given time, not the size of the pool (if larger) from which the sitting Members are selected.

[3] Figures include any non-voting committee Members.

As Appendix 6 Table 2 shows:

- The Borough's Members currently hold an average of 2.6 positions, in addition to attending Full Council. 3.6 Committee positions, or an average of 2.6 positions (211 positions, spread across 82 Members) if Full Council meetings are excluded. Members hold, on average, a total of 5.6 positions (2.6 on committees and 3 elsewhere) when working groups/ boards/ panels and outside organisations (including town and parish councils) are factored in. They attend an average of 22 Committee meetings a year (including Full Council meetings). It is estimated that, over a typical three-month period, they spend an average of 26.6 hours/ week on council business, of which 3.8 hours are on preparing for, travelling to/ from and attending committee meetings, 7.3 hours on casework/ ward issues, 13.1 on additional responsibilities (including any town/ parish councillor positions) and 2.4 on work for outside bodies that the Council has appointed them to, and the meetings alone involve an average of 64.2 hours (around 9 days' work) per Member. However, i
- in Committee meetings would increase to an average of 68.4 hours a year
- Currently (as of July 2023), the average number of electors per councillor is 3,800 and this is forecast to increase to 4,100 by 2029 as a result of the expected growth in the number of electors.

The evidence from the Council's recent (September 2023) survey of Members indicates that, with the current total of 82 Members, workload levels are XXXX and hence that the effect of:

- a reduction in the number of seats would be XXXX;
- an increase in the number of seats would be XXXX

Taken together, the evidence from Appendices 5 to 7 provides an indication as to what would be an appropriate increase in the number of councillors. Looking at the evidence from Appendix 5:

- The seven authorities that are closest in size to Cheshire East all have electors-per-councillor ratios in the 3,400 to 4,000 range (allowing for the impact of LGBCE proposals from ongoing reviews) and 3,400 to 3,900 if the East Riding of Yorkshire (not reviewed since 2001) is excluded.
- The nine authorities identified by CIPFA as Cheshire East's nearest neighbours have ratios covering a much wider range - 3,200 to 5,000 - though it should be noted that the two with ratios in excess of 4,000 (Cornwall and Buckinghamshire) both have populations substantially (over a third) greater than Cheshire East's. If the Cornwall figure were adopted, the number of Councillors would be reduced significantly.

It is appreciated that these other authorities' populations and electorates will also grow in number over time and that the LGBCE's review decisions allow for some of those authorities' electors-per-councillor ratios increasing, within a few years, beyond the ranges quoted above. Allowing for this growth over the longer term and factoring in the evidence from the Members survey, a ratio of around 4,100 would allow Cheshire East Members to carry out their duties properly whilst preserving their wellbeing and a reasonable work-life balance. It is a suggested a ration as high as 5000:1 would not.

As noted above, the electorate forecasts indicate a ratio of 4,100 by 2029 if the current size (82 Members) is retained. It is considered that this would be sustainable and further reviews and adjustments to the committee structure could enable more efficient decision-making that reduces Members' workloads. However, a reduction from the current council size of 82 is likely to result in unsustainable pressures on Members that structural changes to the Committee system could not resolve.

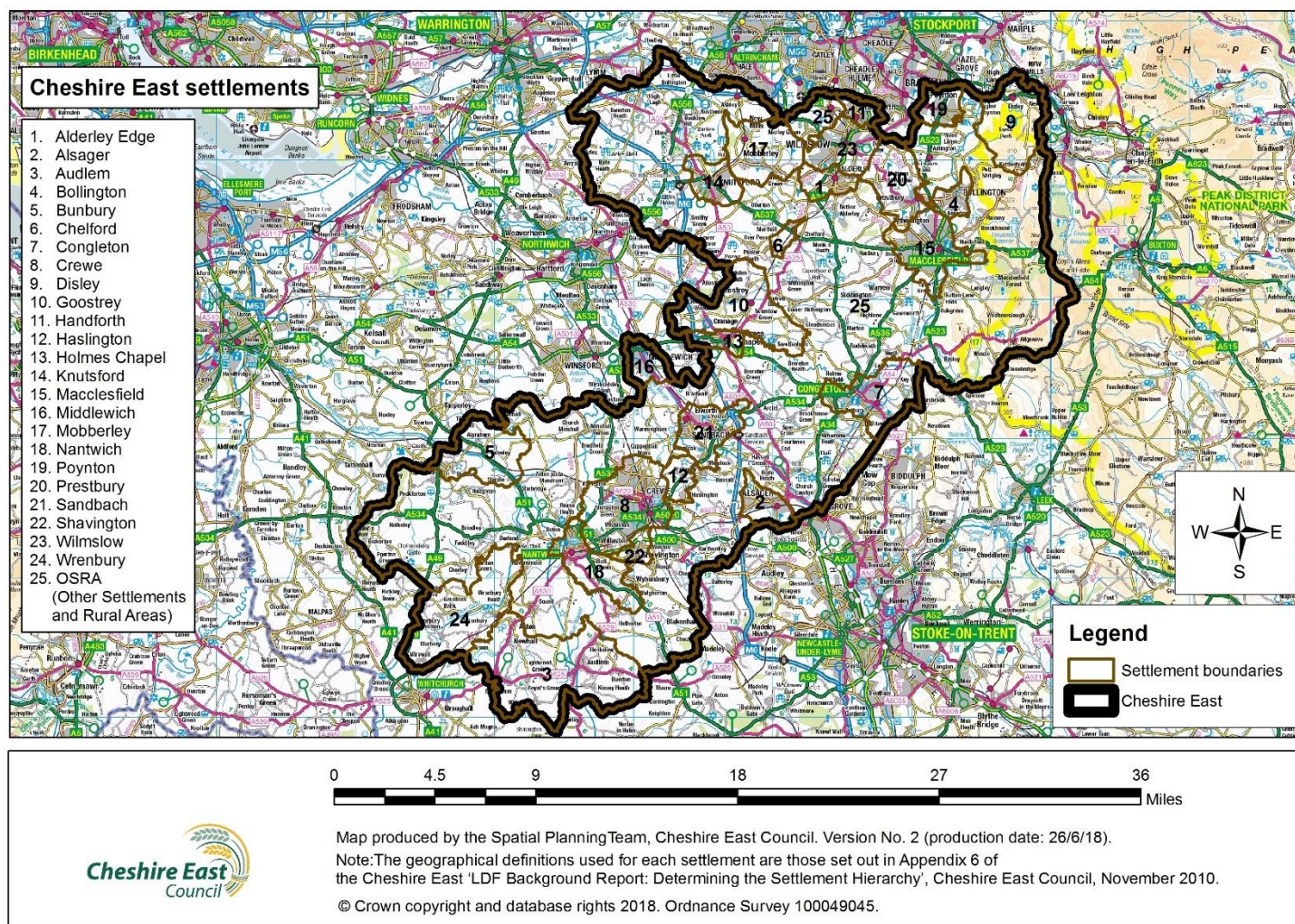
Taken together, the collective evidence in this submission – the Table 1 comparison with similar authorities, the Table 2 data on Committee workloads, the Member survey results and the other evidence presented under earlier sections of this form – therefore suggests that the appropriate council size for Cheshire East would be XX. Therefore the current size of 82 [the provisionally-proposed council size figure] continues to reflect sufficient capacity in terms of members to electorate ratio and still provides sufficient room for growth.

In reaching its decision about the appropriate council size, the Council has taken a long-term view, based upon what it understands of the likely national and local policy context, over the period of the next 15-20 years, particularly in the context of an anticipated increased population and also the local impact of any sub regional devolution agreements.

In summary, having 82 [the provisionally-proposed council size figure]XX-councillors would help to avoid the risks set out above and should ensure a diverse range of Members with complementary skills and backgrounds and who have sufficient time and resources to perform all their

duties properly, without neglecting any local communities, vulnerable residents or partnership organisations. It would also help to ensure high quality, accountable service provision and efficient use of the Council's finances.

Appendix 1: Cheshire East main settlements



Appendix 2: Rural and urban areas of Cheshire East

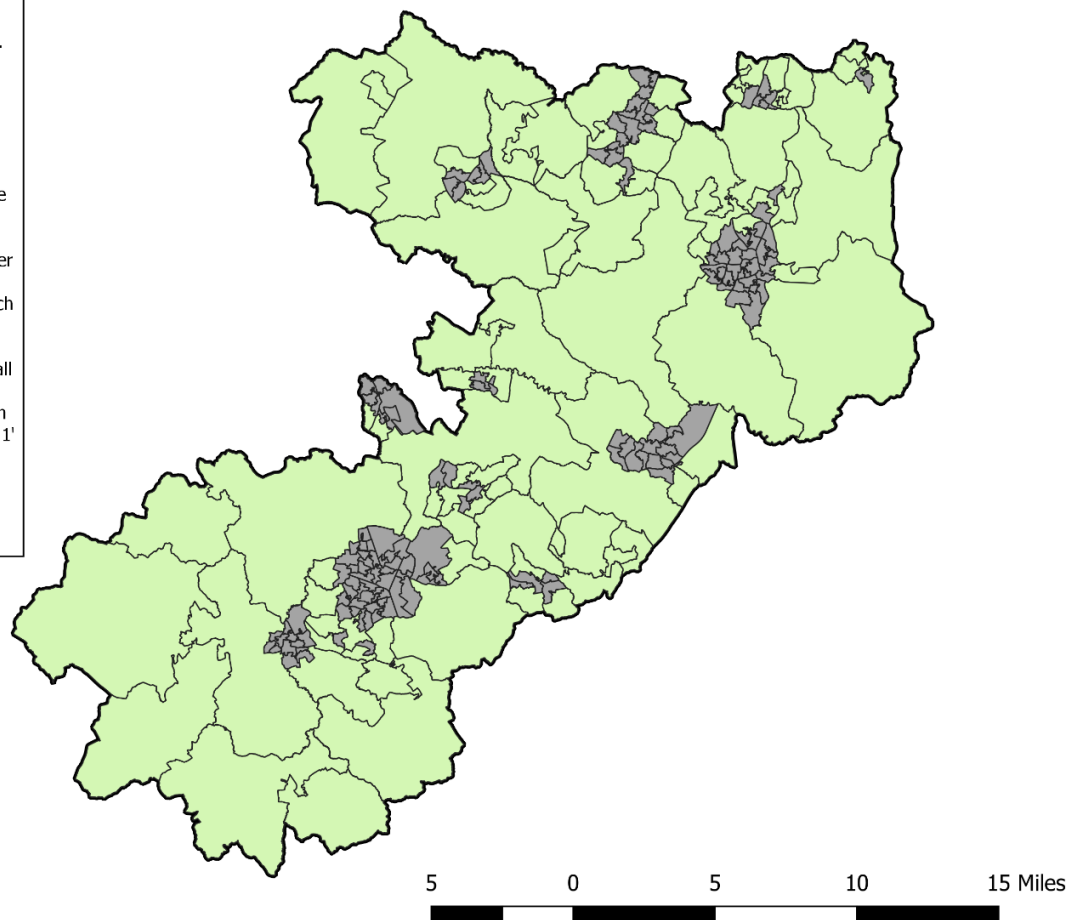
Rural and Urban Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Cheshire East

Map produced by the Strategic Planning Team, Cheshire East Council, 19/9/23. Map version No. 1.
(c) Crown copyright and database rights 2023.
Ordnance Survey 100049045.

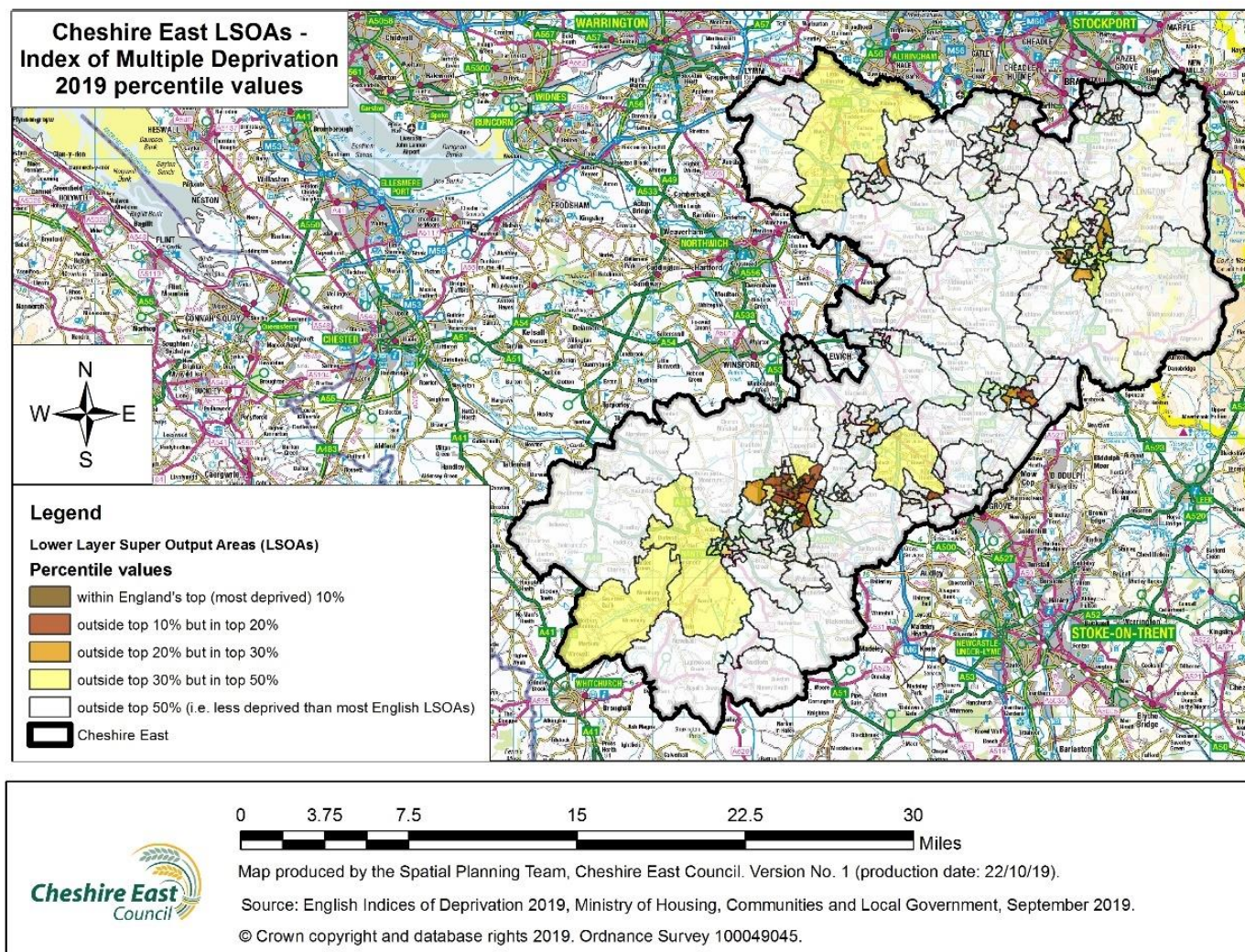
Source: 2015 Rural-Urban Classification (LSOA-based), Cheshire East Council.

Note: Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are small geographical areas created by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for statistical purposes. They are intended to be of similar size to each other in terms of population; ONS reviews LSOAs in the wake of each new Census and makes changes (such as mergers or division of LSOAs) where necessary, to ensure they continue to have similar-sized populations. These changes have resulted in a small net increase in the number of LSOAs in Cheshire East over time. The 2015 Rural-Urban Classification shown here is based on the boundaries of the '2011' LSOAs that were created in the wake of the 2011 Census evidence (though the 2021 Census results have led to a further revision of LSOA boundaries since then).

Legend
Rural
Urban
Cheshire East



Appendix 3: Deprivation in Cheshire East



Appendix 4: Committee names, types, sizes and frequency of meetings

	<u>Committee name</u>	<u>Standing committee</u>	<u>Committee/ meeting category</u>	<u>Number of Members</u>	<u>Number of meetings held in last year</u>
1	<u>Adults and Health Committee</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Service Committees</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>6</u>
2	<u>Children and Families Committee</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Service Committees</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>8</u>
3	<u>Corporate Policy Committee</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Service Committees</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>7</u>
4	<u>Economy and Growth Committee</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Service Committees</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>6</u>
5	<u>Environment and Communities Committee</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Service Committees</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>8</u>
6	<u>Finance Sub-Committee</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Service Committees</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>
7	<u>Highways and Transport Committee</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Service Committees</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>6</u>
8	<u>Licensing Committee</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Regulatory (Licensing)</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>3</u>
9	<u>Northern Planning Committee</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Regulatory (Planning)</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>12</u>
10	<u>Southern Planning Committee</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Regulatory (Planning)</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>10</u>
11	<u>Strategic Planning Board</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Regulatory (Planning)</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>9</u>
12	<u>Scrutiny Committee</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Scrutiny Committees</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>4</u>
13	<u>Appointments Committee</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Other Committees</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>
14	<u>Audit and Governance Committee</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Other Committees</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>6</u>
15	<u>Cared For Children and Care Leaver Sub-Committee</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Other Committees</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>5</u>
16	<u>Health and Wellbeing Board</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Other Committees</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
17	<u>General Appeals Sub-Committee</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Other Committees</u>	<u>5*</u>	<u>7</u>
18	<u>Electoral Review Sub-Committee</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Other Committees</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>N/A</u>
19	<u>Shared Services Joint Committee</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Other Committees</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
20	<u>Staffing Appeals Sub-Committee</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Other Committees</u>	<u>3*</u>	<u>4</u>
21	<u>General Licensing Sub-Committee</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Regulatory (Licensing)</u>	<u>5**</u>	<u>0</u>
22	<u>Licensing Act Sub-Committee</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Regulatory (Licensing)</u>	<u>3**</u>	<u>10</u>
23	<u>Local Authority School Governor Nomination Sub-Committee</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Other Meetings</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>

*General Appeals Sub-Committee and Staffing Appeals Committee Members chosen from a pool of 10.

**General Licensing Act Sub-Committee and Licensing Act Sub-Committee Members chosen from among the 15 Licensing Committee Members.

Source: Democratic Services team administrative data (provided during July-October 2023). Notes: [1] Figures include reserves and non-voting members. [2] Figures in the last column based on meetings held in the 12-month period ending mid July 2023. [2] Electoral Review Sub-Committee not appointed until July 2023. [3] As noted in the “Licensing” section of this submission, the General Licensing Sub-Committee has met only once in the last 18 months, due to a lack of business.

Appendix 5: Council sizes and ratios for Cheshire East and similar local authorities

(Shaded rows indicate councils with a population that was within 20% of the Cheshire East as of 2021. Bold font indicates those authorities identified by CIPFA modelling (<https://www.cipfa.org/services/cipfastats/nearest-neighbour-model>) as most comparable to Cheshire East.)

Name	Population (from 2021 Census)	Local government electors as of Dec 2022	Current number of councillors	Ratio of electors to councillors	New number of councillors proposed or recommended by LGBCE, if applicable (see Note [3] below)	New ratio, if applicable (see Note [3] below)
Buckinghamshire	553,100	412,800	147	2,800	97	4,300
Central Bedfordshire	294,200	219,900	63	3,500	N/A	N/A
Cheshire East	398,800	310,600	82	3,800	N/A	N/A
Cheshire West and Chester	357,200	262,600	70	3,800	N/A	N/A
Cornwall	570,300	431,200	87	5,000	N/A	N/A
Dorset	379,600	297,500	82	3,600	N/A	N/A
Durham	522,100	390,300	126	3,100	98	4,000
East Riding of Yorkshire	342,200	270,100	67	4,000	N/A	N/A
North Northamptonshire	359,500	264,500	78	3,400	68	3,900
North Somerset	216,700	165,500	50	3,300	N/A	N/A
Northumberland	320,600	251,600	67	3,800	69	3,600
Shropshire	323,600	250,100	74	3,400	74	3,400
Solihull	216,200	160,800	51	3,200	51	3,200
South Gloucestershire	290,400	212,000	61	3,500	N/A	N/A
Stockport	294,800	222,800	63	3,500	N/A	N/A
West Northamptonshire	425,700	298,500	93	3,200	76	3,900
Wiltshire	510,400	382,700	98	3,900	N/A	N/A

Sources: [1] List of comparable local authorities identified by CIPFA, LGBCE email to Cheshire East Council, 21st July 2023. [2] 'Population and household estimates for England and Wales: Census 2021' (the first release of results from the 2021 Census of Population for England and Wales), Office for National Statistics (ONS), 28th June 2022. [3] December 2022 local government elector data: 'Electoral statistics, UK, December 2022' data file from ONS' 'Electoral statistics for the UK' release, 20th April 2023: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/elections/electoralregistration/datasets/electoralstatisticsforuk> [4] Councillor numbers: LGBCE electoral data spreadsheet file, downloaded on 14th April 2023 from <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/electoral-data>

Notes: [1] These authorities are ones that were either identified by CIPFA as being comparable to Cheshire East, or which met all the following criteria: English unitary authority; a substantial rural area/ rural population; population (as of 2021) at least half that of Cheshire East, but no more than 50% greater than Cheshire East. [2] Ratios based on local government electorate as of December 2022. [3] Entries in the final two columns applicable only where a review is currently underway or changes from a concluded review have yet to take effect. These two columns take account of LGBCE review proposals and decisions published up to 11 October 2023.

Appendix 6: Workload per councillor, by council size

			Average number of hours spent per week (over a typical three-month period) – see 'CALCULATION APPROACH' note below						
<u>Number of councillors</u>	<u>Average number of Committee positions per councillor (i)</u>	<u>Average number of positions held, including outside organisations (i, ii)</u>	<u>Committee work (iii)</u>	<u>Casework/ ward issues</u>	<u>Additional duties (iv)</u>	<u>Work for outside bodies (v)</u>	<u>Total (all council business) (vi)</u>	<u>Electors per councillor, July 2023</u>	<u>Electors per councillor, December 2029</u>
77	2.8	6.0 (5.1)	4.0	7.8	14.0	2.6	28.3	4,087	4,381
78	2.8	5.9 (5.0)	3.9	7.7	13.8	2.5	27.9	4,034	4,325
79	2.7	5.9 (5.0)	3.9	7.6	13.6	2.5	27.6	3,983	4,270
80	2.7	5.8 (4.9)	3.8	7.5	13.5	2.5	27.2	3,934	4,217
81	2.7	5.7 (4.9)	3.8	7.4	13.3	2.4	26.9	3,885	4,165
82	2.6	5.6 (4.8)	3.8	7.3	13.1	2.4	26.6	3,838	4,114
83	2.6	5.6 (4.7)	3.7	7.2	13.0	2.4	26.3	3,791	4,064
84	2.6	5.5 (4.7)	3.7	7.1	12.8	2.4	25.9	3,746	4,016
85	2.6	5.4 (4.6)	3.6	7.0	12.7	2.3	25.6	3,702	3,969
86	2.5	5.4 (4.6)	3.6	6.9	12.5	2.3	25.3	3,659	3,923
87	2.5	5.3 (4.5)	3.5	6.9	12.4	2.3	25.0	3,617	3,877

CALCULATION APPROACH: Apart from Democratic Services team administrative data recording the average length of Committee meetings, the statistics on the average number of hours spent on council business are derived from the Members Survey undertaken in September-October 2023. As the survey questions asked Members to select a time band (e.g. "Up to two hours", "Two to four hours", etc), it has been assumed for the purposes of the above calculations that the time spent by Members on each activity will, on average, fall within the middle of the band they selected. For example, it is assumed for the above calculations that Members who spent "Four to six hours" a week on casework/ ward issues worked an average of five hours a week on these issues. In cases where Members picked a time band with no upper limit (e.g. "Over twenty hours"), the assumed average for the responses within that band is based on the overall distribution of times selected by the Members who answered that particular question. In particular:

- For preparation/ reading time for each committee meeting, nine hours was taken as a reasonable average to assume for those who said "More than eight hours". This was because only 2% of the committee meetings that Members reported on in the survey were within this band and so the average time taken in these cases is unlikely to be much more than eight.
- When asked about the average amount of time spent per week on casework/ ward issues, nearly half of respondents (46%) said "More than eight hours". Hence it was assumed that the average time for the respondents in this band would be significantly greater than eight. An average of 10 hours is therefore assumed, though this could potentially be an underestimate.

- Given that nearly a quarter (24%) of Members reported spending "Over twenty hours" on dealing with additional duties, it is assumed that the average time spent by the Members in this band is significantly above 20. Given the lack of information about how far beyond 20 hours these working hours might range, it has been assumed that the averages for Members in this band are evenly distributed between 21 and 25 and therefore average out at 23.

Sources: [1] Committee structure and meetings web pages (<http://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>). [2] Democratic Services Team, Cheshire East Council, July-September 2023. [3] Electorate forecasts produced by Cheshire East Council for the current electoral review. [4] Members Survey, September-October 2023.

Notes relating to specific data columns: (i) Figures for committee positions exclude Full Council, which meets an average of six times a year. (ii) For each council size, there are two figures given for the average number of positions held. The first figure (outside the brackets) includes all internal committees/ working groups/ boards/ panels and other outside organisations, including town/ parish council positions. However, the figures in brackets exclude town/ parish council positions. (iii) The figures for hours spent on Committee work include reading/ preparation and travel time as well as time spent in the actual meetings. (iv) 'Additional duties' includes the following roles: Committee chair/ vice-chair, Executive Board member, Group Leader, Group Administrator, Mayor, Town/ Parish Councillor. (v) 'Outside bodies' means only those that Members have been appointed to by the Borough Council. (vi) The figures in the 'Total (all council business)' column are the sum of those in the preceding four columns.

Appendix 7: Member Survey results

Overview

This Appendix sets out in detail the results from the Council's recent survey of Members, which was undertaken to inform the Council's response to the Electoral Review. This survey was open from 8th September until 4th October 2023 and 57% (47) of Cheshire East's 82 Members responded.

Assessment of the survey's representativeness

Comparisons of the survey data with the Council's administrative data suggest that those who responded were broadly representative of all 82 Members. For example, the 47 survey respondents had, on average, 2.7 committee positions (excluding Full Council), which closely matched the average shown in the administrative records (2.6). In addition, the proportion of survey respondents who said they had been appointed to outside bodies (63%) was close to the proportion for all 82 Members (with 50 of them, or 61%, being on such bodies). "Twin-hatted" Members (those who are also town or parish councillors) were a little under-represented: as noted earlier in this submission, 76% of all Members are twin-hatted, but only 62% (29) of the survey respondents were. In that respect, the survey responses may understate the average volume of work arising from town/ parish councillor positions. However, the survey respondents' answers (based on their personal estimates or recollections of meeting frequencies) indicated an average of 8.1 meetings per year for the committees they sat on, compared to administrative records showing this average to be 6.2 when all Members are included. Therefore the survey responses may overstate the average volume of work arising from committee positions. Taking all the survey sample's variances from the 82-Member "population" into account, though, there is no reason to think that the total workload levels indicated by the survey data are significantly skewed, either upwards or downwards, by who did or did not respond to the survey.

Other notes

The final survey question ("Do you believe that you currently have sufficient time and capacity to properly undertake your Councillor duties?") was followed by an invitation for Members to add any comments. To avoid potentially identifying individuals, these comments are not listed in full in this submission. However, some key points are cited in the 'Summary' section of the submission and the collective feedback from these open comments will be followed up internally.

Q1. Please provide your name and the name of the ward which you represent in the space below.

<u>Answer Choice</u>		<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Total</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>Name (First name, Family name)</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>47</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>Ward Name</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>47</u>
		<u>answered</u>	<u>47</u>
		<u>skipped</u>	<u>0</u>

Q2. How long have you been a ward Councillor?

Please select one option only

<u>Answer Choice</u>		<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Total</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>1 year or less</u>	<u>38.3%</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>2 - 5 years</u>	<u>25.5%</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>6 - 10 years</u>	<u>14.9%</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>11 + years</u>	<u>21.3%</u>	<u>10</u>
		<u>answered</u>	<u>47</u>
		<u>skipped</u>	<u>0</u>

Q3. What were your reasons for seeking election to Cheshire East Council?

Please tick all that apply

<u>Answer Choice</u>		<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Total</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>To make a difference</u>	<u>91.5%</u>	<u>43</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>Develop my leadership skills</u>	<u>12.8%</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>Have a direct involvement in local decision making</u>	<u>85.1%</u>	<u>40</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>Improve my skills and knowledge</u>	<u>31.9%</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>5</u>	<u>Serve my ward/community</u>	<u>93.6%</u>	<u>44</u>
<u>6</u>	<u>The political "cut and thrust"</u>	<u>14.9%</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>7</u>	<u>Other (please specify):</u>	<u>10.6%</u>	<u>5</u>
		<u>answered</u>	<u>47</u>
		<u>skipped</u>	<u>0</u>

Q4. In addition to your role as a ward Councillor, what other position(s) do you hold within the Council?

Please tick all that apply

Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
<u>1</u> <u>Chair of Committee</u>	<u>27.7%</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>2</u> <u>Vice Chair of Committee</u>	<u>19.1%</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>3</u> <u>Executive Board member</u>	<u>6.4%</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>4</u> <u>Group Leader</u>	<u>6.4%</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>5</u> <u>Group Administrator</u>	<u>6.4%</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>6</u> <u>Mayor</u>	<u>6.4%</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>7</u> <u>Parish/ Town Councillor</u>	<u>61.7%</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>8</u> <u>None</u>	<u>12.8%</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>9</u> <u>Other (please specify):</u>	<u>29.8%</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>answered</u>		<u>47</u>
<u>skipped</u>		<u>0</u>

Q5. On average, how much time per week do you spend dealing with your areas of additional responsibility?

Please select one option only, and estimate your average weekly workload, over a typical three-month period

<u>Answer Choice</u>	<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Total</u>
<u>1</u> Up to five hours	<u>8.9%</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>2</u> Six to ten hours	<u>26.7%</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>3</u> Eleven to fifteen hours	<u>13.3%</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>4</u> Sixteen to twenty hours	<u>22.2%</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>5</u> Over twenty hours	<u>24.4%</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>6</u> N/A	<u>4.4%</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>answered</u>		<u>45</u>
<u>skipped</u>		<u>2</u>

Q6. Have you been appointed by the Council to any outside bodies?

Please select one option only

<u>Answer Choice</u>	<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Total</u>
<u>1</u> Yes	<u>63.0%</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>2</u> No	<u>37.0%</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>answered</u>		<u>46</u>
<u>skipped</u>		<u>1</u>

Q7. On average, how much time per week do you spend dealing with work for outside bodies?

Please select one option only, and estimate your average weekly workload, over a typical three-month period

<u>Answer Choice</u>		<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Total</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>Up to five hours</u>	<u>45.5%</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>Six to ten hours</u>	<u>13.6%</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>Eleven to fifteen hours</u>	<u>2.3%</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>Sixteen to twenty hours</u>	<u>0.0%</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>5</u>	<u>Over twenty hours</u>	<u>0.0%</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>6</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>38.6%</u>	<u>17</u>
		<u>answered</u>	<u>44</u>
		<u>skipped</u>	<u>3</u>

Q8. How many Committee(s) are you appointed to?

Please select one option only

<u>Answer Choice</u>	<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Total</u>
<u>1</u> <u>1</u>	<u>12.8%</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>2</u> <u>2</u>	<u>21.3%</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>3</u> <u>3</u>	<u>46.8%</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>4</u> <u>4</u>	<u>19.1%</u>	<u>9</u>
		<u>answered</u>
		<u>47</u>
		<u>skipped</u>
		<u>0</u>

Q9. Thinking about the committees which you have been appointed to, how often do they meet?

If you are appointed to one Committee, please complete the first row, two Committees rows 1 and 2, three Committees 1, 2 and 3 and four Committees 1, 2, 3 and 4.

<u>Answer Choice</u>		<u>Each month</u>	<u>Every other month</u>	<u>Quarterly</u>	<u>Twice a year</u>	<u>Ad hoc</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>Response Total</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>Committee 1</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>47</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>Committee 2</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>42</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>Committee 3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>33</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>Committee 4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>answered</u>								<u>47</u>
<u>skipped</u>								<u>0</u>

Q10. Thinking about the committees to which you have been appointed to, at what time of the day are the meetings usually held?

If you are appointed to one Committee only, please complete the first row, two Committees rows 1 and 2, three Committees 1, 2 and 3 and four Committees 1, 2, 3 and 4.

<u>Answer Choice</u>		<u>Morning</u>	<u>Afternoon</u>	<u>Evening</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>Response Total</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>Committee 1</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>47</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>Committee 2</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>40</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>Committee 3</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>32</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>Committee 4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>answered</u>						<u>47</u>
<u>skipped</u>						<u>0</u>

Q11. Thinking about the committees to which you have been appointed to, at which venue are the meetings usually held?

If you are appointed to one Committee, please complete the first row, two Committees rows 1 and 2, three Committees 1, 2 and 3 and four Committees 1, 2, 3 and 4.

<u>Answer Choice</u>		<u>Municipal Buildings, Crewe</u>	<u>Town Hall, Macclesfield</u>	<u>Westfields, Sandbach</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>Response Total</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>Committee 1</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>47</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>Committee 2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>42</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>Committee 3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>33</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>Committee 4</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>13</u>
					<u>answered</u>	<u>47</u>
					<u>skipped</u>	<u>0</u>

Q12. On average, how much time do you spend travelling from your home to each Committee location?								
If you are appointed to one Committee only please complete the first row, two Committees rows 1 and 2, three Committees 1, 2 and 3 and four Committees 1, 2, 3 and 4.								
Please estimate your average travel time, to each committee that you are appointed to, over a typical three-month period								
Answer Choice		Up to two hours	Two to four hours	Four to six hours	Six to eight hours	More than eight hours	N/A	Response Total
1	Committee 1	39	3	1	3	0	0	46
2	Committee 2	35	3	0	3	0	1	42
3	Committee 3	26	2	0	2	0	3	33
4	Committee 4	10	0	0	1	0	2	13
							answered	46
							skipped	1

Q13. On average, how much time per week do you spend preparing/ reading papers for a meeting?

If you are appointed to one Committee only, please complete the first row, two Committees rows 1 and 2, three Committees 1, 2 and 3 and four Committees 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Please estimate your average weekly workload over a typical three-month period

<u>Answer Choice</u>		<u>Up to two hours</u>	<u>Two to four hours</u>	<u>Four to six hours</u>	<u>Six to eight hours</u>	<u>More than eight hours</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>Response Total</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>Committee 1</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>47</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>Committee 2</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>42</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>Committee 3</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>32</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>Committee 4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>answered</u>								<u>47</u>
<u>skipped</u>								<u>0</u>

Q14. On average, how much time per week do you spend dealing with case work/ ward issues?

Please select one option only and estimate your average weekly workload over a typical three-month period

<u>Answer Choice</u>		<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Total</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>Up to two hours</u>	<u>6.5%</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>Two to four hours</u>	<u>10.9%</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>Four to six hours</u>	<u>13.0%</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>Six to eight hours</u>	<u>23.9%</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>5</u>	<u>More than eight hours</u>	<u>45.7%</u>	<u>21</u>
		<u>answered</u>	<u>46</u>
		<u>skipped</u>	<u>1</u>

Q15. On average, how much time per week do you spend (if you are able to tell) on dealing with *unregistered voters?

***"unregistered voters" i.e. those who are eligible to vote, but who choose not to be on the Electoral Register, or inadvertently fail to get themselves on the Register**

Please select one option only and estimate your average weekly workload over a typical three-month period

<u>Answer Choice</u>		<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Total</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>Up to two hours</u>	<u>17.8%</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>Two to four hours</u>	<u>4.4%</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>Four to six hours</u>	<u>4.4%</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>Six to eight hours</u>	<u>0.0%</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>5</u>	<u>More than eight hours</u>	<u>0.0%</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>6</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	<u>73.3%</u>	<u>33</u>
		<u>answered</u>	<u>45</u>
		<u>skipped</u>	<u>2</u>

Q16. Is the time you spend on council business (work as a Councillor) what you expected when you first became a Councillor?

Please select one option only

<u>Answer Choice</u>		<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Total</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>36.2%</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>No – I spend more time on council business</u>	<u>63.8%</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>No – I spend less time on council business</u>	<u>0.0%</u>	<u>0</u>
		<u>answered</u>	<u>47</u>
		<u>skipped</u>	<u>0</u>

Q17. Has the time you spend on council business (work as a Councillor) increased from when you were first elected?

Please select one option only

<u>Answer Choice</u>		<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Total</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>89.4%</u>	<u>42</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>10.6%</u>	<u>5</u>
		<u>answered</u>	<u>47</u>
		<u>skipped</u>	<u>0</u>

Q18. If yes, by how much has your workload increased?

Please select one option only

<u>Answer Choice</u>		<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Total</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>Up to 20%</u>	<u>21.4%</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>21 - 40%</u>	<u>33.3%</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>41 - 60%</u>	<u>21.4%</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>61 - 80%</u>	<u>9.5%</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>5</u>	<u>81 - 100%</u>	<u>14.3%</u>	<u>6</u>
		<u>answered</u>	<u>42</u>
		<u>skipped</u>	<u>5</u>

Q19. When considering what you believe to be a reasonable expectation of a Councillor, and taking into account work/life balance and other considerations, do you consider that your workload as a Councillor keeps you:

Please select one option only

<u>Answer Choice</u>		<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Total</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>Under occupied</u>	<u>0.0%</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>Appropriately occupied</u>	<u>21.7%</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>A little over occupied</u>	<u>45.7%</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>Very over occupied</u>	<u>32.6%</u>	<u>15</u>
		<u>answered</u>	<u>46</u>
		<u>skipped</u>	<u>1</u>

Q20. When are workload (working as a Councillor) demands placed on you the most?

Please tick all that apply

<u>Answer Choice</u>		<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Total</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>All days/ times of the week</u>	<u>60.0%</u>	<u>27</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>Monday - Friday daytime</u>	<u>35.6%</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>Monday - Friday evening</u>	<u>13.3%</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>Saturday – daytime</u>	<u>11.1%</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>5</u>	<u>Saturday – evening</u>	<u>0.0%</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>6</u>	<u>Sunday – daytime</u>	<u>11.1%</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>7</u>	<u>Sunday – evening</u>	<u>4.4%</u>	<u>2</u>
		<u>answered</u>	<u>45</u>
		<u>skipped</u>	<u>2</u>

Q21. Do your workload demands impact upon your work-life balance and wellbeing?

Please select one option only

<u>Answer Choice</u>		<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Total</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>76.1%</u>	<u>35</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>23.9%</u>	<u>11</u>
		<u>answered</u>	<u>46</u>
		<u>skipped</u>	<u>1</u>

Q22. If yes, how significant is this impact?

Please select one option only

<u>Answer Choice</u>		<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Total</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>Not at all significant</u>	<u>9.8%</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>Significant</u>	<u>73.2%</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>Very significant</u>	<u>4.9%</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>12.2%</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>answered</u>			<u>41</u>
<u>skipped</u>			<u>6</u>

Q23. Do you believe that you currently have sufficient time and capacity to properly undertake your Councillor duties?

Please select one option only

<u>Answer Choice</u>		<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Total</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>63.8%</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>36.2%</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>If you have any comments, please use the space provided below</u>			<u>33</u>
<u>answered</u>			<u>47</u>
<u>skipped</u>			<u>0</u>

Cheshire East Council Electoral Review 2023-24: Electorate Forecasts Technical Report

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Time period for the forecasts	4
3	Geographical coverage of the forecasts	5
4	Terminology and abbreviations	8
5	Methodology.....	10
5.1	Overview and key data sources	10
5.2	Estimating the current stock of residential properties.....	11
5.3	Estimating the number of electors per property.....	26
5.4	Producing residential property forecasts for 2023-29.....	29
5.5	Producing electorate forecasts	30
6	Constraining the forecasts to ONS population projections	38

1 Introduction

As part of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's current (2023-24) Electoral Review of Cheshire East, it is necessary to produce forecasts of the future electorate for each of the Borough's existing wards.

The main rationale for producing these forecasts is to assess how the size and geographical distribution of electorates is likely to change in the coming years, so that electors can be fairly distributed between councillors. For example, housing developments can result in some small areas seeing much faster population and electorate growth than others – and hence the electors in these areas will be increasingly under-represented unless there is a change in electoral boundaries or the number of assigned councillors. Similarly, councillors representing areas of high population and electorate growth may become increasingly over-burdened unless boundaries or councillor numbers are revised.

Cheshire East Council has now produced electorate forecasts for its existing Borough wards,¹ for the purposes of the current review. This technical report sets out Cheshire East's methodology and the main results. The forecasts, and this report, were prepared by the Council's Strategic Planning Team, over the period from March to September 2023.

In developing these forecasts, the Borough Council has referred to guidance produced by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).² In addition, Cheshire East has drawn on other relevant reference documents, namely:

- the electorate forecasting methodology report³ produced by Cheshire West & Chester (CW&C) Borough Council, to explain the approach taken by CW&C in producing forecasts for the LGBCE's 2017-18 review of that authority. According to that report, the LGBCE reviewed CW&C's methodology and considered it fit for purpose.
- the electorate forecasts and accompanying technical report⁴ produced by Cheshire East in 2019 (again by the Strategic Planning Team) for its 2018-23 Community Governance Review (CGR).
- the 2018-23 CGR Final Recommendations Assessment Report⁵, which includes an overview of the 2019 forecasting approach, as well as details of the additional

¹ It will also be necessary to estimate future numbers of electors for any alternative administrative boundaries that are proposed during the Electoral Review.

² [1] 'Electoral Forecasting: User Guidance', LGBCE: https://www.lgbce.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-03/electoral_forecasting_-_user_guidance.pdf. [2] 'Electoral reviews: Technical guidance (Updated April 2022)', LGBCE: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-03/technical-guidance-2021.pdf>

³ 'Cheshire West and Chester Electoral Review 2017: The Current and Forecast Electorate', Cheshire West & Chester Council, March 2017.

⁴ Cheshire East CGR electorate forecasts technical report V9 (7 August 2019), Cheshire East Council. This report is the appendix under item 18 of the Constitution Committee 19 September 2019 agenda and minutes published [here](#).

⁵ Cheshire East Council Community Governance Review Final Recommendations Assessment Report, 25 March 2022. This report is Appendix 3 under item 81 of the 27 April 2022 Full Council agenda and minutes published [here](#).

forecasting of future electorate numbers undertaken to assess the implications of the recommended changes to what were then the existing town and parish council boundaries.

Cheshire East's chosen methodology is based on CW&C's approach for its 2017-18 Electoral Review, which has been reviewed and accepted by the LGBCE. This chosen methodology also (albeit with some minor adaptations) follows that adopted for its 2018-23 CGR electorate forecasting work.

A few health warnings are worth highlighting in this introduction (other words of caution are issued at appropriate points later in this report):

- firstly, the electorate forecasts produced for this Electoral Review relate only to the number of electors eligible to vote in local government elections. This also applies to the current and historic electorate data (from the Electoral Register) that has been fed into the Borough Council's electorate forecasting model.
- secondly, the modelling set out in this report does not seek to estimate the past, current, or likely future numbers of adults who are eligible to vote but who choose not to register or inadvertently fail to do so. Registration rates for eligible adults are likely to vary significantly between different parts of the Borough, and so unregistered adults are likely to be more concentrated in some Borough wards than others. However, estimating levels of (and geographical variations in) under-registration is beyond the scope of the current forecasts and is not part of the wide array of evidence that the LGBCE has requested from the Borough Council for the purposes of this Review.
- thirdly, it should be noted that many of the figures cited in this report are rounded off, for ease of reading. However, the underlying calculations used for the Borough Council's modelling rely, wherever possible, on unrounded data. Therefore figures derived from the rounded numbers cited in this report may in some cases differ slightly from those generated by the Borough Council's modelling.⁶

The rest of this report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 explains the choice of the forecasting time period (July 2023 to December 2029).
- Section 3 sets out which geographical areas the forecasts were produced for (and why) and includes the forecast figure for the total (Borough-wide) electorate by 2029 and the change this represents from its current total. This section also explains how the forecasts deal with a few unusual cases where a property is

⁶ For instance, in Section 6, it is noted that the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) latest (2018-based) subnational projections for Cheshire East's population in mid-2029 and mid-2030 are 400,914 and 402,349 respectively. However, the unrounded figures published by ONS are 400,914.111 and 402,348.731. As the Borough Council's modelling is based on the unrounded data, this report gives the midpoint of these figures as 401,631 (the midpoint of the unrounded figures), rather than 401,632 (the midpoint of the rounded figures).

recorded in the July 2023 Electoral Register as being in one polling district but will be listed under another polling district from December 2023 onwards.

- Section 4 explains the terminology and abbreviations used in this report.
- Section 5 presents the forecasting methodology and summarises the forecast results.
- Section 6 highlights the results of constraining the forecasts so they are consistent with the Office for National Statistics' latest (2018-based) subnational population projections: an approach that was tested (in line with LGBCE guidance), but which, as Section 6 also explains, was found to be less suitable than the Borough Council's preferred forecasting approach.

Appendix 1 (a separate sister document) contains the tables of electorate forecasts resulting from this work.

2 Time period for the forecasts

LGBCE guidance on electorate forecasts highlights a requirement for an electoral review to consider changes in the electorate that are likely to occur within five years of the end of the review's final recommendations. Hence local authorities are required to produce forecasts for six years from the start of the review: so, for the current review, that means forecasts up to 2029.⁷

The base date for the forecasts is 1 July 2023, as (at the time the forecasts were produced) this was the date of the most recently available Electoral Register data.

The resulting forecasts are therefore for the period from mid-2023 (1 July 2023) to the end of 2029 (31 December 2029)⁸, although (for reasons explained in Section 3) statistics are presented for 2021-29 as well as 2023-29 changes in electorate numbers.

⁷ This is set out in paragraphs 3.9 and 4.68 of the LGBCE's 'Electoral reviews: Technical guidance (Updated April 2022)' and paragraph 20 of the LGBCE's 'Electoral Forecasting: User Guidance'.

⁸ At the time of writing, the LGBCE intended to agree its final recommendations for Cheshire East in December 2024 and publish these in January 2025, so the end date of December 2029 for the electorate forecasts is five years ahead of that final decision.

3 Geographical coverage of the forecasts

Although the forecasts requested by the LGBCE for this stage of the Electoral Review are only for existing Borough wards, the findings of the Review and the resulting decisions may involve a change to these wards' boundaries. Hence there is a need, as far as data limitations and resource constraints will allow, to be able to break down the current and future electorate into small sub-areas of each ward, so that the impact of any boundary change that the LGBCE propose or recommend can be readily assessed.

With this in mind, the Borough Council has followed a forecasting methodology that enables the production of forecasts for its smallest electoral tier, namely polling districts. The reasons for generating forecasts down to this specific geographical level are twofold. Firstly, Electoral Register data, which include statistics on both the number of electors and the number of properties, are readily available at polling district level. Secondly, all polling districts are subdivisions of parish wards, parishes and council wards and therefore forecasts for polling districts can be readily aggregated, if required, into figures for those higher electoral tiers.⁹

The other key data input required for electorate forecasts, Council data on completed new build housing and on future development sites, includes coordinates (eastings and northings) for individual housing development sites. Housing completions and expected future developments can therefore be mapped to any existing electoral tier, or indeed any potential subdivisions of these.

It is also recognised that the LGBCE seeks to use parishes, or else any town and parish council warding, as the building blocks for Borough wards.¹⁰ Furthermore, there are some obvious advantages in keeping an entire town and parish council within a single Borough ward, so electorate forecasts at town and parish council level are also a key part of the evidence base.

Given all this, Cheshire East's CGR electorate forecasts have been produced for five geographical tiers:¹¹

- the 370 polling districts
- the 184 separate areas for which councillors are elected (town and parish council wards, where warding exists, and parishes in other cases) or for which there are parish meetings (for a definition of parish meetings, see Section 4)
- the 120 parishes¹²

⁹ Forecasting at polling district level is also consistent with the advice in paragraph 24 of the LGBCE's 'Electoral Forecasting: User Guidance' and with the approach taken by CW&C for the 2017-18 review of its council ward boundaries.

¹⁰ As noted in paragraph 1.12 and Chapter 7 of the LGBCE's 'Electoral reviews: Technical guidance (Updated April 2022)'.

¹¹ The figures given relate to the electoral areas that came into effect from 1 April 2023, following the CGR changes.

¹² One of these 120 parishes, Lower Peover, is unique in being split between Cheshire East and a neighbouring local authority. This parish (which covers the same area as Lower Peover Parish Council) consists of two parish wards: Peover Inferior (the same geographical area as polling district

- the 106 town and parish councils and parish meetings¹³
- the 52 Borough wards
- the Borough as a whole.

The chosen approach, following that taken by CW&C in its 2017-18 Review, was to produce forecasts firstly for Borough wards and add these up to obtain a Borough-wide total, and then generate forecasts for polling districts. The forecasts for each polling district were calculated using (amongst other input data) estimates of the average number of electors per dwelling for the Borough ward in which the polling district lay. The resulting electorate forecasts for each polling district were then constrained so that they summed to the electorate totals for each Borough ward.

The polling district figures were then grouped into their constituent parish wards, parishes and parish councils, in order to generate forecasts for these other geographical tiers that summed to the same Borough ward sub-totals and overall (borough) totals.

In presenting the forecast results up to the LGBCE's specified end date of 2029, it is useful to include data on the expected changes in electorate numbers for two key periods:

- December 2021 to December 2029, as the LGBCE's starting point for this Review is the Electoral Register data as at (December) 2021
- July 2023 to December 2029, as (by the time these forecasts were produced), Electoral Register data for 1 July 2023 was available for feeding into the model and so 1 July 2023 marks the base date for the forecasts.

There are rare instances where a property is recorded in the July 2023 Electoral Register as being in one polling district but will be listed under another polling district from December 2023 onwards. For each of these, the forecasts assign these properties and their electors to the polling district that the Register records (or will record) them as being in at the time in question. This approach is based on LGBCE advice on how to treat such cases. The cases are as follows:

- **Handforth/Styal parish boundary decision (affecting one property and its two electors):** In spring 2023, the Borough Council decided to uphold a resident's complaint about their property's transfer (under the CGR) from the

3CN1), which is in Cheshire East, and Nether Peover, which is in CW&C. However, given that this Electoral Review is limited to Cheshire East, the electorate forecast figures produced for the Review relate only to the numbers of electors in the Peover Inferior parish ward; this is so even for the figures produced at parish and parish council level.

¹³ The figure of 106 includes eight separate groups of parishes which technically are not parish councils in their own right: rather, they are 22 individual parishes which group together for administrative purposes. These eight groups are: Bickerton and Egerton; Brindley and Faddiley; Cholmondeley and Chorley; Cholmondeston and Wettenhall; Hatherton and Walgherton; Leighton, Minshull Vernon and Woolstanwood; Sound and District (the parishes of Austerson, Baddiley, Baddington, Broomhall, Coole Pilate and Sound); and Worleston and District (the parishes of Aston Juxta Mondrum, Poole and Worleston).

parish of Styal to Handforth Town Council. The Register will not be updated to reflect this decision until the annual canvass (scheduled for the summer and autumn of 2023) has been undertaken. Therefore the electorate forecast model treats this property and its two electors being as part of Handforth Town Council and polling district 8FKT as of the forecast base date (July 2023), but as part of the parish of Styal and its polling district (8FK1) from the end (December) of 2023 onwards. However, this case has no impact on the electorate figures at Borough ward level, as both 8FKT and 8FK1 are part of the same Borough ward (Wilmslow Lacey Green).

- Alsager property (with three electors) recorded under incorrect polling district in the July 2023 Register:** In order to provide the LGBCE with the detailed Register data that it requires for the current Review, the Borough Council undertook an extensive amount of work in checking its existing records of mapping coordinates (eastings and northings) for properties on the Register and in obtaining accurate coordinates for those properties where no eastings and northings were previously listed. This work identified a few cases where a property was in a slightly different location to that recorded in the existing Register. These included one instance where the existing Register was found to have assigned one property, in Alsager, to the incorrect polling district. The July Register lists this property and its electors as being in polling district ALEF, but it is actually in ALEG. Again, the Register will not be updated to reflect this error until the annual canvass has been undertaken. However, this case has no impact on the electorate figures at parish ward and higher electoral levels, as both ALEF and ALEG are part of the same Town Council ward (Alsager West) and the same Borough ward (Alsager).

For the Borough as a whole, the resulting forecast is that:

- between December 2021 (when the electorate was 307,800) and the end of 2029 (31 December), the electorate will increase by around 29,500 (9.6%), to reach 337,300
- between 1 July 2023 (when the electorate was 314,700) and the end of 2029 (31 December), the electorate will increase by around 22,700 (7.2%).

4 Terminology and abbreviations

Dates

Except where specified otherwise, references to 12-month periods spanning two calendar years are for the period 1 April to 31 March. For example, “2022/23” means the year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Parish meetings

Parish meetings are parishes that have no elected councillors and where decisions are instead made at meetings of local residents. Cheshire East has four parish meetings.

Parish wards

For simplicity, this report uses the term “parish wards” to refer to the 184 areas with separate councillor representation (180 areas) or with a parish meeting (four areas), though some of these 184 areas consist of a whole parish that is not divided into wards.

Residential properties

The chosen forecasting methodology involves the use of different assumptions for the different types of accommodation in which electors live, namely dwellings intended for occupation by a single household, houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and specialist housing for older people.¹⁴ However, apart from where specific mention is made of HMOs or specialist housing for older people, the references in this report to “dwellings”, “residential properties”, “properties”, “housing” or “homes” means all accommodation for long-term residents, whether it is intended for single households, multiple households or older people.

Abbreviations

This report includes the following abbreviations:

- CGR: Community Governance Review
- CW&C: Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council
- DLUHC: Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
- HMO: Houses in multiple occupation
- HMU: (Cheshire East Borough Council) Housing Monitoring Update Report
- LGBCE: Local Government Boundary Commission for England

¹⁴ For the purposes of this report and the CGR electorate forecasts, HMOs and “specialist housing for older people” are defined as follows: “specialist housing for older people” is housing for older people that falls within the C2 premises use class, namely residential care homes, nursing homes and extra care housing; and HMOs are small shared houses occupied by between three and six unrelated individuals, as their only or main residence, who share basic amenities such as a kitchen or bathroom. These definitions are based on the use class descriptions given by the Planning Portal: <https://www.planningportal.co.uk/permission/common-projects/change-of-use/use-classes> . Extra care housing is housing primarily for older people, where occupants have specific tenure rights to occupy self-contained dwellings and where they have agreements that cover the provision of care, support, domestic, social, community or other services.

- LPS: Local Plan Strategy
- OA: Output Area
- ONS: Office for National Statistics
- ONSPD: ONS Postcode Directory
- ORS: Opinion Research Services
- SHLAA: (Cheshire East Borough Council) Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
- SNPP: Subnational population projections

5 Methodology

5.1 Overview and key data sources

One approach to forecasting future changes in the electorate is to produce forecasts of the future population change and then apply estimates of (or assumptions about) the number of electors per head of population. However, whilst population forecasts are commonly produced at local authority level, Cheshire East does not consider that such forecasts can be reliably generated for smaller areas, such as towns, parishes or Borough wards. This is because the key input data, such as official statistics on migration flows, are not generally available for these small areas. The 2011 Census includes migration data at small area level,¹⁵ but only for short-term migration (people moving house during the 12 months before the Census): clearly longer-term migration trends cannot be identified from this alone. The 2021 Census data releases (ongoing at the time of writing) include some updated information on these short-term migration flows, but do not provide any more detailed evidence.¹⁶ Furthermore, population forecasting requires specialist knowledge of demographic data (such as fertility rates, mortality rates and migration flows) and associated modelling techniques. Cheshire East does not have this in-house expertise.

The most obvious alternative approach (the one that the Council has followed) is to forecast future change in the number of residential properties and then apply estimates of the average number of electors per property. This approach is more suitable, as Cheshire East's Strategic Planning Team maintains a database of housing developments, which includes records of past housing completions and forecasts of expected future completions.

This database records only changes in the stock of residential properties (completions, demolitions, changes of use and conversions). Therefore it cannot be used in isolation to estimate the stock at any one time. However, small area data on the stock of residential properties are available from other sources, namely Official for National Statistics (ONS) dwelling stock statistics, the 2021 Census (and earlier Censuses), Cheshire East's Council Tax Team and from the Council's Electoral Register.

The property statistics from these sources can also be cross-checked against each other and against outputs from the forecasting work and can be used to inform the forecasting methodology and choices of input data.

¹⁵ For example, for the statistical 'OAs' created by ONS, which generally contain smaller numbers of residents than polling districts.

¹⁶ At the time of writing, the published 2021 Census data on migration is available down to OA level (Cheshire East is currently divided into 1,298 OAs, each of which are of broadly similar size in terms of population). However, this 2021 Census data identifies only the number of residents within the specified geographical area who had, within the previous 12 months, migrated to their current home from an address inside the UK, and the number who had migrated there from an address outside the UK. Therefore it does not yet identify the numbers of residents who migrated within Cheshire East or within a specific ward, and nor does it identify the numbers of people who had migrated out of Cheshire East in the previous 12 months. In any case, a single 12-month period may well be unrepresentative of longer-term migration trends, and this may be particularly so for the 12 months prior to Census Day 2021 (21 March 2021), given that it coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic and periods of lockdowns and COVID-related restrictions.

For data on the number of electors, the Electoral Register is the obvious (and only) source.

These data sets are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Key data sources available for the electorate forecasting work

Data	Source	Time period(s) for which data are available at small area level
Cheshire East Council housing database records on housing completions and current/future developments	Strategic Planning Team	2010 onwards
Electoral Register data on electorate size and property numbers	Electoral Services Team	2016-23*
Council Tax data on number of properties	Council Tax Team	2011 and 2019-23
ONS dwelling stock data	ONS	2010
Census dwelling stock data	ONS	2011 and 2021

*Registers as of August 2016, August 2017, November 2018, January 2020, December 2020, December 2021, January 2023, and July 2023.¹⁷

5.2 Estimating the current stock of residential properties

Sourcing, cleansing and mapping of data on historic (2010-23) and future housing completions

The Strategic Planning Team's housing database is the most comprehensive and reliable source of data on recent and potential future changes to the Borough's housing stock. It includes eastings and northings for sites where development is completed, underway or planned. This means that existing and expected future dwelling provision can be mapped to any current or potential future administrative areas.

The information on the housing database records the day (date, month, and year) of each completion. The data goes back only to 2010 and (a few exceptions aside) does not record dwellings built before then. However, the data can be used, in tandem with less up-to-date statistics on the residential property stock, to produce up-to-date estimates of this stock.

For the purposes of the electorate forecasting work, extracts were obtained from this database. These extracts included records of past completions and forecasts of future development, as well as supplementary data on completions of specialist housing for older people, and on dwelling losses. The extracts contained all data

¹⁷ These were the dates for which Electoral Register data were readily available. For the purposes of the electorate forecasting work, those Register figures that predated July 2023 and that were for months other than December were treated as proxies for the December they were closest to: for example, the August 2017 figures were used as a proxy for December 2017 and the January 2020 figures were used as a proxy for December 2019.

fields deemed of potential use for the forecasting work and included records of all property completions to date and all development sites where housing construction has occurred since April 2010, is underway or is expected to commence during or beyond the current (2010-30) Local Plan period.

It should be stressed that the forecasts of future residential property completions are based on the status of the site (for example, whether it has planning permission) and realistic build rates (the number of properties that can be built per annum). They are not constrained or uplifted to reflect planning policy aspirations or subjected to any other kind of policy adjustment.

The extracted forecasts of future housing completions are those produced as part of the Strategic Planning Team's most recently published Housing Monitoring Update (HMU), a report that provides a yearly update on past and expected future housing completions.¹⁸ These housing forecasts were provided in March 2023 and record full details of the site, including its address and the forecast number of completions on the site in each reporting year from 2022/23 to 2029/30.

The extracted data on historic (actual) completions included completions up to 31 March 2023 and were provided in two separate instalments:

- finalised figures for completions up to 31 March 2022 were provided in March 2023. These figures are consistent with the Strategic Planning Team's official (published) data on housing completions and forecasts, in the form of the most recent HMU. These figures were provided with separate records (individual data rows) for each property, including its plot address and its completion date.
- figures for the year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 were provided in July 2023.¹⁹ These figures provide a comprehensive record of completions during that 12-month period and have been subjected to extensive checks. Hence they were considered more than sufficiently accurate for input into the Council's electorate forecasting model.²⁰ However, unlike the completions data provided for earlier years, the completions figures for the 2022/23 year could only be provided at site level: that is, they show the number of net completions in 2022/23 for each site and the site's address details, but do not include completion dates and plot addresses for each individual property.

¹⁸ 'Housing Monitoring Update – Base date: 31 March 2022', Cheshire East Council, February 2023: https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial-planning/research_and_evidence/strategic_housing_land_assmnt/housing-land-supply.aspx

¹⁹ The extracted data on housing completions included one property that involved a change of use from a standard (C3 use class) dwelling to a residential institution (C2 use class) property that is intended to be a children's home. (This contrasts with the other C2 developments recorded in the housing database data extracts, which are for specialist older people's housing.) This change is therefore treated by the electorate forecasting model as a net loss of one standard (C3) dwelling, rather than a change of use (as the electoral forecasting approach includes only C2 accommodation for older people).

²⁰ However, the completions figures for the 2022/23 year will undergo further checks and potential further amendments, so the 2022/23 completions fed into the electorate forecasting model may not necessarily tally exactly with the final numbers that will be reported in the next HMU.

The housing database extracts were reviewed, and some extra data checking and cleansing was undertaken given the additional levels of precision required for some elements of the electoral forecasting work.²¹ In particular:

- for some of the site records for which housing completions were forecast from April 2022 onwards, it was necessary to check the development location by referring to other Strategic Planning Team records, because of differences in the information provided about the location details. For example, in a few cases, different files or spreadsheet tabs recorded a different easting or northing for the same site; in a few others, the original easting and northing appeared to map to a location outside Cheshire East. In such cases, the site location and area covered were checked using the Cheshire East SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) map layer and the final easting and northing taken from the SHLAA.²² Amended postcodes and revised coordinates were added in new data fields. However, these changes affected only 0.5% (five) of the 1,011 housing forecast sites included in the electorate forecasting.
- for the 21,768 gross completions between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2022, no eastings or northings were available, as the housing database does not record coordinates for individual properties. However, the site address and (where also included) plot address entries in the database generally included detailed information, usually including a full, recognisable postcode. Eastings and northings for these 21,768 individual completions were therefore derived as follows:
 - if the property was the only one that had been (or would be) built on its development site, then the site easting and northing were taken as the property's easting and northing. 1,689 (7.8%) of the 2010-22 completions fell into this category. (These 1,689 included all the 164 completions (cited later in this report²³) that were identified as being residential bedrooms for unrelated elderly residents.)
 - for the other 20,079 completions, namely those involving multi-property sites, work was undertaken to confirm the property's postcode and then match this to what (at that time of that data preparation work) was the latest (February 2023) ONS Postcode Directory (ONSPD), as the ONSPD includes eastings and northings for each UK postcode.²⁴ The procedure

²¹ As the housing database is designed for recording and monitoring housing completions and other changes in the housing stock, not for informing electoral reviews, some of its records inevitably excluded some of the detailed information required for the electoral forecasting work.

²² For some of these sites, the SHLAA includes the boundary of the site, but not an easting and northing; in such cases, the easting and northing used for the electorate forecasts were based on a relatively central point within the site area.

²³ The derivation of the 164 figure for residential bedrooms is covered later in Subsection 5.2, under the heading 'Distinguishing between different types of older people's specialist housing (individual properties and communal establishment bedrooms)'.

²⁴ Larger sites often consist of properties on multiple streets and covering multiple postcodes. In these cases, the postcode easting and northing are a more precise indicator of an individual property's location than the site coordinates. For very small sites, particularly those involving a single completion, the reverse may be true, with the site coordinates being more accurate than those for the property's postcode. However, to avoid undue complexity, it was deemed preferable to follow a consistent approach for all properties.

followed in each case depended on the type and accuracy of the available information on the property location:

- for most cases (19,874 or 99.0% of the completions on multi-property sites), the housing database plot address included a full postcode that could be matched to a postcode (and hence to an easting and northing) in the ONSPD that was located in Cheshire East.
- for eight other properties (all on the same development site), the ONSPD easting and northing for the housing database plot address postcode mapped to a location significantly beyond the Cheshire East boundary; therefore, the correct postcode was obtained using Google searches and this was matched to the ONSPD to obtain an amended easting and northing.
- in one further case, the property in question had no postcode in its plot address but was one of a number on the same relatively small site (16 properties), and so the postcode recorded for other plots on the same site was used to match to the ONSPD.
- in 73 cases, there was enough information in the housing database's plot address to find the location's postcode using Google searches and match this to the ONSPD.
- in six cases, the plot address contained a postcode or provided enough details to find a postcode for the location via Google searches, but the resulting postcode was not one listed in the ONSPD. In these cases, the site easting and northing were taken as the property's easting and northing.
- in the remaining 117 cases, there was too little information (if any) in the plot address to undertake Google searches that were likely to identify the property's postcode. In these cases, the site easting and northing were again taken as the property's easting and northing.

Hence for 19,956 (91.7%) of the completed properties, the eastings and northings were based on the property's postcode and for the rest the site's easting and northing were used.

Losses were mapped according to the relevant development site easting and northing given in the housing database.

For each of the 1,011 sites in the forecasting model for which future housing completions were forecast, checks were made to identify which ones cut across polling district boundaries and to assess how (if at all) the properties due to be built on these sites would be split between multiple polling districts. These checks were made by overlaying the site and polling district boundaries in the Council's QGIS mapping software and, where necessary:

- referring to Ordnance Survey data showing current progress with the sites' development
- referring to relevant planning application documents for the site (for example, proposed site layouts showing where and how houses would be distributed across the site).

The checks established that:

- most of these sites (941) lie entirely within a single polling district.
- for most (49) of the 72 that were split between two or more polling districts, it was clear (or at least highly likely) that all the housing on the completed site would fall within a single polling district, even though the site's total land area was split. For example, there were cases where a site spanned two polling districts, but where one of these polling districts contained land that would clearly (according to OS data or planning application documents) be used only for roads or landscaping, or which was clearly too small in size to accommodate even a small dwelling.
- in the case of the remaining 23 sites (2.3% of all the sites), it was likely (or even certain) that housing would be split between two or more polling districts. In each of these cases, the electoral forecasting approach was to divide the total expected number of houses between different polling districts, to reflect each polling district's expected share of the site's total number of houses. This division took account of planning application documents (where these revealed useful information on the proposed distribution of homes across the sites) and any Ordnance Survey data on the distribution of any homes already completed at the time the checks were done (March-April 2023). Nearly all (20) of the 23 sites in this category had their housing divided between only two polling districts, but it was considered necessary to split two sites between three polling districts and to split one site between four polling districts.
- of the latter group of 23 sites, none involved any development of specialist housing for older people, nor any HMOs.

The checks also revealed four cases where a site's easting and northing mapped to point that was located outside (though in most cases close to) the polling district that contained most (or all) of its housing; in such cases, the easting and northing were further amended, so they mapped to a point in the polling district where most (or all) of the housing was going to be.

This division of sites' housing, to reflect splits between polling districts, dovetails with the approach taken by CW&C for the forecasting undertaken for its 2017-18 electoral review. It is also an improvement on the approach taken for the Cheshire East CGR, for which (because of greater time constraints and resource pressures on the forecasting work and other CGR analytical work) sites were generally assigned to the single polling district containing their easting and northing.²⁵

²⁵ Some work was undertaken during the CGR to estimate the division of new homes between polling districts or other small electoral geographies, but this was focused on areas where parish boundary

The data cleansing and mapping work set out above was undertaken during March-April 2023.

The housing data file recording actual 2022/23 completions (as received in July) did not include site eastings and northings. However, of the 270 sites where gross completions or losses (or both) occurred in 2022/23, 240 were among those listed in the housing database forecasts and so eastings and northings for these sites were already available within the electorate forecasting model.

For the other 30 sites, additional mapping work was necessary: firstly, to identify an easting and northing, and secondly to check whether their housing was split between multiple polling districts. For these 30 sites, eastings and northings were taken from the SHLAA where available; where the SHLAA did not record coordinates for the site, an easting and northing were taken from a point within the site boundary. However, whilst one site boundary appeared to extend into a small area of land (too small to accommodate a property) in a neighbouring authority, none of the 30 spanned multiple Cheshire East polling districts.

Adjustment of the original housing forecast figures to reflect actual 2022/23 completions

The most recent (2021/22) HMU (published in February 2023) has a base date of 31 March 2022 for its forecasts of future housing development. The next HMU, which will have a base date of 31 March 2023, is not due to be finalised and published until 2024, which will be too late to inform the electorate forecasts for this Review. However, the extracted housing database figures for 2022/23 completions provide valuable updated evidence on the likely levels, volumes, and locations of housing development, and this evidence can be used to produce adjusted housing forecasts for input into the electoral forecasting model.

Therefore the approach taken for the electoral forecasting work has been to use data on actual housing completions to estimate changes in the housing stock from 2010 up to 31 March 2023, and to use adjusted housing forecasts (2021/22 HMU forecasts adjusted to reflect the actual 2022/23 completions evidence) to estimate changes in the housing stock from 1 April 2023 up to the end of the electorate forecasting period (31 December 2029).

Table 2 below sets out the approach taken in adjusting the HMU forecast figures to reflect and ensure consistency with actual 2022/23 completions figures. The examples given in the final column relate to the actual numbers of past and expected future completions for actual sites recorded in the model, rather than being made-up hypothetical cases.

Whilst the assumptions for scenarios 1 to 4 in Table 2 are helpfully informed by evidence on the actual level of site activity in 2022/23, there is more uncertainty in making a judgement about the status of those sites (scenarios 5 and 6) where some

changes were proposed and was done to inform the CGR Draft and Final Recommendations, rather than being a wholesale exercise that was carried out at an earlier stage, as part of the CGR electoral forecasting work.

completions were originally forecast in 2022/23 but none occurred. The simple assumption applied to the scenario 6 cases, that development has just been set back one year, is one that errs on the optimistic side. In practice, development on some of those sites may end up being delayed for a few years or may not even happen at all. However, there were 145 sites that came under scenario 6 and it was not considered feasible to undertake a reassessment of so many sites' prospects within the timetable set out for this Review's electorate forecasts. Such detailed information will be available only when research and consultation work is undertaken to inform the next HMU. Given the small scale of the development originally forecast for 2022/23 on the scenario 6 sites (nine or fewer completions), revised assumptions about the timing of this development are likely, in any case, to have very limited impact on the resulting electoral forecasts.

The scenario 5 cases, however, warrant a different approach. The assumptions made about larger sites can have a material effect on the electoral forecasts. Furthermore, there were only five sites for which 10 or more net completions were forecast for 2022/23 but for which none occurred. Therefore, as Table 2 indicates, housing monitoring officers were approached (in late July 2023) for an updated view on progress and likely timescales for completing these sites and the electoral forecasting model's assumptions were adjusted to reflect this updated information.²⁶ In four of these five cases, development was underway (and in some instances completed) by that point in the 2023/24.

Besides reviewing the scenario 5 cases, housing monitoring officers were also consulted on the whole approach set out in Table 2 and given examples (including names and reference numbers) of sites that fell under scenarios 1 to 4 and 6. They endorsed the general approach, but also provided updated information on development progress with the specific sites presented as examples; this updated evidence has also been used to adjust the model's assumptions.

The feedback from housing monitoring officers identified two specific sites where completions were originally forecast for 2022/23, but for which signs of actual or imminent progress were still obviously lacking. The electorate forecasting approach therefore assumes, conservatively, that development on these two sites, if it occurs at all, will be after 2029.

²⁶ None of these five sites was unusually large in scale: the biggest was a development of specialist housing for older people involving 72 net completions (all originally forecast to be built in 2022/23, but now expected to be completed in 2023/24); two others each involved around 50 net completions over the site lifespan; the others involved 15 or fewer properties.

Table 2: Approach taken to adjusting original housing forecast figures to reflect actual 2022/23 housing completions

Scenario No.	Scenario description	Adjustment (if any) made to the original (housing database) forecast numbers	Example
1	Development in 2022/23 has progressed at the 'speed' expected, with actual net completions in that year equalling what was forecast.	No adjustment needed.	Original housing forecast was one net completion every year from 2022/23 to 2026/27 inclusive, and there was actually one net completion achieved in 2022/23. In this case, the electorate forecasting model records the 2022/23 actual figure and assumes one net completion a year from 2023/24 to 2026/27 inclusive.
2	Development in 2022/23 has progressed faster than expected, with more actual net completions than were forecast and the whole site was complete as of 31/3/23. ²⁷	The model assumes the site has been fully built out as of end of 2022/23 year.	Original housing forecast was zero net completions in 2022/23 and four in 2023/24, but the four net completions were actually achieved in 2022/23. In this case, the model records the 2022/23 actual figure and assumes zero net completions for 2023/24 and beyond.
3	Development in 2022/23 has progressed <u>faster</u> than expected, with <u>more</u> actual net completions than were forecast, but the site is not yet complete.	The model revises <u>downwards</u> the originally forecasted number of completions in later years, to exactly offset the gap between the 2022/23 actual figure and the 2022/23 forecast.	Original housing forecast was 30 net completions in 2022/23, 30 in 2023/24 and 21 in 2024/25, but there were actually 48 net completions in 2022/23, 18 more than expected. In this case, the model records the 2022/23 actual figure and assumes 30 net completions in 2023/24 and the remaining three units in 2024/25.
4	Development in 2022/23 has progressed <u>more slowly</u> than expected, with <u>fewer</u> actual net completions than were forecast.	The model revises <u>upwards</u> the originally forecasted number of completions in later years, to exactly offset the gap between the 2022/23 actual figure and the 2022/23 forecast.	Original housing forecast was 39 net completions a year from 2022/23 to 2027/28 inclusive and two net completions in 2028/29, but there were only 27 actual net completions in 2022/23, 12 less than expected. In this case, the model records the 2022/23 actual figure and assumes 39 net completions a year from 2023/24 to 2027/28 inclusive and <u>14</u> net completions (12 more than originally forecast) in 2028/29.

²⁷ The sites within this category included one for which actual net completions in 2022/23 (10) exceeded the total volume of development (seven net completions) that the original housing forecasts predicted over the site's lifespan.

Scenario No.	Scenario description	Adjustment (if any) made to the original (housing database) forecast numbers	Example
5	Site on which a significant volume of development (10 or more net completions) expected in 2022/23, but none actually occurred.	Adjustment made to take account of up-to-date view from Strategic Planning Team housing monitoring officers ²⁸ on recent and expected future progress with the site in question.	Original housing forecast was a total of 50 net completions over the site's lifespan, with 19 of these to be in 2022/23, a further 19 in 2023/24 and the remaining 12 in 2024/25, but the actual outturn for 2022/23 was zero. When asked for an update on the site's current status, housing monitoring officers confirmed construction was by then (as of late July 2023) underway. The officers' updated expectations (which the electorate forecasting model has adopted) were that 25 completions would be achieved by the end of 2023/24, 19 in 2024/25 and the remaining six in 2025/26.
6	Site on which a small amount of development (nine or fewer net completions) expected in 2022/23, but none actually occurred.	The model assumes the development timetable has been set back a year: that is, the original net completions forecast for 2022/23 will now be achieved in 2023/24, the original numbers forecast for 2023/24 will be achieved in 2024/25 and so on.	Original housing forecast was two net completions in 2022/23, two in 2023/24 and two in 2024/25. In this case, the model records the 2022/23 actual figure of zero net completions and assumes two net completions in 2023/24, two in 2024/25 and two in 2025/26.

As it happens, inputting the actual 2022/23 completions figures into the electorate forecasting model and adjusting the housing forecasts accordingly (as set out in Table 2) has relatively little impact on the overall electorate forecast figures for 2029. As noted earlier, the adopted forecasting approach results in a forecast of 337,300 electors by December 2029 (an increase of 22,700, or 7.2%, on the July 2023 Electoral Register figure of 314,700). An alternative variant of the model was tested, under which the 2022/23 actual completions figures are excluded, and the original (HMU) housing forecast figures consequently left unchanged, but this results in an electorate forecast for December 2029 that is only marginally (around 50 electors) lower, but still in the 337,250 to 337,350 range. This provides reassurance that the adopted forecasting approach is robust and that the inclusion or exclusion of the actual 2022/23 completions evidence does not materially affect the 2029 electorate forecast figures.

²⁸ The housing monitoring officers provided this input in late July 2023, so their responses reflect the information available at that time. However, with further information becoming available in the next few months, expectations about these sites may change and so the housing forecasts reported for these sites in the next (2022/23) HMU may, of course, differ from those that the electorate forecasting model assumes.

Treatment of windfall sites

The electorate forecasting work excluded the forecasts for future housing development on windfall sites (sites that unexpectedly come forward for development during a plan period). This approach is consistent with the LGBCE's guidance, which advises that windfall sites should be excluded from electorate forecasts, given that their locations cannot be predicted and therefore windfall numbers cannot be converted into numbers of additional electors in each current or potential future ward.²⁹

Distinguishing between different types of older people's specialist housing (individual properties and communal establishment bedrooms)

Where a site involved a development of older people's specialist housing that had already been completed by the end of March 2023 and this was recorded as the construction of a single property, the plot address was reviewed, along with (if deemed necessary) relevant planning application documents and the evidence available from other online searches for that address. The purpose of this exercise was to assess whether the property involved a single unit of accommodation for (typically) one person, or a larger building containing bedrooms for many (unrelated) residents. For example, properties with plot addresses containing "Apartment 1" or "Flat 1" could reasonably be assumed to be accommodation for a single person, but names such as "Priesty Fields Care Home" and "Kendal House" indicated accommodation for many residents; even addresses with a specific house number could potentially involve a large property with many bedrooms.

As a result of these checks, four properties were identified where it could be determined that the completed property provided accommodation for many residents. In these four cases, planning application evidence showed the number of bedrooms to be provided for residents (10 in one case, 14 in another, 60 in another and 80 in the final case, or 164 in total). For the purposes of the electorate forecasting work, each of the bedrooms in these four properties was counted as a single unit of accommodation and hence as a single housing completion. The result of this stage of the work (treating the four properties as 164 completions, rather than four completions) was to revise upwards the number of completions (up to the end of March 2023) by 160.

Treatment of properties in use class C3b

One of the sites completed in 2022/23 involved the development of a property classed as C3b. This development was classed as an HMO for the purposes of the electorate forecasts: that is, the forecasting model assumes the property will contain 3 electors. This is because C3b properties cover up to six people living together as a single household and receiving care (for example, supported housing schemes such as those for people with learning disabilities or mental health problems), so the likely number of electors is similar to that for HMOs, allowing for the number of occupants being less than six and for people receiving care perhaps being less likely to be on the Register than other groups of the population.³⁰

²⁹ Paragraph 51 of the LGBCE's 'Electoral Forecasting: User Guidance'.

³⁰ This is taken from the Planning Portal definition for C3b dwellings:

<https://www.planningportal.co.uk/permission/common-projects/change-of-use/use-classes>

Conversion of housing monitoring reporting years (April to March) to calendar years and other time periods

Whereas the extracted housing database forecasts are for years running from 1 April to 31 March, the Electoral Register data being used relates to December of each year (or as close to December as possible³¹). Given this, and the LGBCE's guidance on the end date for the forecasts, the aim of the Council's electorate forecasting work has therefore been to produce estimates of the electorate in each future December, up until December 2029. An added complication is that the most recent Electoral Register data fed into the model is for 1 July 2023, meaning that this is the base date used for the electorate forecasts. Hence, for its calculations, the model must separate housing completions for July 2023 onwards from those for the pre-July 2023 period.

Consequently:

- the housing completions and forecast numbers have been converted into calendar years
- in addition, the housing completions and forecast numbers for the 2023 calendar year have been separated into three periods: January to March 2023 (for which actual housing completions are available), April to June 2023 (for which only housing forecasts are available) and July to December 2023 (which again are housing forecasts, not actual completions).

For these conversions, it has been assumed that, for each reporting year (April to March), 25% of completions occur during 1 April to 30 June, 50% occur during 1 July to 31 December and the remaining 25% of completions occur during 1 January to 31 March.

A similar issue affects the data on actual losses, which for years prior to 2022/23 was broken down by reporting year but did not include the month that the loss occurred. However, of the 857 sites where losses occurred between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2022, only 84 involved the loss of more than one property and only 34 of those 84 involved the loss of more than two properties. Therefore, for most sites with losses up to 31 March 2022, it is not even feasible to divide the losses between calendar years. Consequently, for the pre-April 2022 losses data, the figures for each reporting year (April to March) have been taken as a proxy for the calendar year they mainly overlap with: for example, the 2010/11 losses have been used as an estimate for 2010 calendar year losses, 2011/12 losses used to estimate 2011 calendar year losses and so on.

In terms of the electorate forecasting results, this approach impacts most on the treatment of the 2021/22 losses.³²

³¹ See Table 1 above for more details on the dates of the Electoral Register data used for the forecasts.

³² There were 86 losses (spread across 74 sites) during the 2021/22 reporting year, of which only five involved the loss of more than one property (and none involved more than seven losses). Consequently, the electorate forecasting approach assigns all the 86 losses for 2021/22 to the 2021 calendar year. The effect of this is a slightly higher forecast for 2022 net completions than would

Hence housing completions for each calendar year for 2022 onwards were worked out as shown in Table 3 below. The estimated numbers of completions were rounded off to the whole number.³³

Table 3: Conversion of housing database (April to March) forecasts into time periods that could be matched to the electoral forecast data

Period (calendar except where specified otherwise)	Calculation of housing forecast for this period
2022	January-March 2022 actual <u>gross</u> * completions + (2022/23 actual <u>net</u> completions x 75%)
January to June 2023	(2022/23 actual <u>net</u> completions x 25%) + (2023/24 forecast <u>net</u> completions x 25%)
July to December 2023	2023/24 forecast net completions x 50%
2024	(2023/24 forecast net completions x 25%) + (2024/25 forecast net completions x 75%)
2025-29	As for 2024, but rolled forward a year

*As noted earlier, the gross losses for 2021/22 were not broken down by month and so the electorate forecasting model assigns them all to the closest matching (2021) calendar year.

Overview of the completions data for 2010-29

In summary, the housing completions and forecast data that was included in the electorate forecasts therefore consisted of:

- the 21,768 gross completions (spread across 2,633³⁴ sites) that occurred between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2022 and the 1,579 gross losses (spread across 857 sites) that occurred during that same 12-year period. Hence there

otherwise be the case. If, for example, 26% (22) of those 86 losses had occurred during January to March, then the “true” net completions figure for the 2022 calendar year would be 2,446, or 0.9% less than the 2,468 that the electorate forecasts indicate. However, in the context of the cumulative total of 18,046 net completions forecast between 1 January 2022 and 31 December 2029, the effect of assigning 22 January to March 2022 losses to the 2022 calendar year would be a “true” net completions figure for the 2022-29 of 18,024, or a mere 0.1% less than the electorate forecasts assume.

³³ To avoid rounded figures that summed to a different total than the unrounded figures, the estimated completions for January to March were rounded down to the nearest whole number and those for April to December were rounded up to the nearest whole number. For the same reason, the estimates for April to June 2023 were rounded down to the nearest whole number and those for July to December 2023 were calculated as the 2023/24 figure minus the (rounded down) estimates for April to June 2023 and January to March 2024.

³⁴ This figure consists of 2,524 sites where all construction had been completed by 31 March 2022 and 109 sites where further completions were forecast to occur from 1 April 2022 onwards.

were an estimated 20,189 net completions (the 21,768 completions minus the 1,579 losses) between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2022.³⁵

- the 2,506 gross completions (spread across 255 sites) that occurred between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023 and the 162 gross losses (spanning 55 sites) over that same 12-month period, giving a total of 2,344 net completions for that year. Of the 255 sites with gross completions during that year, 27 were ones where the most recent HMU had not anticipated and forecast completions from April 2022 onwards.
- 15,057 net completions (spread across 1,011 sites³⁶) forecast between 1 April 2023 and 31 December 2029 (after adjusting the original housing forecasts to reflect actual 2022/23 net completions and apportioning the figures to calendar years). Of these 15,057, it is forecast that 649 would be built by the end of June 2023 and the remaining 14,408 from 1 July 2023 onwards.

Addition of 2010 housing stock data to the completions figures

To arrive at figures for total housing stock over the electorate forecasting period, it is necessary to add the figures for net completions since April 2010 to estimates of what the total stock was back in 2010. For this, Cheshire East has relied on statistics published on ONS' former Neighbourhood Statistics site, down to Output Area (OA) level, on the dwelling stock as of March 2010.³⁷ These figures are no longer available in the public domain, but Cheshire East obtained a copy of the data set from CW&C for use in its (Cheshire East's) 2018-23 CGR forecasting work. The ONS data set is based on the original (2001) OA boundaries (subsequently referred to in this report as "2001 OAs"), which divides Cheshire East into 1,215 OAs. ONS lookup tables can be used to match these original OA boundaries to parishes and council wards.³⁸

³⁵ The actual figure recorded in the housing database for losses during this period was 1,580 (across 858 sites), but the record for one site, involving the loss of a single dwelling (in 2010/11) and no gross completions, did not include any information about its geographical location; the reference number for this site was not one listed in the SHLAA map layer either. As it could not be assigned to a Borough ward, this single loss has been excluded from the electorate forecasting work.

³⁶ This figure excludes future windfalls, as well as two sites that were identified during the process of adjusting the housing forecasts to reflect actual 2022/23 completions and where the latest evidence points to no development progress in the foreseeable future. (These exclusions are explained in more detail in earlier parts of Subsection 5.2, under the headings 'Adjustment of the original housing forecast figures to reflect actual 2022/23 completions' and 'Treatment of windfall sites'.) The figure of 1,011 consists of 902 sites where no properties had been completed by 31 March 2022, plus the 109 sites where some completions had occurred by that date.

³⁷ Dwelling Stock by Council Tax Band, 2010, Neighbourhood Statistics, ONS.

³⁸ OAs are small areas created by ONS for statistical purposes and are intended to be of similar size (in terms of population). They were originally created in 2001, but some OA boundaries have since been merged or split, firstly to reflect the subsequent demographic change demonstrated by 2011 Census evidence and then similarly in the wake of the 2021 Census results. As a guide to their size, ONS' Census geography web page

(<https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/ukgeographies/censusgeography>) notes that, for England and Wales OAs, "The minimum OA size was [originally] 40 resident households and 100 resident people, but the recommended size was rather larger at 125 households."

The 2001 OA boundaries do not necessarily align with (and in many cases do not even closely follow) Cheshire East Borough ward boundaries. However, as the 2010 housing stock data are available for over a thousand 2001 OAs of similar size population, they can still be aggregated in groupings that correspond reasonably well to each of the 52 Borough wards.

Whilst this 2010 ONS dwelling stock data provides reliable estimates on the stock in each Borough ward, the difficulty is in allocating the 2010 ONS dwelling stock figures to smaller electoral geographies, such as polling districts and some of the smaller parishes and parish wards. The 2001 OAs can be best-fitted to parish wards, polling districts or any other geographical areas, using their population-weighted centroids.³⁹ It is this approach that ONS uses to derive statistics for parishes (and some other geographical tiers) from OA level data. However, even at parish level, there are some areas that do not contain a single population-weighted OA centroid, because of their relatively small population (for example, the parishes of Coole Pilate, Egerton, and Poole⁴⁰); this problem becomes even more acute for smaller geographical subdivisions, such as parish wards or polling districts.

Given this limitation, it is necessary to explain why use of the 2010 ONS dwelling stock data, in tandem with the housing database data, was still regarded as preferable to alternative sources of housing stock data, such as the Census, Council Tax records and the property statistics from the Council's Electoral Register.

Use of Census data on Cheshire East's dwelling stock (whether from the 2011 or the 2021 Census) would present a similar problem, as the Census' "parish" statistics are best-fitted to OA boundaries, rather than covering the exact area of parishes.⁴¹ Furthermore, when OA boundaries are revised by ONS in the wake of new Census evidence, there is no requirement for the redrawn OA boundaries to align with those of parishes, parish councils or parish wards. Hence the 2011 Census dwelling data, being based on 2011 OA boundaries, are less well matched to small electoral geographies than the 2010 dwelling stock data were, and the 2021 Census data are even less well matched than the 2011 Census figures were.⁴²

Council Tax dwellings data provide a record of the number of dwellings in all parish councils and even individual parishes (and are based on actual parish council boundaries, rather than best-fitted OAs). The Council Tax dwellings figures also (as shown later in this subsection of the report) closely match the estimates derived from ONS dwelling stock and Borough Council housing completions data.

³⁹ With population-weighted centroids, the central point (centroid) of the area is based on the geographical distribution of its population, rather than the geographical coverage of the area.

⁴⁰ The three examples cited here are parishes that have same boundaries now (after the implementation of the CGR recommendations in 2023) as they did when the ONS 2010 dwelling stock data were published. In other words, the limitations of best-fitting 2001 OAs to smaller electoral geographies are a longstanding issue.

⁴¹ Under the best-fitting approach, ONS groups smaller parishes together with others until they meet its requisite population size threshold. For example, the parishes of Aston Juxta Mondrum and Poole are assigned to a single OA.

⁴² In addition, with the changes to town and parish council geography that occurred in April 2023 as the CGR changes were implemented, the boundaries of OAs and small electoral areas have, if anything, diverged a little further.

However, the Council Tax figures are not broken down to parish ward or polling district level. Furthermore, the Council Tax dwellings data for small areas were available only for the year 2011 and for 2019 onwards, and do not therefore offer a long enough data series for estimating the average number of electors per property, a key element in this electoral forecasting work.

An alternative source is the property data from the Electoral Register, as the Register's figures are available at polling district level. As parish wards, parishes and Borough wards are all made up of groups of polling districts, the Electoral Register data can be easily aggregated into these larger geographical levels.

As with the Council Tax property data, the Electoral Register property estimates can be, and were, checked against the figures available from other sources, including the ONS and housing completions evidence on the size of the Borough's dwelling stock. However, these comparisons suggest that Electoral Register property counts err on the high side at Borough level.

For example, the 2011 Census (undertaken on 27 March 2011) put the Borough's total stock of residential properties at 166,236.⁴³ Cheshire East's latest HMU publication shows a total of 17,400 net completions between the start of 2011/12 and the end of 2020/21⁴⁴, suggesting (when added to the Census figure) a stock of 183,636 properties by the end of March 2021. This is only 0.1% less than the figure of 183,766 recorded by the 2021 Census⁴⁵ (undertaken on 21 March 2021) and the dwellings estimate (identical to the Census figure) recorded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for 31 March 2021⁴⁶ and is relatively close to (1.2% above) the Council Tax figure for February 2021 (181,515). Even when the HMU's 2021/22 net completions figure (2,779) and the 2022/23 net completions figure (2,344⁴⁷) are added on, this implies a stock of 188,759 by the end of March 2023 (1.1% above the February 2023 Council Tax figure of 186,747). However, the Electoral Register for the preceding December (December 2022) puts the stock 2.8% higher than the (March 2023) ONS-/HMU-based figure, at 194,059, and is 3.9% above the February 2023 Council Tax figure. The Electoral Register as of 1 July 2023 gives a slightly higher still total for number of properties (194,244).

The Electoral Register property figures therefore appear relatively high compared to the alternative sources and for this reason they were considered less suitable than

⁴³ Table QS418EW (Dwellings), 2011 Census, ONS, NOMIS. ONS Crown Copyright.

⁴⁴ Table 3.1, 'Housing Monitoring Update - Base date: 31 March 2022', Cheshire East Borough Council, February 2023.

⁴⁵ Table RM204 (Dwellings), 2021 Census, ONS, NOMIS. ONS Crown Copyright.

⁴⁶ Table 100 (Dwelling stock: Number of Dwellings by Tenure and district: England; 2021), Live tables on dwelling stock, DLUHC, May 2023: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>

⁴⁷ This figure is based on the 2022/23 completions data provided for this electorate forecasting work. However, as the 2022/23 completions figures may go undergo further revisions as part of the process of preparing the 2022/23 HMU publication, the final completions figure reported in the published HMU may of course be different to this.

the estimates derived from ONS dwelling stock and Borough Council housing completions data.⁴⁸

5.3 Estimating the number of electors per property

Estimating the current number of electors per property

In converting future (2023-29) net property change into electorate change, communal and multi-household accommodation was treated separately from single-household dwellings. This is because residents of communal establishments and other multi-household properties are likely to be very different from the occupants of single-household properties in terms of their age and status: hence their propensity to be on the Electoral Register may be very different too.

In the case of specialist housing for older people, the forecasting approach assumes a ratio of one elector per property (in cases where the properties are intended to house a single resident) or else one elector per bedroom. This is the same as the ratio used by CW&C for older people's specialist housing in its 2017-18 Electoral Review forecasting work. This assumption is also the one recommended by the LGBCE in its guidance; as the LGBCE notes, a ratio of one elector per home reflects the fact that some such homes will have more than one elector, but others will be vacant.⁴⁹

For students living in specialist housing (for example, student halls), the ratio of electors to bed spaces is likely to be much lower. This is because responsibility for electoral registration lies with individual students (so not all will register) and some will be registered at their holiday-time address, rather than their term-time one. For the Borough ward electorate forecasts produced for its 2017-18 Electoral Review, CW&C used a specific, evidence-based ratio (0.27) for electors per student bedroom. However, the Cheshire East housing database shows no actual or expected completions of student halls or other specialist student housing between 1 April 2010 and the end of the Plan period (2030). Therefore, the forecasting for the Borough's Electoral Review did not need to factor in separate assumptions for specialist student accommodation.

For HMOs, a ratio of three electors per property was assumed.⁵⁰ This ratio was based on the fact that:

⁴⁸ It could be that the Electoral Register property numbers are so high because they include many new-build properties before these are occupied. However, confirmation of that possible explanation is beyond the scope of this electorate forecasting work.

⁴⁹ Paragraph 53 of the LGBCE's 'Electoral Forecasting: User Guidance'.

⁵⁰ An alternative assumption of 4.5 electors per HMO was tested. (This, in effect, equates to a more optimistic assumption about the electoral registration rate for HMO residents.) However, this had a negligible impact on the electorate forecasts for 2029: it increased the Borough-wide number of electors by only 11 (0.003%) and changed each of the Borough ward forecasts by 0.14% or less.

- HMOs are small, shared houses occupied by between three and six unrelated individuals, as their only or main residence.⁵¹ Hence an average of three to six occupants per HMO could be considered a reasonable assumption.
- any living arrangement involving three or more people who are unrelated to each other is unlikely to be a long-term one in which the residents continue to live in the property for many years. As HMO occupants are likely to be a relatively transient population who may move to another property within a short time, they are also perhaps less likely to be on the Electoral Register than would be the case for adults living in a single-household dwelling. Therefore, the number of electors per HMO is more likely to be towards the lower end of the range.

For all other (that is, non-communal) residential properties, the base date (1 July 2023) average number of electors per property for each Borough ward was based on electorate data from the Electoral Register and the property estimates derived from the ONS 2010 dwelling stock data and the Council's housing database figures for 2010-23. (The estimated increase in housing stock during 2010-23 was calculated using actual completions figures up to March 2023 and housing forecast data, adjusted to reflect actual 2022/23 completions, for April to June 2023.)⁵² More specifically, the approach, taken for each Borough ward in turn, was to take a simple (unweighted) average of the number of electors per residential property ratios over a three-year period and use this as the ratio for the forecast base date.⁵³

There is a case for including the most recent (July 2023) Electoral Register data in this "three-year" average, on the grounds that this is the latest evidence available. However, this and the two next most recently available sets of Register data (for January 2023 and December 2021) span a period of only one and a half years, two of which are only six months apart, and so they would arguably provide a less accurate and representative baseline than one spanning two years and involving equal time intervals.

It was therefore decided to base the estimate for the number of electors per property for the forecast period's base date on an average of the ratios for December 2020 (for which Register data was also available), December 2021 and January 2023. However, the resulting averages for each Borough ward (and the Borough as a whole) were compared with the ratios for July 2023 and with averages for 2021-23

⁵¹ This is taken from the Planning Portal definition of HMOs:

<https://www.planningportal.co.uk/permission/common-projects/change-of-use/use-classes>

⁵² As the underlying ONS and housing database figures used for this calculation include the existing stock of HMOs and specialist housing for older people and students (up to 2023), as well as standard (single-household) dwellings, the resulting electors per property ratios will differ from what they would be if based only on the stock of standard dwellings. However, this difference will be slight, given that specialist housing and HMOs form only a very small proportion of the total property stock. In any case, due to the available (ONS) data on 2010 housing stock not being broken down at all by property type, it was not feasible to estimate and separate out the total stock of HMOs and specialist housing when calculating these ratios.

⁵³ The purpose of averaging over this three-year period was to reduce the risk of feeding unrepresentative data into the forecast calculation. This is consistent with the advice given in paragraph 33 of the LGBCE's 'Electoral Forecasting: User Guidance' about not relying on a single year's data for electoral ratios; it is also consistent with the approach taken by CW&C for its 2017-18 Electoral Review.

(December 2021, January 2023, and July 2023) and for 2017-20 (August 2017, November 2018, and January 2020). The comparison with these other averages was considered an additional useful check, given that they exclude the period from spring 2020 to summer 2021 when COVID-19 restrictions were intermittently in place.⁵⁴

For the Borough as a whole, the 2020-23 (December 2020 to January 2023) average number of electors per property was 2.4% lower than that for 2017-20 and for each ward, the 2020-23 average was between 95.0% and 100.7% of that ward's 2017-19 average. (However, in only three of the 52 wards was the 2020-23 average higher than the 2017-19 average.)

The Borough-wide 2020-23 average was, however, 0.5% higher than that for 2021-23 and for each ward, the 2020-23 average was between 98.2% and 101.7% of that ward's 2021-23 average.

It is also notable that, looking at the last four winter dates for which Register data were available, the ratio for the Borough as a whole has declined slightly, year on year: from 1.716 in January 2020 to 1.692 in December 2020, then 1.663 in December 2021 and 1.655 in January 2023. (The July 2023 ratio was higher than the January 2023 figure, at 1.667, but this could in part be the result of seasonal differences.)

These findings suggested a gradual (but plausible) decrease in the number of electors per property in recent years, with the direction of this trend and the rate of decrease seemingly independent of COVID-19. Hence the three-year average for 2020-23 was considered a suitable baseline for the electorate forecasting work, rather than one skewed by COVID-19.

The resulting ratios for each ward were reviewed, to see whether they appeared implausibly low or high. These ratios for individual wards ranged from 1.281 in Crewe Central and 1.395 in Macclesfield Central (the only ratios below 1.4) to 1.871 in Wybunbury and 1.920 in Leighton (the only two ratios above 1.85). For the Borough as a whole, the 2020-23 average was 1.670 (the 2017-19 average was 1.711). Although the ratio for Crewe Central was substantially lower than anywhere else, the dwelling stock, demographics, and socioeconomic composition (and hence the average number of electors per dwelling) of wards in the centre of major urban areas is often very different to that of other areas, so the Crewe Central figure seems credible. It is also notable that the next lowest ratio was in Macclesfield Central, the centre of the Borough's other large town.

For those wards containing Further and Higher Education institutions, the ratios followed a generally slow and downward trend over time and appeared plausible. Electoral registration rates are likely to be relatively low for student halls (as the evidence collected by CW&C for its 2017-18 Electoral Review indicated) and probably also for students living in non-specialist housing, but offset against this is the often large number of students per student dwelling. Hence the average number

⁵⁴ This was done bearing in mind that the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions could potentially have affected household formation and electoral registration, resulting in ratios that were unrepresentative of the longer term.

of electors per student dwelling may not necessarily be that low. It should also be stressed that many students will live in a different ward to the one in which their college or university campus is located. Even so, we might reasonably expect low ratios for wards that include Further or Higher Education campuses. The figures for such wards generally seem to bear this out: Macclesfield Central, which had the second lowest ratio (1.395), contains Macclesfield College; Crewe West (location of the Cheshire College – South and West campus) had a ratio of 1.577; for Crewe East (the site of the Apollo Buckingham Health Science Campus⁵⁵), the ratio was 1.521. Bunbury ward, home to Reaseheath College, was marginally above the Cheshire East average, at 1.703 (notably lower than the ward's 2017-20 average of 1.787, but this change may in part reflect the construction in recent years of major housing developments in what was previously a more predominantly rural ward).

Allowing for future change in the average number of electors per property

For its 2017-18 Review, CW&C's ward level electorate forecasts factored in a future decline in average household size, which reflects an expected long-term reduction in household size at national level. This adjustment factor was calculated as the Borough-wide population aged 17+ (17 and above) per dwelling in the base year (2018), divided by the Borough's population aged 17 and above per dwelling in the final forecast year.⁵⁶ For this purpose, CW&C used forecasts from its Local Plan.

Taking the same approach (as it also did for the 2018-23 CGR forecasting work), Cheshire East used the population and dwelling forecasts which informed its own Local Plan Strategy (LPS).⁵⁷ These put the population aged 17+ at 330,896 in 2023 and the number of dwellings (excluding care homes and similar specialist housing for older people) at 187,802, giving a ratio of 1.762; for 2029, the respective figures for the population aged 17 and above and for dwellings are 346,205 and 197,431, giving a ratio of 1.754.

Hence the forecast is that, in 2029, the average number of electors per dwelling will be 1.754/1.762, or 0.995 of its 2023 level: in other words, this ratio will fall by around 0.5% over the Electoral Review forecast period.

5.4 Producing residential property forecasts for 2023-29

The change in dwelling stock between 1 July 2023 and the end of 2029 was estimated using housing database forecasts of future net completions on each development site.

⁵⁵ According to its website (<https://www.abhsc.co.uk/>), the campus – previously occupied by Manchester Metropolitan University – was founded by Apollo Healthcare and the University of Buckingham, to provide education and development facilities for medical students.

⁵⁶ As discussed earlier, in Subsection 5.1, limited data availability and reliability mean that it is not feasible to produce robust population forecasts for small areas: hence the Local Plan forecasts (in both Cheshire authorities) being at Borough level only.

⁵⁷ Population and housing forecasts produced by Opinion Research Services (ORS) for the Cheshire East Housing Development Study 2015, ORS, June 2015.

For each Borough ward, the 2023-29 net completions of specialist housing for older people and of HMOs were calculated separately from other net completions, so that separate electors per property ratios could be applied to each of these three categories. (As noted in Subsection 5.3, the housing forecasts showed no specialist student accommodation planned for this period, so no separate calculation was required for that.)

5.5 Producing electorate forecasts

For each Borough ward, the electorate forecasts were calculated as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Calculation of electorate forecasts

Component	Calculation
Properties as of March 2010	Aggregation of ONS' OA (2001 OA) property statistics for March 2010, to Borough ward level
Properties as of end of December 2020	(March) 2010 properties + (April) 2010 to December 2020 net completions (gross completions minus gross losses)
Properties as of end of December 2021	2010 properties + 2010-21 net completions
Properties as of end of December 2022	2010 properties + 2010-22 net completions
Properties as of mid-2023 (end June/start of July)	2010 properties + 2010-23 net completions* *Net completions for January to June 2023 calculated as actual net completions during January to March 2023 plus the forecast net completions for April to June 2023.
Electors as of mid-2023 (1 July)	Electoral Register data as at 1 July 2023
Baseline (1 July 2023) estimate of average number of electors per property	(December 2020 electors per property + December 2021 electors per property + January 2023* electors per property) divided by 3 *Using the January 2023 Electoral Register data as a proxy for December 2022.
2029 electorate, excluding future completions of specialist older people's housing and HMOs	(mid-2023 properties + mid-2023 to December 2029 net completions of standard dwellings*) x baseline electorate-per-property ratio (the average ratio for 2020-23) x adjustment factor (0.995) for future decline in household size** **"Standard dwellings" in this context means residential properties excluding specialist older people's housing and HMOs. **Adjustment for household size based, as noted earlier, on Borough-wide Local Plan forecasts (17+ population per dwelling in 2029 divided by 17+ population per dwelling in 2023).
2023-29 (mid-2023 to December 2029) change in electorate living in specialist older people's housing	mid-2023 to December 2029 net care home completions x electorate-per-property ratio for this type of accommodation (assumed to be 1 for the whole forecast period)

Component	Calculation
2023-29 (mid-2023 to December 2029) change in electorate living in HMOs	mid-2023 to December 2029 net HMO completions x electorate-per-property ratio for this type of accommodation (assumed to be 3 for the whole forecast period)
Total electorate as of end of 2029	(2029 electorate, excluding future completions of specialist older people's housing and HMOs) + 2023-29 (mid-2023 to December 2029) change in electorate living in specialist older people's housing + 2023-29 (mid-2023 to December 2029) change in electorate living in HMOs

A further adjustment was made following a test to see how accurately the approach in Table 4 would predict the July 2023 electorate. For this test, the total stock of housing as of mid-2023 (based on the ONS 2010 dwelling statistics and the Borough Council's housing net completions figures up to the end of June 2023) was calculated for each Borough ward and then multiplied by the baseline (2020-23) average number of electors per property for that ward, to give a modelled estimate of the number of electors for that ward. These modelled estimates were then summed. The modelled estimates for the 52 wards' elector numbers as of July 2023 came to 315,283, whereas the actual electorate at that time (based on the Register) was only 314,681 (0.2% below the modelled total). However, for individual wards, the actual number of electors varied from being up to 2.7% below the modelled estimate to being 5.1% above it.

Consequently, the electorate forecasts for each ward for 2023 to 2029 were adjusted to factor in the actual July 2023 electorate figures for that ward. This was achieved by multiplying the forecasts by a factor of:

$$X/Y$$

where X is the actual July 2023 electorate and Y is the modelled figure.

To take a worked example, for Macclesfield Central Borough ward:⁵⁸

- the stock of properties was estimated at 4,750 as at March 2010
- net completions were +337 for the period from April 2010 to December 2020, +54 for January to December 2021, +50 for January to December 2022, and +27 for January to June 2023⁵⁹
- the number of electors (as of December of each year, or the closest available proxy date) is given in the Electoral Register as 7,264 in 2020 (December 2020 figure), 7,076 in 2021 (December 2021 figure) and 7,171 in 2022 (using January 2023 as a proxy)

⁵⁸ Unless stated otherwise, the numbers cited in this example for a specific year relate to the end of that year (December).

⁵⁹ In keeping with the approach taken (using actual completions figures for January to March 2023 and housing database forecast numbers for April 2023 onwards), the figure of 27 consists of 11 actual completions during January to March 2023 and 16 forecast for the April to June 2023 period.

- the number of electors as of the forecast period base date (1 July 2023) was 7,380
- a net increase of 188 dwellings (excluding HMOs and specialist housing for older people) is expected between July 2023 and December 2029
- a net increase of 9 specialist homes for older people is expected between July 2023 and December 2029
- a net increase of 7 HMOs is expected between July 2023 and December 2029.

Hence the stock of properties is estimated at:

- 5,087 (4,750 + 337) for the end of 2020 (December 2020)
- 5,141 (5,087 + 54) for the end of 2021
- 5,191 (5,141 + 50) for the end of 2022
- 5,218 (5,191 + 27) as of mid-2023 (end of June/start of July).

Therefore the average number of electors per property is estimated at:

- 1.428 (7,264/5,087) for the end of 2020
- 1.376 (7,076/5,141) for the end of 2021
- 1.381 (7,171/5,191) for the end of 2022.

Therefore, the average number of electors per property for the baseline (July 2023) period is estimated as $(1.428 + 1.376 + 1.381)/3 = 1.395$.

If the number of properties in mid-2023 (5,218) is multiplied by the average number of electors per property for that baseline period (1.395), that gives a modelled estimate of 7,280 electors ($5,218 \times 1.395$) as of mid-2023. However, as seen from the actual electorate numbers cited earlier in this worked example, the actual electorate as of 1 July 2023 was 7,380, or 1.4% above (1.014 times) the modelled estimate.

Hence the forecast number of electors in 2029 is:

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \{[(\text{mid-2023 properties} + \text{mid-2023 to end 2029 net completions of standard dwellings}^{60}) \\
 & \times \text{baseline (mid-2023) electors-per-property ratio} \\
 & \times \text{adjustment factor (0.995) for future decline in household size}] \\
 & + (\text{mid-2023 to end 2029 net completions of specialist older people's housing} \times \\
 & \text{electors-per-property ratio for that type of housing}) \\
 & + (\text{mid-2023 to end 2029 net completions of HMOs} \times \text{electors-per-property ratio} \\
 & \text{for that type of housing})\}
 \end{aligned}$$

⁶⁰ "Standard dwellings" in this context meaning residential properties other than HMOs and specialist older people's housing.

x ward-specific adjustment factor (1.014) to offset model tendency to over-predict the electorate at the start of the forecast period

$$= \{[(5,218 + 188) \times 1.395 \times 0.995] + (9 \times 1) + (7 \times 3)\} \times 1.014$$

$$= \{[5,406 \times 1.389] + 9 + 21\} \times 1.014$$

$$= \{7,507 + 30\} \times 1.014$$

$$= 7,537 \times 1.014$$

$$= 7,640 \text{ electors}$$

For each council ward, the figures were then rounded off to the nearest whole number.

Hence the forecast is for Macclesfield Central Borough ward's electorate to increase from 7,380 in July 2023 to 7,640 by December 2029: an increase of 260, or 3.5%. This largely reflects the expected increase in its number of residential properties during that time (a net increase of 204 including its HMOs and specialist housing for older people, which equates to a rise of 3.9% over the mid-2023 to end 2029 period), but also the expected slight decline in average household size and the average number of electors per property across the whole Borough.

In terms of percentage changes, the Borough ward forecasts for the mid-2023 to end 2029 period range from increases of 49.3% in the electorate in Brereton Rural, 47.3% in Leighton, 36.1% in Haslington and 28.8% in Sutton to increases of 21% at most elsewhere, with slight falls (of up to 0.4%) predicted in four wards (Crewe North, Macclesfield Hurdsfield, Sandbach Ettiley Heath & Wheelock and Willaston & Rope). Again, this largely reflects the expected numbers of net housing completions over this period. The number of properties is forecast to rise by 50.0% (1,802) in Brereton Rural, by 48.0% (1,179) in Leighton, by 36.7% (1,547) in Haslington and by 29.4% (595) in Sutton (for all other wards, the forecast increase in the number of properties is less than 22%). In contrast, the number of net completions forecast for Crewe North between mid-2023 and the end of 2029 is a mere one, and likewise for Macclesfield Hurdsfield. As might be expected, the only four wards with predicted declines in elector numbers between mid-2023 and the end of 2029 are the four where the expected number of net completions is lowest (less than 10 in each case).

The resulting (rounded) forecasts for all council wards were summed, to give a Borough-wide total.⁶¹ For Cheshire East as a whole, the resulting electorate forecast for the end of 2029 is 337,339, or 337,300 to the nearest 100. This equates to an increase of 22,700 on the July 2023 Register total (314,681, or 314,700 to the nearest 100).⁶² This increase corresponds to 7.2% growth over the whole forecast

⁶¹ It is appreciated that summing rounded-off estimates can affect the overall total, particularly so when the figures for large number of sub-categories (52 council wards) are involved. In this case, the effect of summing rounded (rather than unrounded) estimates happens to have only a very marginal effect (the sum of the unrounded figures is two electors less, at 337,337), and even a different methodology or different input data would alter the total by 26 (0.5 x 52) at most.

⁶² A variant approach was tested, under which the forecasts were produced firstly at Borough level but using the same data and formulae. This generated a very similar figure for the 2029 electorate of 336,840: this is only 0.1% less than the 337,339 figure obtained from the "wards first" approach and

period, or average growth of 1.1% per annum.⁶³ The 2029 forecast also represents an increase of around 29,500 (9.6%) from the December 2021 Register figure of 307,800 (the December 2021 Register figures being those which prompted the LGBCE to begin this Review).

Forecasts were then produced for each polling district, using each individual polling district's mid-2023 electorate and its mid-2023 to end 2029 completions figures, but applying the Borough ward-level electors-to-properties ratios to work out the number of additional electors that the new properties were likely to host. The resulting polling district forecasts were then constrained (adjusted) so that they summed to the total electorate forecasts for their respective Borough wards.

Taking a worked example, for polling district 4CD1 (part of Macclesfield Central Borough ward):

- this polling district had 1,416 electors as of July 2023
- 13 net completions are forecast between mid-2023 and the end of 2029, of which 4 are dwellings, 9 are specialist housing for older people and none are HMOs
- the electorate to properties ratio for this polling district's ward, Macclesfield Central, was estimated at 1.395 for 2022 and 1.389 for 2029, as set out in the previous (Macclesfield Central Borough ward) worked example.

Hence the (unconstrained) forecast number of electors in this polling district in 2029 is:

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \text{(mid-2023 electors x adjustment factor (0.995) for future decline in household size)} \\
 & + \text{(mid-2023 to end 2029 net dwelling completions x 2029 electors-per-property ratio for dwellings)} \\
 & + \text{(mid-2023 to end 2029 older people's specialist housing net completions x electors-per-property ratio for that type of housing)} \\
 & + \text{(mid-2023 to end 2029 HMO net completions x electors-per-property ratio for that type of housing)} \\
 & = (1,416 \times 0.995) + (4 \times 1.389) + (9 \times 1) + (0 \times 3) \\
 & = 1,409 + 6 + 9 + 0 \\
 & = 1,424
 \end{aligned}$$

implying a very similar amount of growth (22,200, or 7.0%). This provides some reassurance that the chosen approach of producing the council ward forecasts first has not skewed the results.

⁶³ This annual growth rate treats the forecast period as six and a half years, not seven.

Following this same approach, the unconstrained forecasts for the 2029 electorate for each of the seven polling districts in Macclesfield Central were as shown in Table 5a below.

Table 5a: Unconstrained forecasts for Macclesfield Central polling districts

Polling district code	Unconstrained electorate forecast for 2029
4BA1	641
4BA2	719
4BB1	963
4BB2	1,964
4BBR	1,198
4CD1	1,424
4CE1	727
Total	7,636

Hence the unconstrained forecasts for the Macclesfield Central Borough ward's polling districts sum to 7,636. However, as noted in the earlier worked example (for the Macclesfield Central Borough ward), the initial, Borough ward-level forecasts put Macclesfield Central at 7,640. Hence the polling district forecast of 1,424 for 4CD1 was multiplied by a factor of 7,640/7,636 (increasing it to 1,425) – and the figures for the other six Macclesfield Central polling districts were similarly adjusted, with the numbers for 4BB1, 4BB2 and 4BBR also being increased by one elector as a result.

Following this initial iteration of adjustments, the (adjusted) figures for individual polling districts were rounded off to the nearest whole number. However, this rounding off meant that they still did not necessarily sum to the “target” total from the Borough ward-level forecast. For some wards, including Macclesfield Central, the adjusted figures did sum to the “target” total. However, for others, they did not; Macclesfield South is shown in Table 5b as an example of this.

Table 5b: Unconstrained and constrained electorate forecasts for Macclesfield South polling districts

Polling district code	Unconstrained forecast for 2029	Constrained forecast for 2029
4BF2	1,333	1,334
4BFR	462	462
4CA1	2,057	2,058
4CAR	1,360	1,361
4CB1	1,698	1,699
4CBR	613	613
Total	7,523	7,527

In Macclesfield South's case, the adjusted figures for its polling districts, after rounding off to whole numbers, summed to 7,527 (one more than the Borough ward-level forecast of 7,526). To correct for these cases, a calculation was made for each polling district of the difference between the rounded and unrounded adjusted forecast, to identify which figures were skewed the most by the rounding process; a further adjustment was then made to the more skewed figures. For Macclesfield

South, four of the six polling districts' figures were higher after being rounded off and the polling district with the largest such increase, (4BF2, where the unrounded figure was 1,333.53 and the rounded number therefore 1,334), was decreased by one, to 1,333, to achieve the Borough ward-level "target" of 7,526. The same kind of approach was followed for other wards where required.⁶⁴

At polling district level, the greatest percentage rise⁶⁵ is 2,259.1% (an increase from 22 electors to 519) in the electorate for BRET, which is part of the Middlewich Cledford ward. However, the extremely large percentage increases for this and some other polling districts is due to them consisting largely or entirely of new properties in major housing development areas where little construction has been completed so far but much building is expected by 2029. At the other end of the spectrum, there are predicted falls of 1.4% in the polling districts of 1AC1 (part of Crewe East) and 4GM6 (the Peak Park parish meeting of Wincle). For all the other polling districts with a forecast decline in electors, the decline is 1.0% or less.

The forecasts for all polling districts were then aggregated into parish wards and parishes, to produce forecasts for these other geographical tiers.

At parish council level, the predicted change in the electorate between mid-2023 and the end of 2029 varies from an increase of 312.4% in Hulme Walfield and Somerford Booths and 110.5% in Weston and Crewe Green to a decrease of 1.4% in Wincle.

For parishes, the degree of change varies from increases of 312.4% (Hulme Walfield and Somerford Booths again) and 110.5% (Weston and Crewe Green again) to a fall of 1.4% (Wincle again).

The fact that the electorate is predicted to fall in some (albeit only a few) geographical areas requires some explanation. As noted earlier, the forecasting approach assumes that the number of electors per property will decline by around 0.5% between mid-2023 and the end of 2029. On that basis, it is reasonable to expect the electorate to decline by up to 0.5% in those areas where the anticipated 2023-29 gross completions (if any) are matched by gross losses, or where net completions are positive but too small to offset the projected fall in electors per property.

In some cases, the 2023-29 forecast decline in electors exceeds 0.5% because the area is one where a net loss of housing is expected. For polling district 1AC1, for example, where the predicted decline is 1.4%, the forecast is zero net completions of standard dwellings and specialist older people's housing and a net loss of three HMOs (which itself equates to an estimated loss of nine electors).

⁶⁴In no cases did this adjustment result in the number of electors being changed (either up or down) by more than two.

⁶⁵ The figures quoted here exclude the five polling districts that had zero electors as of July 2023 (and for which a mid-2023 to end 2029 percentage change figure cannot therefore be calculated). The forecasts indicate that, of these five polling districts, three will still have zero electors as of 2029. The latter are among the areas where it was considered necessary to create new polling districts in the wake of the 2018-23 CGR boundary changes.

However, in some areas, the percentage decline is greater than 0.5%, despite a forecast of gross completions matching or exceeding gross losses. For example, as noted a few paragraphs earlier, in polling district 4GM6 (Wincle), zero net completions are expected between mid-2023 and the end of 2029, but the number of electors is predicted to fall by 1.4%, from 146 to 144 (the largest percentage fall for any polling district where the expected number of net completions is either zero or positive).

Such cases are a consequence of various elements of the forecasting approach:

- firstly, basing the base date (July 2023) electors-per-property ratio on the 2020-23 average, rather than averaging over a different period. Whilst taking a three-year average increases the robustness of the forecasts collectively, it may have an adverse effect on the accuracy of the results for those individual areas where perhaps the use of the latest year's ratio, or averaging over a different time period, might yield slightly more intuitive results for some individual polling districts.
- secondly, deriving estimates of the stock of properties from ONS and the Borough Council's housing database data, rather than from the Electoral Register, as different data sets have different degrees of accuracy and coverage. (This is shown, for example, by the comparison in Subsection 5.2 between the Electoral Register property statistics and property figures from other sources.)
- thirdly, the various adjustments made: to make sure the forecasts reflect the actual number of electors as of mid-2023; to constrain the forecasts for the polling districts so they sum to the Borough ward-level forecasts for the ward they are in (which in Wincle's case reduces its 2029 forecast electorate from 145 to 144); and rounding off the forecasts to the nearest whole number.

6 Constraining the forecasts to ONS population projections

As noted earlier, the Council's chosen method of forecasting the residential property stock and applying electors per property ratios is one which the LGBCE supported in CW&C.

However, the LGBCE recommends that 'any authority approaching forecasting should "constrain" the total population figure which they reach to either the ONS projections or projections developed from some other tested methodology for authority-wide forecasting.'

It adds that 'Because the tendency has been for local authorities to over-estimate population and electorate growth, the Commission's guidance recommends the use of ONS projections. Authorities who use their own forecasts of growth should provide firm evidence to justify selection of those forecasts.'⁶⁶

The reference to the "ONS projections" is to the subnational population projections produced by ONS (at local authority level), usually every two to three years.

The Borough Council's chosen methodology does not constrain the electorate forecasts to ONS' latest (2018-based) subnational population projections (SNPPs), nor to any earlier ones, but such a constraint was tested and this section of the technical report highlights the effect of that constraint and explains why the SNPP-constrained electorate forecasts were not adopted as the Council's chosen forecast.

For the reasons set out in Subsection 5.1 of this report, the Council did not consider it appropriate to start by producing population forecasts and converting those into electorate forecasts. However, under the Council's chosen methodology, it is possible to generate an alternative scenario that constrains the electorate forecasts so that they are consistent with the 2018-based SNPPs.⁶⁷ This additional modelling should provide further reassurance to the LGBCE that the Council is following its guidance as closely as it reasonably can.

The 2018-based SNPPs project that Cheshire East's population will reach 390,980 by mid-2023. With the mid-2023 electorate totalling 314,681, this implies a ratio of 0.805 (314,681/390,980) electors per head of population.

According to these SNPPs, the total population of the Borough will grow to 400,914 by mid-2029 and to 402,349 by mid-2030. Taking the midpoint between these two figures (401,631) gives us a reasonable estimate of what the SNPPs would have projected for the population as of the end of 2029 (the end point of the electorate forecasting period).

⁶⁶ This advice is set out in paragraphs 26 to 29 of the LGBCE's 'Electoral Forecasting: User Guidance'.

⁶⁷ 'Subnational population projections for England: 2018-based', ONS, March 2020. Published at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/subnationalpopulationprojectionsforengland2018based>

The SNPPs also project that the number of residents aged 17 and above will reach 316,903 by mid-2023, 328,345 by mid-2029 and 330,144 by mid-2030. Taking the midpoint between the latter two figures gives a reasonable estimate of what the SNPPs would have projected for the 17+ population as of end 2029 (329,244).

Based on the SNPP figures, therefore, the proportion of the population aged 17 and above, that is, people who are of voting age or who will reach it in the following 12 months, will increase slightly, from 81.1% (316,903/390,980) in mid-2023 to 82.0% (329,244/401,631) by the end of 2029. Hence it is reasonable to assume that the average number of electors per head of population will increase proportionally, to reach 0.814 ($0.805 \times 0.820/0.811$) by 2029. Given that the SNPP-based estimates indicate that the Borough's population will be 401,631 by the end of 2029, that implies 326,935 electors⁶⁸ ($401,631 \times 0.814$) by the end of the electorate forecasting period – an increase of 12,254 (3.9%) on the mid-2023 figure.

Hence the effect of constraining the electorate forecasts to the 2018-based SNPPs is to reduce the amount of growth from 22,658 (+7.2% over six and a half years, or an average of 1.1% per annum) to just 12,254 (+3.9% over that period, or an average of 0.6% per annum). This raises questions about whether the Council's chosen approach has produced forecasts that significantly overestimate future electorate growth.

However, there are various grounds for believing that the 2018-based SNPPs are likely to significantly underestimate Cheshire East's population growth and hence that electorate forecasts constrained to these SNPPs are likely to significantly underestimate the level of growth in Cheshire East's electorate.

Firstly, it is now clear, largely from the 2021 Census evidence available, that ONS had been significantly underestimating Cheshire East's population before it had the new (2021) Census figures to refer to. For example, for Cheshire East, the 2018-based SNPPs (published about 12 months before Census Day 2021) projected that the population would increase from 380,800 (2018) to 387,000 by 2021, but ONS' population estimate for mid-2021 (which was published in December 2022 and which factors in the 2021 Census evidence) puts the mid-2021 population at 400,500. The latter figure is a population level which the 2018-based SNPPs did not anticipate Cheshire East reaching until 2028-29 (the 2018-based SNPPs projected a population of around 399,300 by 2028 and, as noted a few paragraphs earlier, of around 400,900 by 2029). In other words, it appears that, even by mid-2021, the 2018-based SNPPs were under-estimating the Borough's population by around 13,500 (about 3.4%).

Secondly, the 2018-based SNPPs' projected population change between mid-2023 to the end of 2029 (from around 391,000 in mid-2023 to around 401,600 by the end 2029) equates to an annual average growth rate of 0.41%. It is reasonable to question whether the growth rate over that period would actually be that low, given:

⁶⁸ A slightly quicker calculation that yields the same result is to divide the 2023 electorate (314,681) by the number of residents aged 17 and above in 2023 (316,903, according to the 2018-based SNPPs) and multiply the resulting ratio (0.993) by the SNPP-derived projection for the number of residents aged 17 and above by the end of 2029 (329,244), giving 326,935.

- (a) that population growth in Cheshire East averaged 0.78% a year between 2011 and 2021 and 0.52% a year between 2001 and 2011.⁶⁹
- (b) the high volumes of housing completions (which began in the later 2010s and will have contributed to the 2011-21 growth rate) and which have continued beyond 2021 and into 2022 and 2023, and may persist beyond that. Given the time lag between homes being completed and the new dwellings being occupied, the population growth rate is likely to remain relatively high into 2023 and perhaps beyond, particularly bearing in mind the level of additional housing that the Borough's 2010-30 LPS provides for. For example, during the 10 years from 2011/12 to 2020/21 inclusive, net completions averaged 1,740 per annum (see Table 6 below). However, in 2021/22 (a year which mostly falls after the mid-2021 date of ONS' latest mid-year population estimates) they reached 2,779. Furthermore, the housing database actual housing completions and forecasts used for the electorate forecasting work indicate around 2,300 net completions between April 2022 and March 2023 and 2,700 more forecast for the period April to December 2023. For the six-year period from January 2024 to December 2029, the housing forecasts indicate that net completions will average around 2,100 a year, with 75% of this development expected during the first four years (2024-27).⁷⁰
- (c) that the SNPP-constrained forecast, that Cheshire East's electorate will grow by 3.9% (an average of just 0.6% per annum) between mid-2023 and the end of 2029, contrasts sharply with the actual growth recorded on the Electoral Register in recent years. Between August 2016 and July 2023, the electorate increased by 8.5%, from 289,969 to 314,681: this equates to an average of 1.2% per annum.⁷¹ Therefore the Council's chosen methodology, with its forecast that the electorate will grow by an average of 1.1% per annum between mid-2023 and the end of 2029, equates broadly to a continuation of the growth rate achieved in the last seven years, albeit with the future growth rate being slightly slower than for 2016-23.

In summary, the SNPP-constrained forecast appears very conservative when compared to the evidence on recent electorate and population growth, the latest (mid-2021) population estimates and the evidence on housing completions during the 2021/22 and 2022/23 years and likely levels of completions thereafter.

⁶⁹ Source: ONS mid-year population estimates for 1991-2021 (December 2022 release). ONS Crown Copyright.

⁷⁰ As the SNPPs are projections (that is, based on past trends and relationships), rather than forecasts (which would take account of local policies and local knowledge as well), they do not factor in the impact of expected future housing development. That is likely to explain to a large degree why they have underestimated the recent rate of population growth in the Borough.

⁷¹ This calculation treats the period from August 2016 to July 2023 as exactly seven years.

Table 6: Net housing completions, Cheshire East, 2010/11 to 2021/22

Year	Net completions
2010/11	659
2011/12	778
2012/13	614
2013/14	713
2014/15	1,236
2015/16	1,473
2016/17	1,762
2017/18	2,321
2018/19	3,062
2019/20	3,065
2020/21	2,376
2021/22	2,779
Total	20,838

Source: Table 3.1, 'Housing Monitoring Update - Base date: 31 March 2022', Cheshire East Borough Council, February 2023.

The SNPP constraint effectively reduces the 2029 electorate forecast by 3.1% (as the 2029 Borough-wide, SNPP-constrained forecast of 326,935 is 3.1% lower than the unconstrained forecast of 337,339). When applied to individual Borough wards, this 3.1% reduction produces some rather implausible changes in the electorate over the mid-2023 to end 2029 period.

For example, Odd Rode ward had an electorate of 6,889 as of mid-2023 and 74 net new housing completions are expected in this ward between mid-2023 and the end of 2029. Even if those new homes were to have only one elector each, this extra housing would increase the ward's total electorate by around 1.1%⁷², but in reality the number of electors per property is likely to be much greater.⁷³ The assumed reduction in the average number of electors per property (a fall of 0.5% over the forecast period, as explained in Subsection 5.3) would therefore only partly offset the positive contribution that the additional completions would make to Odd Rode's electorate growth over the 2023-29 period. However, the effect of the SNPP constraint is to reduce the ward's predicted 2029 electorate from 6,985 (an increase of 1.4% on the mid-2023 electorate) to $6,985 \times 326,935/337,339$, that is, to 6,770 (a decrease of 1.7% on mid-2023). Such a decrease is clearly implausible.

In fact, the impact of the SNPP constraint on 2023-29 electorate change is a predicted fall of 0.6% or more in nearly half of Cheshire East's wards (22 out of 52), even though the effect of the assumed reduction in the number of electors per property is a decrease of only 0.5% and every single ward has net new completions

⁷² At any given time, some homes will be vacant (that is, they have no regular occupants). However, at the time of the 2011 Census, only 4.1% of Cheshire East's household spaces (the accommodation available for one household) had no usual residents, though this proportion ranged from 1.2% in Leighton Borough ward to 7.9% in Prestbury Borough ward. (Source: Table KS401EW, 2011 Census, ONS. ONS Crown Copyright.) (Comparable data from the 2021 Census were not available at the time of writing.)

⁷³ The baseline (2020-23) average number electors per property for Odd Rode was 1.758.

due during 2023-29 that will at least partially offset this. In five of these wards, the constraint produces a decrease in excess of 3.0% (with the sharpest falls being 3.5% in Crewe North and Macclesfield Hurdfield). In contrast, under the unconstrained forecasts, a decrease is predicted in only four of the 52 council wards and none of the decreases exceed 0.4%, as Subsection 5.5 of this report has noted.

Taking all these issues and pieces of evidence together, the Council's view is that its chosen approach produces forecasts for future change in the electorate that are reasonable and that are more credible than SNPP-constrained forecasts.

It should also be noted that the SNPPs discussed above are ONS' principal projections. However, along with the 2018-based principal projections release in March 2020, ONS published variant population projections for England and its constituent regions and local authorities. These variant projections are based on different assumptions and data to the principal projections.

There are four sets of variant projections: one based on 10 years of migration data (in contrast to the principal projections, which are based on only five years); one which assumes a higher level of net international migration (i.e. a higher net inflow of migrants from abroad) than the principal projections do; one which assumes a lower level of net international migration; and one which makes alternative assumptions about internal migration. But, as with the principal projections, none of these variants take account of expected future house-building or other local policies and projects.

The LGBCE's 'Electoral Forecasting: User Guidance' refers to the SNPPs only as "projections" and does not specify whether its recommendations relate only to principal projections, or to variant projections as well. It is reasonable to assume that the LGBCE guidance relates only to principal projections, as electorate forecasts cannot be simultaneously constrained to multiple (principal and variant) sets of projections. Nevertheless, it seems prudent to assess the impact of constraining the electorate forecasts to the 2018-based variant SNPPs.

However, whilst the variant projections include breakdowns by age group, these are for five-year age bands only, so they do not include figures for the population aged 17 and above. Looking instead at their projections for the total population across all ages, over the mid-2023 to end 2029 period (and again using an average of the mid-2029 and mid-2030 as a proxy for end 2029) they differ relatively little from the principal projection: the variant projections for 2023 all fall within the range of 387,300 to 391,900 and their projections for 2029 range from 392,700 to 405,800. Only the high net international migration variant projects a figure for 2029 (405,759) that exceeds the ONS mid-year estimate for the year 2021. If, as the latter variant indicates, the Borough's population by 2029 were to be only 405,759, that would mean population growth over the 2021-29 period averaging only 0.16% a year, an improbably low rate compared to the averages seen for 2011-21 (0.78%, as cited earlier), 2001-11 (0.52%, as also cited earlier) or even 1991-2001 (0.33%) and even more improbable considering the high volume of housing completions achieved in 2021/22 and 2022/23 and expected net completions up to 2029.

Taking the principal projection figure of 0.814 electors per head of population as of end 2029 and (in the absence of variant projection data for the 17 and above age

group) assuming this ratio is the same for each of the four variants, even the high migration variant would imply only 330,295 electors ($405,759 \times 0.814$) by 2029, which equates to the electorate growing by an average of only 0.7% a year (against the 1.2% a year growth seen during 2016-23). Using this same approach, each of the other variants would imply electorate growth of 0.4% or less a year.

In short, the Borough Council considers that the variant SNPPs (like the principal SNPPs) imply rates of population and electorate growth that are implausible, given past trends, as well as recent and expected future volumes of housebuilding. Applying them as a constraint therefore results in very improbable electorate forecasts even at Borough-wide level; at Borough ward or lower level, some of the results of applying such constraints are even more improbable.

Cheshire East Council
Electoral Review 2023-24:
Electorate Forecasts Technical Report

Appendix 1 (forecast data tables)

Contents

Technical notes 1

Table A1.1: Forecasts for Borough wards..... 2

Table A1.2: Forecasts for town and parish councils and parish meetings 5

Table A1.3: Forecasts for parishes..... 9

Table A1.4: Forecasts for parish wards..... 12

Table A1.5: Forecasts for polling districts..... 20

Technical notes

Guide to colour shading used in Table A1.1

In the columns showing the electors per seat ratio's percentage variance from the borough average, yellow shading indicates a variance that (after rounding to the nearest whole percentage point) is more than 10% different from the borough average, and orange shading indicates a variance that (to the nearest whole percentage point) is more than 20% different from the borough average. (This conditional shading reflects the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's advice to Cheshire East that its focus is on whether a ward's variance exceeds 10% after rounding: in other words, the cut-off point is 10.5%, rather than 10% exactly.)

Other notes

[1] The electorate figures shown in Tables A1.1 to A1.5 include only those electors eligible to vote in local elections.

[2] In the July 2023 Electoral Register, there were a small number of electors who (along with their properties) were not assigned to the correct polling district. This affects one property with two electors that was recorded as being in polling district 8FKT (part of Handforth Town Council and Wilmslow Lacey Green Borough ward) but which is actually in 8FK1 (part of Styal Parish Council and Wilmslow Lacey Green Borough ward), and one property with three electors that was recorded as being in ALEF but is actually in ALEG (both these polling districts are part of Alsager Town Council and Alsager Borough ward). The figures shown in Tables A1.1 to A1.5 for July 2023 are exactly as taken from the Register and so do not adjust for these errors. Future publications of the Register will correct these errors and therefore the 2029 forecast figures assign the affected properties to the polling districts they are actually located in. However, as these errors in the July 2023 Register relate to misallocations within Borough wards, rather than between one Borough ward and another, they do not affect the July 2023 Borough ward level statistics in Table A1.1 and impact only on the July 2023 figures for the smaller electoral areas shown in Tables A1.2 to A1.5.

[3] Of all the small electoral areas listed in Tables A1.2 to A1.5, Lower Peover is the only one that is split between Cheshire East and another local authority. More specifically, Lower Peover Parish Council (which covers the same area as Lower Peover parish) consists of two parish wards: Peover Inferior (the same geographical area as polling district 3CN1), which is in Cheshire East and Nether Peover, which is in Cheshire West and Chester. However, given that the Electoral Review is limited to Cheshire East, the electorate forecast figures presented in Tables A1.2 and A1.3 for the "Lower Peover" parish council and parish area relate only to the numbers of electors in the Peover Inferior parish ward.

Table A1.1: Forecasts for Borough wards

Borough ward name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29	Council seats	Electors per seat ratio, Jul 2023	Electors per seat ratio, Dec 2029	Ratio's % variance (from Borough average), Jul 2023	Ratio's % variance (from Borough average), Dec 2029
Alderley Edge	3,677	3,711	0.9%	1	3,677	3,711	-4.2%	-9.8%
Alsager	11,025	11,622	5.4%	3	3,675	3,874	-4.2%	-5.8%
Audlem	4,306	4,428	2.8%	1	4,306	4,428	12.2%	7.6%
Bollington	6,932	6,976	0.6%	2	3,466	3,488	-9.7%	-15.2%
Brereton Rural	6,257	9,340	49.3%	1	6,257	9,340	63.0%	127.0%
Broken Cross and Upton	6,742	6,801	0.9%	2	3,371	3,401	-12.2%	-17.3%
Bunbury	5,007	5,790	15.6%	1	5,007	5,790	30.5%	40.7%
Chelford	3,910	4,038	3.3%	1	3,910	4,038	1.9%	-1.8%
Congleton East	10,833	11,002	1.6%	3	3,611	3,667	-5.9%	-10.9%
Congleton West	12,224	12,587	3.0%	3	4,075	4,196	6.2%	2.0%
Crewe Central	4,855	4,978	2.5%	1	4,855	4,978	26.5%	21.0%
Crewe East	11,647	12,679	8.9%	3	3,882	4,226	1.2%	2.7%
Crewe North	3,602	3,586	-0.4%	1	3,602	3,586	-6.1%	-12.8%
Crewe South	8,268	8,633	4.4%	2	4,134	4,317	7.7%	4.9%
Crewe St Barnabas	3,546	4,038	13.9%	1	3,546	4,038	-7.6%	-1.8%
Crewe West	7,565	7,628	0.8%	2	3,783	3,814	-1.4%	-7.3%
Dane Valley	8,315	8,494	2.2%	2	4,158	4,247	8.3%	3.2%
Disley	3,867	3,868	0.0%	1	3,867	3,868	0.8%	-6.0%
Gawsworth	3,624	4,383	20.9%	1	3,624	4,383	-5.6%	6.5%
Handforth	7,299	8,493	16.4%	2	3,650	4,247	-4.9%	3.2%
Haslington	7,551	10,276	36.1%	2	3,776	5,138	-1.6%	24.9%
High Legh	3,669	3,866	5.4%	1	3,669	3,866	-4.4%	-6.0%
Knutsford	10,391	11,477	10.5%	3	3,464	3,826	-9.7%	-7.0%
Leighton	4,729	6,966	47.3%	1	4,729	6,966	23.2%	69.3%
Macclesfield Central	7,380	7,640	3.5%	2	3,690	3,820	-3.8%	-7.1%

Borough ward name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29	Council seats	Electors per seat ratio, Jul 2023	Electors per seat ratio, Dec 2029	Ratio's % variance (from Borough average), Jul 2023	Ratio's % variance (from Borough average), Dec 2029
Macclesfield East	3,620	4,106	13.4%	1	3,620	4,106	-5.7%	-0.2%
Macclesfield Hurdsfield	3,428	3,413	-0.4%	1	3,428	3,413	-10.7%	-17.0%
Macclesfield South	6,686	7,526	12.6%	2	3,343	3,763	-12.9%	-8.5%
Macclesfield Tytherington	7,525	7,947	5.6%	2	3,763	3,974	-2.0%	-3.4%
Macclesfield West and Ivy	6,167	6,496	5.3%	2	3,084	3,248	-19.6%	-21.0%
Middlewich	11,279	12,107	7.3%	3	3,760	4,036	-2.0%	-1.9%
Mobberley	3,502	3,513	0.3%	1	3,502	3,513	-8.7%	-14.6%
Nantwich North and West	7,080	7,091	0.2%	2	3,540	3,546	-7.8%	-13.8%
Nantwich South and Stapeley	7,414	7,703	3.9%	2	3,707	3,852	-3.4%	-6.4%
Odd Rode	6,889	6,985	1.4%	2	3,445	3,493	-10.2%	-15.1%
Poynton East and Pott Shrigley	6,212	6,351	2.2%	2	3,106	3,176	-19.1%	-22.8%
Poynton West and Adlington	7,036	7,237	2.9%	2	3,518	3,619	-8.3%	-12.0%
Prestbury	3,691	3,767	2.1%	1	3,691	3,767	-3.8%	-8.4%
Sandbach Elworth	4,949	5,005	1.1%	1	4,949	5,005	29.0%	21.7%
Sandbach Ettiley Heath and Wheelock	4,461	4,454	-0.2%	1	4,461	4,454	16.2%	8.3%
Sandbach Heath and East	4,195	4,539	8.2%	1	4,195	4,539	9.3%	10.3%
Sandbach Town	4,264	4,280	0.4%	1	4,264	4,280	11.1%	4.0%
Shavington	4,760	5,009	5.2%	1	4,760	5,009	24.0%	21.8%
Sutton	3,532	4,549	28.8%	1	3,532	4,549	-8.0%	10.6%
Willaston and Rope	4,332	4,324	-0.2%	1	4,332	4,324	12.9%	5.1%
Wilmslow Dean Row	4,062	4,091	0.7%	1	4,062	4,091	5.8%	-0.6%
Wilmslow East	3,285	3,546	7.9%	1	3,285	3,546	-14.4%	-13.8%
Wilmslow Lacey Green	3,904	4,134	5.9%	1	3,904	4,134	1.7%	0.5%

Borough ward name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29	Council seats	Electors per seat ratio, Jul 2023	Electors per seat ratio, Dec 2029	Ratio's % variance (from Borough average), Jul 2023	Ratio's % variance (from Borough average), Dec 2029
Wilmslow West and Chorley	8,010	8,049	0.5%	2	4,005	4,025	4.4%	-2.2%
Wistaston	7,953	7,979	0.3%	2	3,977	3,990	3.6%	-3.0%
Wrenbury	4,685	4,915	4.9%	1	4,685	4,915	22.1%	19.5%
Wybunbury	4,539	4,923	8.5%	1	4,539	4,923	18.3%	19.7%
Cheshire East (all wards)	314,681	337,339	7.2%	82	3,838	4,114	0.0%	0.0%

Table A1.2: Forecasts for town and parish councils and parish meetings

Council/ meeting style	Council/ meeting name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29
Parish Council	Adlington	878	878	0.0%
Parish Council	Alderley Edge	3,677	3,711	0.9%
Community Council	Alraham and Calveley	625	721	15.4%
Town Council	Alsager	11,567	12,503	8.1%
Parish Council	Arclid	336	350	4.2%
Parish Council	Ashley	250	250	0.0%
Parish Council	Aston by Budworth	268	279	4.1%
Parish Council	Audlem	1,805	1,808	0.2%
Parish Council	Barthomley	169	185	9.5%
Parish Council	Betchton	556	578	4.0%
Parish Council	Bickerton and Egerton	254	262	3.1%
Town Council	Bollington	6,318	6,365	0.7%
Parish Council	Bosley	362	363	0.3%
Parish Council	Bradwall	158	163	3.2%
Parish Council	Brereton	1,359	1,354	-0.4%
Parish Council	Brindley and Faddiley	272	276	1.5%
Parish Council	Buerton	450	455	1.1%
Parish Council	Bulkeley and Ridley	355	381	7.3%
Parish Council	Bunbury	1,116	1,156	3.6%
Parish Council	Burland and Acton	950	953	0.3%
Parish Council	Chelford	1,308	1,305	-0.2%
Parish Council	Cholmondeley and Chorley	239	237	-0.8%
Parish Council	Cholmondeston and Wettenhall	337	352	4.5%
Parish Council	Chorley	378	380	0.5%
Parish Council	Church Lawton	1,808	1,813	0.3%

Council/ meeting style	Council/ meeting name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29
Parish Council	Church Minshull	372	390	4.8%
Town Council	Congleton	23,264	23,767	2.2%
Parish Council	Cranage	995	1,008	1.3%
Town Council	Crewe	38,934	40,995	5.3%
Parish Council	Disley	3,867	3,868	0.0%
Parish Council	Dodcott cum Wilkesley	373	393	5.4%
Parish Council	Doddington and District	488	672	37.7%
Parish Council	Eaton	317	325	2.5%
Parish Council	Gawsworth	1,385	1,917	38.4%
Parish Council	Goostrey	1,806	1,799	-0.4%
Parish Council	Great Warford	596	601	0.8%
Town Council	Handforth	5,310	6,670	25.6%
Parish Council	Hankelow	301	314	4.3%
Parish Council	Haslington	5,684	5,918	4.1%
Parish Council	Hassall	211	209	-0.9%
Parish Council	Hatherton and Walgherton	419	426	1.7%
Parish Meeting	Haughton	170	171	0.6%
Parish Council	Henbury	531	533	0.4%
Parish Council	High Legh	1,366	1,377	0.8%
Parish Council	Higher Hurdsfield	614	611	-0.5%
Parish Council	Holmes Chapel	5,348	5,506	3.0%
Parish Council	Hough and Chorlton	1,591	1,595	0.3%
Parish Council	Hulme Walfield and Somerford Booths	518	2,136	312.4%
Parish Council	Kettleshulme and Lyme Handley	378	385	1.9%
Town Council	Knutsford	10,413	11,639	11.8%
Parish Council	Leighton, Minshull Vernon and Woolstanwood	5,463	7,707	41.1%
Community Council	Little Bollington with Agden	325	345	6.2%

Council/ meeting style	Council/ meeting name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29
Parish Council	Little Warford	80	80	0.0%
Parish Council	Lower Peover	90	90	0.0%
Parish Council	Lower Withington	458	460	0.4%
Town Council	Macclesfield	41,085	43,658	6.3%
Parish Meeting	Macclesfield Forest and Wildboarclough	159	159	0.0%
Parish Council	Marbury and District	485	495	2.1%
Parish Council	Marton	185	193	4.3%
Parish Council	Mere	551	564	2.4%
Town Council	Middlewich	11,301	12,626	11.7%
Parish Council	Millington and Rostherne	262	261	-0.4%
Parish Council	Mobberley	2,464	2,470	0.2%
Parish Council	Moston	280	289	3.2%
Parish Council	Mottram St Andrew	520	525	1.0%
Town Council	Nantwich	13,143	13,816	5.1%
Parish Council	Nether Alderley	735	818	11.3%
Parish Council	Newbold Astbury cum Moreton	581	613	5.5%
Parish Council	Newhall	754	814	8.0%
Parish Council	North Rode	204	208	2.0%
Parish Council	Odd Rode	4,441	4,483	0.9%
Parish Council	Ollerton with Marthall	446	467	4.7%
Parish Council	Over Alderley	363	406	11.8%
Parish Meeting	Peckforton	130	131	0.8%
Parish Council	Peover Superior and Snelson	682	689	1.0%
Parish Council	Pickmere	649	652	0.5%
Parish Council	Plumley with Toft and Bexton	649	669	3.1%
Parish Council	Pott Shrigley	227	228	0.4%
Town Council	Poynton with Worth	11,765	12,097	2.8%

Council/ meeting style	Council/ meeting name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29
Parish Council	Prestbury	2,808	2,836	1.0%
Parish Council	Rainow	1,039	1,138	9.5%
Parish Council	Rope	1,617	1,612	-0.3%
Town Council	Sandbach	18,325	18,947	3.4%
Parish Council	Shavington cum Gresty	5,428	5,674	4.5%
Parish Council	Siddington	287	287	0.0%
Parish Council	Smallwood	540	541	0.2%
Parish Council	Somerford	1,432	2,174	51.8%
Parish Council	Sound and District	769	795	3.4%
Parish Council	Spurstow	322	327	1.6%
Parish Council	Stapeley and District	3,129	3,417	9.2%
Parish Council	Stoke and Hurleston	268	268	0.0%
Parish Council	Styal	571	571	0.0%
Parish Council	Sutton	2,188	3,108	42.0%
Parish Council	Swettenham	256	254	-0.8%
Parish Council	Tabley	338	338	0.0%
Parish Council	Twemlow	166	181	9.0%
Parish Council	Wardle	159	158	-0.6%
Parish Council	Warmingham	195	202	3.6%
Parish Council	Weston and Crewe Green	1,948	4,101	110.5%
Parish Council	Willaston	2,969	2,967	-0.1%
Town Council	Wilmslow	20,301	20,692	1.9%
Parish Meeting	Windle	146	144	-1.4%
Parish Council	Wistaston	7,055	7,084	0.4%
Parish Council	Worleston and District	471	478	1.5%
Parish Council	Wrenbury cum Frith	1,034	1,140	10.3%
Parish Council	Wybunbury	1,397	1,589	13.7%

Table A1.3: Forecasts for parishes

*The parish codes are the unique codes assigned to each parish by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Cheshire East has two parishes with the same name (Chorley). The parish of Chorley that lies within Wilmslow Borough ward (ONS code E04010926) is the one with 378 electors as of July 2023. The parish of Chorley that lies within Wrenbury Borough ward (ONS code E04010927) is the one with 107 electors as of July 2023.

Parish code(s)*	Parish name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29
E04013173	Adlington	878	878	0.0%
E04010892	Alderley Edge	3,677	3,711	0.9%
E04013174	Alpraham and Calveley	625	721	15.4%
E04013175	Alsager	11,567	12,503	8.1%
E04010895	Arclid	336	350	4.2%
E04010896	Ashley	250	250	0.0%
E04010897	Aston by Budworth	268	279	4.1%
E04010898	Aston Juxta Mondrum	149	152	2.0%
E04010899	Audlem	1,805	1,808	0.2%
E04010900	Austerson	96	96	0.0%
E04013176	Baddiley	146	151	3.4%
E04010902	Baddington	109	116	6.4%
E04010903	Barthomley	169	185	9.5%
E04010906	Betchton	556	578	4.0%
E04010908	Bickerton	190	198	4.2%
E04010910	Bollington	6,318	6,365	0.7%
E04010911	Bosley	362	363	0.3%
E04010912	Bradwall	158	163	3.2%
E04013177	Brereton	1,359	1,354	-0.4%
E04010915	Brindley	131	134	2.3%
E04010916	Broomhall	158	173	9.5%
E04010917	Buerton	450	455	1.1%
E04013178	Bulkeley and Ridley	355	381	7.3%
E04010919	Bunbury	1,116	1,156	3.6%
E04013179	Burland and Acton	950	953	0.3%
E04010923	Chelford	1,308	1,305	-0.2%
E04010924	Cholmondeley	132	131	-0.8%
E04010925	Cholmondeston	163	173	6.1%
E04010926	Chorley	378	380	0.5%
E04010927	Chorley	107	106	-0.9%
E04013180	Church Lawton	1,808	1,813	0.3%
E04010930	Church Minshull	372	390	4.8%
E04013181	Congleton	23,264	23,767	2.2%
E04010932	Coole Pilate	70	70	0.0%
E04010933	Cranage	995	1,008	1.3%
E04012281	Crewe	38,934	40,995	5.3%
E04010935	Disley	3,867	3,868	0.0%
E04010936	Dodcott cum Wilkesley	373	393	5.4%
E04013183	Doddington and District	488	672	37.7%

Parish code(s)*	Parish name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29
E04013184	Eaton	317	325	2.5%
E04010940	Egerton	64	64	0.0%
E04010941	Faddiley	141	142	0.7%
E04010942	Gawsworth	1,385	1,917	38.4%
E04010943	Goostrey	1,806	1,799	-0.4%
E04010944	Great Warford	596	601	0.8%
E04013185	Handforth	5,310	6,670	25.6%
E04010945	Hankelow	301	314	4.3%
E04013186	Haslington	5,684	5,918	4.1%
E04010947	Hassall	211	209	-0.9%
E04010948	Hatherton	293	301	2.7%
E04010949	Haughton	170	171	0.6%
E04013187	Henbury	531	533	0.4%
E04010952	High Legh	1,366	1,377	0.8%
E04010953	Higher Hurdsfield	614	611	-0.5%
E04010954	Holmes Chapel	5,348	5,506	3.0%
E04013188	Hough and Chorlton	1,591	1,595	0.3%
E04010956, E04011007	Hulme Walfield and Somerford Booths	518	2,136	312.4%
E04013189	Kettleshulme and Lyme Handley	378	385	1.9%
E04013190	Knutsford	10,413	11,639	11.8%
E04012282	Leighton	4,729	6,966	47.3%
E04013191	Little Bollington with Agden	325	345	6.2%
E04010964	Little Warford	80	80	0.0%
E04010965	Lower Withington	458	460	0.4%
E04013192	Macclesfield	41,085	43,658	6.3%
E04010967	Macclesfield Forest and Wildboarclough	159	159	0.0%
E04013193	Marbury and District	485	495	2.1%
E04010970	Marton	185	193	4.3%
E04010971	Mere	551	564	2.4%
E04013194	Middlewich	11,301	12,626	11.7%
E04013195	Millington and Rostherne	262	261	-0.4%
E04010974	Minshull Vernon	209	219	4.8%
E04013196	Mobberley	2,464	2,470	0.2%
E04013197	Moston	280	289	3.2%
E04010978	Mottram St Andrew	520	525	1.0%
E04013198	Nantwich	13,143	13,816	5.1%
E04010980	Nether Alderley	735	818	11.3%
E04010976, E04010981	Newbold Astbury cum Moreton	581	613	5.5%
E04010982	Newhall	754	814	8.0%
E04010984	North Rode	204	208	2.0%
E04010985	Odd Rode	4,441	4,483	0.9%
E04010969, E04010986	Ollerton with Marthall	446	467	4.7%
E04010987	Over Alderley	363	406	11.8%
E04010988	Peckforton	130	131	0.8%
E04010989	Peover Inferior	90	90	0.0%
E04013199	Peover Superior and Snelson	682	689	1.0%

Parish code(s)*	Parish name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29
E04010991	Pickmere	649	652	0.5%
E04010907, E04010992, E04011017	Plumley with Toft and Bexton	649	669	3.1%
E04010993	Poole	120	119	-0.8%
E04010994	Pott Shrigley	227	228	0.4%
E04013200	Poynton with Worth	11,765	12,097	2.8%
E04010996	Prestbury	2,808	2,836	1.0%
E04010997	Rainow	1,039	1,138	9.5%
E04013201	Rope	1,617	1,612	-0.3%
E04013202	Sandbach	18,325	18,947	3.4%
E04013203	Shavington cum Gresty	5,428	5,674	4.5%
E04011003	Siddington	287	287	0.0%
E04011004	Smallwood	540	541	0.2%
E04013204	Somerford	1,432	2,174	51.8%
E04011008	Sound	190	189	-0.5%
E04011009	Spurstow	322	327	1.6%
E04013205	Stapeley and District	3,129	3,417	9.2%
E04013206	Stoke and Hurleston	268	268	0.0%
E04013207	Styal	571	571	0.0%
E04011012	Sutton	2,188	3,108	42.0%
E04011013	Swettenham	256	254	-0.8%
E04011014, E04013208	Tabley	338	338	0.0%
E04011018	Twemlow	166	181	9.0%
E04011019	Walgherton	126	125	-0.8%
E04011020	Wardle	159	158	-0.6%
E04011021	Warmingham	195	202	3.6%
E04013182	Weston and Crewe Green	1,948	4,101	110.5%
E04011023	Wettenhall	174	179	2.9%
E04011024	Willaston	2,969	2,967	-0.1%
E04012173	Wilmslow	20,301	20,692	1.9%
E04011025	Wincle	146	144	-1.4%
E04011027	Wistaston	7,055	7,084	0.4%
E04011028	Woolstanwood	525	522	-0.6%
E04013209	Worleston	202	207	2.5%
E04011030	Wrenbury cum Frith	1,034	1,140	10.3%
E04011031	Wybunbury	1,397	1,589	13.7%

Table A1.4: Forecasts for parish wards

*Where a parish is not divided into two or more wards, the "parish ward" forecast relates to the whole parish.

Parish ward name*	Council/ meeting name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29
Adlington	Adlington	878	878	0.0%
Alderley Edge	Alderley Edge	3,677	3,711	0.9%
Alraham	Alraham and Calveley	393	476	21.1%
Calveley	Alraham and Calveley	232	245	5.6%
Central	Alsager	3,549	3,583	1.0%
East	Alsager	4,110	4,604	12.0%
West	Alsager	3,908	4,316	10.4%
Arclid	Arclid	336	350	4.2%
Ashley	Ashley	250	250	0.0%
Aston by Budworth	Aston by Budworth	268	279	4.1%
Audlem	Audlem	1,805	1,808	0.2%
Barthomley	Barthomley	169	185	9.5%
Betchton	Betchton	556	578	4.0%
Bickerton	Bickerton and Egerton	190	198	4.2%
Egerton	Bickerton and Egerton	64	64	0.0%
Central	Bollington	2,260	2,264	0.2%
East	Bollington	1,846	1,843	-0.2%
West	Bollington	2,212	2,258	2.1%
Bosley	Bosley	362	363	0.3%
Bradwall	Bradwall	158	163	3.2%
Brereton	Brereton	1,359	1,354	-0.4%
Brindley	Brindley and Faddiley	131	134	2.3%
Faddiley	Brindley and Faddiley	141	142	0.7%

Parish ward name*	Council/ meeting name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29
Buerton	Buerton	450	455	1.1%
Bulkeley	Bulkeley and Ridley	223	242	8.5%
Ridley	Bulkeley and Ridley	132	139	5.3%
Bunbury	Bunbury	1,116	1,156	3.6%
Acton and Henhull	Burland and Acton	314	315	0.3%
Burland	Burland and Acton	338	339	0.3%
Ravensmoor and Edleston	Burland and Acton	298	299	0.3%
Chelford	Chelford	1,308	1,305	-0.2%
Cholmondeley	Cholmondeley and Chorley	132	131	-0.8%
Chorley	Cholmondeley and Chorley	107	106	-0.9%
Cholmondeston	Cholmondeston and Wettenhall	163	173	6.1%
Wettenhall	Cholmondeston and Wettenhall	174	179	2.9%
Chorley	Chorley	378	380	0.5%
Church Lawton	Church Lawton	1,808	1,813	0.3%
Church Minshull	Church Minshull	372	390	4.8%
Central	Congleton	3,777	4,021	6.5%
North	Congleton	3,934	3,983	1.2%
North East	Congleton	5,740	5,907	2.9%
South East	Congleton	5,165	5,167	0.0%
West	Congleton	4,648	4,689	0.9%
Cranage	Cranage	995	1,008	1.3%
Central	Crewe	4,855	4,978	2.5%
East	Crewe	11,647	12,679	8.9%
North	Crewe	3,602	3,586	-0.4%
South	Crewe	7,719	8,086	4.8%

Parish ward name*	Council/ meeting name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29
St Barnabas	Crewe	3,546	4,038	13.9%
West	Crewe	7,565	7,628	0.8%
Disley	Disley	3,867	3,868	0.0%
Dodcott cum Wilkesley	Dodcott cum Wilkesley	373	393	5.4%
East	Doddington and District	222	223	0.5%
West	Doddington and District	266	449	68.8%
Eaton	Eaton	317	325	2.5%
Moss	Gawsworth	463	991	114.0%
Village	Gawsworth	922	926	0.4%
Goostrey	Goostrey	1,806	1,799	-0.4%
Great Warford	Great Warford	596	601	0.8%
East	Handforth	1,627	2,398	47.4%
South	Handforth	1,361	1,798	32.1%
West	Handforth	2,322	2,474	6.5%
Hankelow	Hankelow	301	314	4.3%
Haslington Village	Haslington	4,099	4,217	2.9%
Oakhanger	Haslington	159	170	6.9%
Winterley	Haslington	1,426	1,531	7.4%
Hassall	Hassall	211	209	-0.9%
Hatherton	Hatherton and Walgherton	293	301	2.7%
Walgherton	Hatherton and Walgherton	126	125	-0.8%
Haughton	Haughton	170	171	0.6%
Henbury	Henbury	531	533	0.4%
High Legh	High Legh	1,366	1,377	0.8%
Higher Hurdsfield	Higher Hurdsfield	614	611	-0.5%
Holmes Chapel	Holmes Chapel	5,348	5,506	3.0%

Parish ward name*	Council/ meeting name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29
Chorlton	Hough and Chorlton	908	903	-0.6%
Hough	Hough and Chorlton	683	692	1.3%
Hulme Walfield	Hulme Walfield and Somerford Booths	352	1,952	454.5%
Somerford Booths	Hulme Walfield and Somerford Booths	166	184	10.8%
Kettleshulme and Lyme Handley	Kettleshulme and Lyme Handley	378	385	1.9%
Bexton and Town Centre	Knutsford	2,345	2,356	0.5%
Cross Town	Knutsford	2,439	2,427	-0.5%
Nether	Knutsford	1,640	2,308	40.7%
Norbury Booths	Knutsford	2,329	2,328	0.0%
St John's Wood	Knutsford	1,660	2,220	33.7%
Leighton	Leighton, Minshull Vernon and Woolstanwood	4,729	6,966	47.3%
Minshull Vernon	Leighton, Minshull Vernon and Woolstanwood	209	219	4.8%
Woolstanwood	Leighton, Minshull Vernon and Woolstanwood	525	522	-0.6%
Agden	Little Bollington with Agden	155	154	-0.6%
Little Bollington	Little Bollington with Agden	170	191	12.4%
Little Warford	Little Warford	80	80	0.0%
Peover Inferior	Lower Peover	90	90	0.0%
Lower Withington	Lower Withington	458	460	0.4%
Broken Cross and Upton	Macclesfield	6,742	6,992	3.7%
Central	Macclesfield	7,380	7,640	3.5%
East	Macclesfield	3,620	4,106	13.4%

Parish ward name*	Council/ meeting name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29
Hurdsfield	Macclesfield	3,428	3,413	-0.4%
South	Macclesfield	6,223	7,064	13.5%
Tytherington	Macclesfield	7,525	7,947	5.6%
West and Ivy	Macclesfield	6,167	6,496	5.3%
Macclesfield Forest and Wildboarclough	Macclesfield Forest and Wildboarclough	159	159	0.0%
Marbury cum Quoisley	Marbury and District	238	242	1.7%
Norbury	Marbury and District	167	166	-0.6%
Wirswall	Marbury and District	80	87	8.7%
Marton	Marton	185	193	4.3%
Mere	Mere	551	564	2.4%
Cledford	Middlewich	6,349	7,618	20.0%
Kinderton	Middlewich	4,952	5,008	1.1%
Millington	Millington and Rostherne	150	149	-0.7%
Rostherne and Tatton	Millington and Rostherne	112	112	0.0%
Mobberley	Mobberley	2,464	2,470	0.2%
Moston	Moston	280	289	3.2%
Mottram St Andrew	Mottram St Andrew	434	439	1.2%
Newton	Mottram St Andrew	86	86	0.0%
North	Nantwich	4,294	4,275	-0.4%
South	Nantwich	4,285	4,286	0.0%
West	Nantwich	4,564	5,255	15.1%
Nether Alderley	Nether Alderley	735	818	11.3%
Astbury	Newbold Astbury cum Moreton	439	454	3.4%
Moreton	Newbold Astbury cum Moreton	142	159	12.0%
Newhall	Newhall	754	814	8.0%

Parish ward name*	Council/ meeting name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29
North Rode	North Rode	204	208	2.0%
Mount Pleasant	Odd Rode	1,251	1,246	-0.4%
Rode Heath	Odd Rode	1,706	1,699	-0.4%
Scholar Green	Odd Rode	1,484	1,538	3.6%
Marthall	Ollerton with Marthall	150	155	3.3%
Ollerton	Ollerton with Marthall	296	312	5.4%
Over Alderley	Over Alderley	363	406	11.8%
Peckforton	Peckforton	130	131	0.8%
Peover Superior and Snelson	Peover Superior and Snelson	682	689	1.0%
Pickmere	Pickmere	649	652	0.5%
Plumley	Plumley with Toft and Bexton	565	580	2.7%
Toft and Bexton	Plumley with Toft and Bexton	84	89	6.0%
Pott Shrigley	Pott Shrigley	227	228	0.4%
East	Poynton with Worth	5,607	5,738	2.3%
West	Poynton with Worth	6,158	6,359	3.3%
Prestbury	Prestbury	2,808	2,836	1.0%
Rainow	Rainow	1,039	1,138	9.5%
Rope	Rope	1,617	1,612	-0.3%
Elworth	Sandbach	5,494	5,766	5.0%
Ettiley Heath and Wheelock	Sandbach	4,372	4,362	-0.2%
Heath and East	Sandbach	4,195	4,539	8.2%
Town	Sandbach	4,264	4,280	0.4%
Gresty Brook	Shavington cum Gresty	549	547	-0.4%
Shavington Village	Shavington cum Gresty	4,879	5,127	5.1%
Siddington	Siddington	287	287	0.0%

Parish ward name*	Council/ meeting name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29
Smallwood	Smallwood	540	541	0.2%
Somerford	Somerford	1,432	2,174	51.8%
Austerson	Sound and District	96	96	0.0%
Baddiley	Sound and District	146	151	3.4%
Baddington	Sound and District	109	116	6.4%
Broomhall	Sound and District	158	173	9.5%
Coole Pilate	Sound and District	70	70	0.0%
Sound	Sound and District	190	189	-0.5%
Spurstow	Spurstow	322	327	1.6%
Stapeley and District	Stapeley and District	3,129	3,417	9.2%
Stoke and Hurleston	Stoke and Hurleston	268	268	0.0%
Styal	Styal	571	571	0.0%
Lane Ends	Sutton	855	851	-0.5%
Langley	Sutton	489	553	13.1%
Lyme Green	Sutton	511	1,368	167.7%
Rural	Sutton	333	336	0.9%
Swettenham	Swettenham	256	254	-0.8%
Tabley	Tabley	338	338	0.0%
Twemlow	Twemlow	166	181	9.0%
Wardle	Wardle	159	158	-0.6%
Warmingham	Warmingham	195	202	3.6%
Crewe Green	Weston and Crewe Green	215	872	305.6%
Weston	Weston and Crewe Green	1,089	2,588	137.6%
Wychwood	Weston and Crewe Green	644	641	-0.5%
North	Willaston	910	907	-0.3%
Village	Willaston	2,059	2,060	0.0%

Parish ward name*	Council/ meeting name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29
Dean Row	Wilmslow	5,700	5,719	0.3%
East	Wilmslow	3,285	3,546	7.9%
Lacey Green	Wilmslow	3,684	3,758	2.0%
West	Wilmslow	7,632	7,669	0.5%
Wincle	Wincle	146	144	-1.4%
St Mary's	Wistaston	2,825	2,858	1.2%
Wells Green	Wistaston	1,639	1,640	0.1%
Wistaston Green	Wistaston	2,591	2,586	-0.2%
Aston Juxta Mondrum	Worleston and District	149	152	2.0%
Poole	Worleston and District	120	119	-0.8%
Worleston	Worleston and District	202	207	2.5%
Wrenbury cum Frith	Wrenbury cum Frith	1,034	1,140	10.3%
Wybunbury	Wybunbury	1,397	1,589	13.7%

Table A1.5: Forecasts for polling districts

*In the final column, an "x" means the percentage cannot be calculated, due to 0 electors in July 2023.

Polling district code	Polling district name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29*
1AB1	1AB1 - Crewe Central - Part 1	1,494	1,517	1.5%
1AC1	1AC1 - Crewe East - Part 1	921	908	-1.4%
1AD1	1AD1 - Crewe East - Part 2	1,300	1,296	-0.3%
1AE1	1AE1 - Crewe Central - Part 2	1,209	1,208	-0.1%
1AF1	1AF1 - Crewe Central - Part 3	2,152	2,253	4.7%
1BA1	1BA1 - Crewe West - Part 1	1,062	1,057	-0.5%
1BAR	1BAR - Crewe West - Part 2	918	918	0.0%
1BB2	1BB2 - Crewe West - Part 3	700	747	6.7%
1BC1	1BC1 - Crewe West - Part 4	1,587	1,580	-0.4%
1BD1	1BD1 - Crewe West - Part 5	1,150	1,146	-0.3%
1BD2	1BD2 - Crewe South - Part 1	435	433	-0.5%
1BD3	1BD3 - Crewe South - Part 2	1,589	1,582	-0.4%
1BE1	1BE1 - Crewe St Barnabas - Part 1	1,226	1,221	-0.4%
1BER	1BER - Crewe St Barnabas - Part 2	952	950	-0.2%
1BF1	1BF1 - Crewe West - Part 6	1,199	1,193	-0.5%
1CA1	1CA1 - Crewe St Barnabas - Part 3	1,368	1,867	36.5%
1CB1	1CB1 - Crewe North - Part 1	1,482	1,475	-0.5%
1CB2	1CB2 - Crewe North - Part 2	917	914	-0.3%
1CC2	1CC2 - Crewe North - Part 3	1,203	1,197	-0.5%
1CD1	1CD1 - Crewe East - Part 3	1,570	1,868	19.0%
1CE1	1CE1 - Crewe East - Part 4	1,389	1,385	-0.3%
1CF1	1CF1 - Crewe East - Part 5	2,007	2,281	13.7%
1DA1	1DA1 - Crewe South - Part 3	1,702	1,702	0.0%
1DB1	1DB1 - Crewe South - Part 4	1,402	1,397	-0.4%
1DC1	1DC1 - Crewe South - Part 5	1,019	1,258	23.5%
1DD1	1DD1 - Crewe West - Part 7	949	987	4.0%
1DE1	1DE1 - Crewe South - Part 6	1,572	1,714	9.0%
1DF1	1DF1 - Crewe East - Part 6	1,526	1,526	0.0%
1DF2	1DF2 - Crewe East - Part 7	1,472	1,961	33.2%
1DF3	1DF3 - Crewe East - Part 8	1,133	1,127	-0.5%
1DG1	1DG1 - Crewe East - Part 9	329	327	-0.6%
1FC1	1FC1 - Stapeley (Urban) - Part 1	1,088	1,083	-0.5%
1FC2	1FC2 - Stapeley (Rural)	961	1,259	31.0%
1FC6	1FC6 - Batherton	49	49	0.0%
1FCR	1FCR - Stapeley (Urban) - Part 2	1,031	1,026	-0.5%
1FD1	1FD1 - Willaston Village - Part 1	1,041	1,036	-0.5%
1FD2	1FD2 - Willaston North - Part 1	373	373	0.0%
1FDC	1FDC - Willaston Village - Part 2	1,018	1,024	0.6%
1FDR	1FDR - Willaston North - Part 2	537	534	-0.6%
1FE1	1FE1 - Rope - Part 1	1,617	1,612	-0.3%
1FE2	1FE2 - Wells Green	1,639	1,640	0.1%
1FET	1FET - Shavington Village - Part 3	119	118	-0.8%
1FET2	1FET2 - Shavington Village - Part 4	0	0	x
1FF1	1FF1 - St Mary's - Part 1	1,637	1,676	2.4%

Polling district code	Polling district name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29*
1FFR	1FFR - St Mary's - Part 2	1,188	1,182	-0.5%
1FG1	1FG1 - Wistaston Green - Part 1	1,796	1,795	-0.1%
1FG2	1FG2 - Wistaston Green - Part 2	795	791	-0.5%
1FH1	1FH1 - Austerson	96	96	0.0%
1FH6	1FH6 - Coole Pilate	70	70	0.0%
1FJ1	1FJ1 - Woolstanwood	525	522	-0.6%
1FJ4	1FJ4 - Leighton Urban - Part 1	362	360	-0.6%
1GF1	1GF1 - Weston	889	1,932	117.3%
1GF1T	1GF1T - Crewe Green - Part 1	49	355	624.5%
1GFR	1GFR - Weston Wychwood	644	641	-0.5%
1GFT	1GFT - Chorlton Ward - Part 1	235	234	-0.4%
1GG1	1GG1 - Basford	200	656	228.0%
1GG2	1GG2 - Hough	683	692	1.3%
1GG3	1GG3 - Chorlton Ward - Part 2	673	669	-0.6%
1GH6	1GH6 - Blakenhall	113	114	0.9%
1GH7	1GH7 - Checkley-Cum-Wrinehill	74	74	0.0%
1GH8	1GH8 - Lea	35	35	0.0%
1GJ6	1GJ6 - Bridgemere	125	238	90.4%
1GJ7	1GJ7 - Doddington	22	44	100.0%
1GJ8	1GJ8 - Hunsterson	119	167	40.3%
1GK1	1GK1 - Hankelow	301	314	4.3%
1GL6	1GL6 - Hatherton	293	301	2.7%
1GM1	1GM1 - Shavington Village - Part 1	1,750	1,853	5.9%
1GM2	1GM2 - Gresty Brook	549	547	-0.4%
1GMR	1GMR - Shavington Village - Part 2	3,010	3,156	4.9%
1GMT	1GMT - Rope - Part 2	0	0	x
1GN1	1GN1 - Wybunbury	1,397	1,589	13.7%
1GN6	1GN6 - Walgherton	126	125	-0.8%
1NA0	1NA0 - Nantwich North - Part 1	1,262	1,256	-0.5%
1NA1	1NA1 - Nantwich West - Part 1	1,142	1,164	1.9%
1NA2	1NA2 - Nantwich West - Part 2	1,644	1,652	0.5%
1NA3	1NA3 - Nantwich North - Part 2	1,135	1,130	-0.4%
1NA4	1NA4 - Nantwich South - Part 1	1,552	1,548	-0.3%
1NA5	1NA5 - Nantwich South - Part 2	1,512	1,521	0.6%
1NA6	1NA6 - Nantwich North - Part 3	1,013	1,008	-0.5%
1NAC	1NAC - Nantwich North - Part 4	884	881	-0.3%
1NAR	1NAR - Nantwich South - Part 3	1,221	1,217	-0.3%
2GA6	2GA6 - Barthomley	169	185	9.5%
2GB1	2GB1 - Crewe Green - Part 2	166	517	211.4%
2GC1	2GC1 - Haslington - Part 1	1,331	1,319	-0.9%
2GC2	2GC2 - Haslington - Part 2	1,766	1,906	7.9%
2GC3	2GC3 - Haslington - Part 3	1,002	992	-1.0%
2GD1	2GD1 - Oakhanger	159	170	6.9%
2GDT	2GDT - Alsager West - Part 3	483	805	66.7%
2GE1	2GE1 - Winterley - Part 1	1,337	1,439	7.6%
3BA1	3BA1 - Knutsford Bexton and Town Centre - Part 1	719	730	1.5%
3BAR	3BAR - Knutsford Nether - Part 1	792	1,196	51.0%

Polling district code	Polling district name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29*
3BART	3BART - Knutsford Bexton and Town Centre - Part 2	281	281	0.0%
3BAT	3BAT - Knutsford Nether - Part 2	344	470	36.6%
3BB1	3BB1 - Knutsford Cross Town - Part 1	961	956	-0.5%
3BBR	3BBR - Knutsford Cross Town - Part 2	1,478	1,471	-0.5%
3BC1	3BC1 - Knutsford St John`s Wood - Part 1	1,660	2,220	33.7%
3BD1	3BD1 - Knutsford Bexton and Town Centre - Part 3	871	873	0.2%
3BDT	3BDT - Knutsford Nether - Part 3	482	480	-0.4%
3BE1	3BE1 - Knutsford Bexton and Town Centre - Part 4	474	472	-0.4%
3BF1	3BF1 - Knutsford Norbury Booths - Part 1	1,331	1,333	0.2%
3BF2	3BF2 - Knutsford Norbury Booths - Part 2	998	995	-0.3%
3CA1	3CA1 - Agden	155	154	-0.6%
3CA2	3CA2 - Little Bollington - Part 1	147	168	14.3%
3CB6	3CB6 - Ashley	250	250	0.0%
3CC6	3CC6 - Aston-By-Budworth	268	279	4.1%
3CD1	3CD1 - Toft and Bexton	84	89	6.0%
3CG1	3CG1 - High Legh	1,366	1,377	0.8%
3CH1	3CH1 - Little Warford	80	80	0.0%
3CJ1	3CJ1 - Marthall	150	155	3.3%
3CK1	3CK1 - Mere	551	564	2.4%
3CL1	3CL1 - Millington	150	149	-0.7%
3CLT	3CLT - Little Bollington - Part 2	23	23	0.0%
3CM1	3CM1 - Mobberley - Part 1	1,300	1,295	-0.4%
3CMR	3CMR - Mobberley - Part 2	1,164	1,175	0.9%
3CMT	3CMT - Knutsford St John`s Wood - Part 2	0	0	x
3CN1	3CN1 - Peover Inferior	90	90	0.0%
3CO1	3CO1 - Ollerton	296	312	5.4%
3CR1	3CR1 - Plumley	565	580	2.7%
3CS1	3CS1 - Peover Superior	561	569	1.4%
3CT1	3CT1 - Pickmere	649	652	0.5%
3CU1	3CU1 - Rostherne	95	95	0.0%
3CU7	3CU7 - Tatton	17	17	0.0%
3CV1	3CV1 - Tabley	338	338	0.0%
3CVT	3CVT - Knutsford Nether - Part 4	22	162	636.4%
3DA1	3DA1 - Chelford	1,308	1,305	-0.2%
3DA2	3DA2 - Snelson	121	120	-0.8%
3DB1	3DB1 - Nether Alderley	735	818	11.3%
3DC1	3DC1 - Over Alderley	363	406	11.8%
3DD1	3DD1 - Chorley	378	380	0.5%
3DE1	3DE1 - Great Warford	596	601	0.8%
3DF1	3DF1 - Alderley Edge - Part 1	1,122	1,130	0.7%
3DG1	3DG1 - Alderley Edge - Part 2	1,527	1,526	-0.1%
3DH1	3DH1 - Alderley Edge - Part 3	1,028	1,055	2.6%

Polling district code	Polling district name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29*
3EA1	3EA1 - Audlem	1,805	1,808	0.2%
3EB1	3EB1 - Alpraham	393	476	21.1%
3EC1	3EC1 - Bickerton	190	198	4.2%
3EC2	3EC2 - Bulkeley	223	242	8.5%
3EC8	3EC8 - Egerton	64	64	0.0%
3ED1	3ED1 - Bunbury	1,116	1,156	3.6%
3EE1	3EE1 - Burland	338	339	0.3%
3EET	3EET - Ravensmoor and Edleston Ward - Part 1	164	165	0.6%
3EF1	3EF1 - Calveley	232	245	5.6%
3EG1	3EG1 - Cholmondeley	132	131	-0.8%
3EH6	3EH6 - Church Minshull	372	390	4.8%
3EJ6	3EJ6 - Cholmondeston	163	173	6.1%
3EJ7	3EJ7 - Wettenhall	174	179	2.9%
3EK6	3EK6 - Brindley	131	134	2.3%
3EK7	3EK7 - Faddiley	141	142	0.7%
3EL1	3EL1 - Buerton	450	455	1.1%
3EM6	3EM6 - Peckforton	130	131	0.8%
3EN6	3EN6 - Hurleston	57	57	0.0%
3EN7	3EN7 - Stoke	211	211	0.0%
3EO6	3EO6 - Ridley	132	139	5.3%
3EP6	3EP6 - Haughton	170	171	0.6%
3EP7	3EP7 - Spurstow	322	327	1.6%
3EQ1	3EQ1 - Chorley	107	106	-0.9%
3ER6	3ER6 - Marbury cum Quoisley	238	242	1.7%
3ER8	3ER8 - Norbury	167	166	-0.6%
3ER9	3ER9 - Wirswall	80	87	8.7%
3ES1	3ES1 - Wardle	159	158	-0.6%
3ET1	3ET1 - Wrenbury-Cum-Frith	1,034	1,140	10.3%
3EU6	3EU6 - Dodcott-Cum-Wilkesley - Part 1	173	183	5.8%
3EV6	3EV6 - Dodcott-Cum-Wilkesley - Part 2	200	210	5.0%
3EW6	3EW6 - Newhall	754	814	8.0%
3FA5	3FA5 - Acton	274	275	0.4%
3FA6	3FA6 - Ravensmoor and Edleston Ward - Part 2	59	59	0.0%
3FA7	3FA7 - Henhull	40	40	0.0%
3FAT	3FAT - Nantwich West - Part 3	642	706	10.0%
3FB7	3FB7 - Poole	120	119	-0.8%
3FB8	3FB8 - Worleston	202	207	2.5%
3FB9	3FB9 - Aston-Juxta-Mondrum	149	152	2.0%
3FBT	3FBT - Nantwich West - Part 4	1,136	1,733	52.6%
3FH3	3FH3 - Baddington	109	116	6.4%
3FH4	3FH4 - Broomhall	158	173	9.5%
3FH7	3FH7 - Sound	190	189	-0.5%
3FH8	3FH8 - Baddiley	146	151	3.4%
3FHT	3FHT - Ravensmoor and Edleston Ward - Part 3	75	75	0.0%

Polling district code	Polling district name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29*
3FJ2	3FJ2 - Leighton Rural	812	3,064	277.3%
3FJ3	3FJ3 - Leighton Urban - Part 2	1,528	1,523	-0.3%
3FJ5	3FJ5 - Leighton Urban - Part 3	563	561	-0.4%
3FJ6	3FJ6 - Leighton Urban - Part 4	1,464	1,458	-0.4%
3FJ7	3FJ7 - Minshull Vernon	209	219	4.8%
3FK6	3FK6 - Warmingham	195	202	3.6%
4AA1	4AA1 - Macclesfield Tytherington - Part 1	1,477	1,470	-0.5%
4AA2	4AA2 - Macclesfield Tytherington - Part 2	1,584	1,581	-0.2%
4AA3	4AA3 - Macclesfield Tytherington - Part 3	687	684	-0.4%
4AA4	4AA4 - Macclesfield Tytherington - Part 4	95	95	0.0%
4AAR	4AAR - Macclesfield Tytherington - Part 5	1,254	1,252	-0.2%
4AB1	4AB1 - Macclesfield Hurdsfield - Part 1	1,280	1,274	-0.5%
4AB2	4AB2 - Macclesfield Hurdsfield - Part 2	1,269	1,263	-0.5%
4AB3	4AB3 - Macclesfield Hurdsfield - Part 3	879	876	-0.3%
4AC1	4AC1 - Macclesfield Tytherington - Part 6	1,150	1,591	38.3%
4AD1	4AD1 - Broken Cross and Upton - Part 1	1,014	1,009	-0.5%
4AD2	4AD2 - Broken Cross and Upton - Part 2	1,089	1,084	-0.5%
4AD3	4AD3 - Broken Cross and Upton - Part 3	1,061	1,056	-0.5%
4AE1	4AE1 - Macclesfield Tytherington - Part 7	1,278	1,274	-0.3%
4AF1	4AF1 - Broken Cross and Upton - Part 4	913	997	9.2%
4AF2	4AF2 - Broken Cross and Upton - Part 5	1,364	1,357	-0.5%
4AF3	4AF3 - Broken Cross and Upton - Part 6	1,301	1,298	-0.2%
4BA1	4BA1 - Macclesfield Central - Part 1	643	641	-0.3%
4BA2	4BA2 - Macclesfield Central - Part 2	588	719	22.3%
4BB1	4BB1 - Macclesfield Central - Part 3	956	964	0.8%
4BB2	4BB2 - Macclesfield Central - Part 4	1,863	1,965	5.5%
4BBR	4BBR - Macclesfield Central - Part 5	1,184	1,199	1.3%
4BC1	4BC1 - Macclesfield West and Ivy - Part 1	1,472	1,818	23.5%
4BD1	4BD1 - Macclesfield West and Ivy - Part 2	1,517	1,510	-0.5%
4BE1	4BE1 - Macclesfield West and Ivy - Part 3	1,354	1,347	-0.5%

Polling district code	Polling district name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29*
4BF1	4BF1 - Macclesfield West and Ivy - Part 4	1,824	1,821	-0.2%
4BF2	4BF2 - Macclesfield South - Part 1	1,339	1,333	-0.4%
4BFR	4BFR - Gawsworth Moss - Part 1	463	462	-0.2%
4CA1	4CA1 - Macclesfield South - Part 2	1,553	2,058	32.5%
4CAR	4CAR - Macclesfield South - Part 3	1,029	1,361	32.3%
4CB1	4CB1 - Macclesfield South - Part 4	1,686	1,699	0.8%
4CBR	4CBR - Macclesfield South - Part 5	616	613	-0.5%
4CC1	4CC1 - Sutton - Lyme Green	511	1,368	167.7%
4CD1	4CD1 - Macclesfield Central - Part 6	1,416	1,425	0.6%
4CE1	4CE1 - Macclesfield Central - Part 7	730	727	-0.4%
4CF1	4CF1 - Macclesfield East - Part 1	1,125	1,166	3.6%
4CG1	4CG1 - Macclesfield East - Part 2	1,037	1,489	43.6%
4CH1	4CH1 - Macclesfield East - Part 3	1,458	1,451	-0.5%
4EA1	4EA1 - Bollington East - Part 1	546	548	0.4%
4EB1	4EB1 - Bollington East - Part 2	1,300	1,295	-0.4%
4EC1	4EC1 - Bollington Central - Part 1	1,495	1,503	0.5%
4ED1	4ED1 - Bollington Central - Part 2	765	761	-0.5%
4EDT	4EDT - Bollington West - Part 1	269	273	1.5%
4EE1	4EE1 - Bollington West - Part 2	1,943	1,985	2.2%
4FA1	4FA1 - Disley - Part 1	523	522	-0.2%
4FB1	4FB1 - Disley - Part 2	1,663	1,662	-0.1%
4FB2	4FB2 - Disley - Part 3	1,681	1,684	0.2%
4FB6	4FB6 - Lyme Handley - Part 1	72	80	11.1%
4FC1	4FC1 - Higher Hurdfield	614	611	-0.5%
4FD1	4FD1 - Kettleshulme	276	275	-0.4%
4FD7	4FD7 - Lyme Handley - Part 2	30	30	0.0%
4FE2	4FE2 - Pott Shrigley	227	228	0.4%
4FF1	4FF1 - Rainow	1,039	1,138	9.5%
4GA1	4GA1 - Bosley	362	363	0.3%
4GC1	4GC1 - Eaton	317	325	2.5%
4GCT	4GCT - Congleton North - Part 1	286	296	3.5%
4GCT2	4GCT2 - Congleton North East - Part 1	72	72	0.0%
4GD1	4GD1 - Gawsworth Village	922	926	0.4%
4GDT	4GDT - Gawsworth Moss - Part 2	0	529	x
4GE1	4GE1 - Henbury	531	533	0.4%
4GET	4GET - Broken Cross and Upton - Part 7	0	191	x
4GF6	4GF6 - Marton	185	193	4.3%
4GG6	4GG6 - Macclesfield Forest	56	56	0.0%
4GH6	4GH6 - North Rode	204	208	2.0%
4GJ6	4GJ6 - Siddington	287	287	0.0%
4GK1	4GK1 - Sutton - Lane Ends	855	851	-0.5%
4GK6	4GK6 - Sutton - Rural	333	336	0.9%
4GL6	4GL6 - Wildboardclough	103	103	0.0%
4GM6	4GM6 - Wincle	146	144	-1.4%
4GN1	4GN1 - Lower Withington	458	460	0.4%
4GO1	4GO1 - Sutton - Langley	489	553	13.1%

Polling district code	Polling district name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29*
4HE1	4HE1 - Mottram St Andrew	434	439	1.2%
4HE2	4HE2 - Mottram St Andrew - Newton Ward	86	86	0.0%
4HF1	4HF1 - Prestbury - Butley	1,305	1,322	1.3%
4HF2	4HF2 - Prestbury - Fallibroome	90	95	5.6%
4HF3	4HF3 - Prestbury - Prestbury	1,413	1,419	0.4%
4JA1	4JA1 - Adlington - Part 1	481	481	0.0%
4JB1	4JB1 - Adlington - Part 2	397	397	0.0%
4JC1	4JC1 - Poynton East - Part 1	1,468	1,458	-0.7%
4JC2	4JC2 - Poynton West - Part 1	1,643	1,635	-0.5%
4JD1	4JD1 - Poynton East - Part 2	1,125	1,120	-0.4%
4JDR	4JDR - Poynton East - Part 3	1,018	1,022	0.4%
4JE1	4JE1 - Poynton East - Part 4	1,130	1,257	11.2%
4JF1	4JF1 - Poynton East - Part 5	866	881	1.7%
4JG1	4JG1 - Poynton West - Part 2	1,200	1,424	18.7%
4JG2	4JG2 - Poynton West - Part 3	1,489	1,484	-0.3%
4JH1	4JH1 - Poynton West - Part 4	1,826	1,816	-0.5%
8EA1	8EA1 - Wilmslow Lacey Green - Part 4	509	507	-0.4%
8EB1	8EB1 - Wilmslow Dean Row - Part 1	1,621	1,613	-0.5%
8EC1	8EC1 - Wilmslow Dean Row - Part 2	1,089	1,084	-0.5%
8ED1	8ED1 - Wilmslow Dean Row - Part 3	1,352	1,394	3.1%
8EE1	8EE1 - Wilmslow Dean Row - Part 4	1,638	1,628	-0.6%
8EF1	8EF1 - Handforth South	1,361	1,798	32.1%
8EG1	8EG1 - Handforth West - Part 1	996	1,001	0.5%
8EH1	8EH1 - Handforth East	1,627	2,398	47.4%
8EJ1	8EJ1 - Handforth West - Part 2	1,168	1,161	-0.6%
8EK1	8EK1 - Wilmslow Lacey Green - Part 1	1,578	1,661	5.3%
8EKC	8EKC - Wilmslow Lacey Green - Part 2	1,597	1,590	-0.4%
8FA1	8FA1 - Wilmslow East - Part 1	1,130	1,213	7.3%
8FB1	8FB1 - Wilmslow West - Part 1	1,160	1,163	0.3%
8FBR	8FBR - Wilmslow West - Part 2	1,440	1,458	1.3%
8FC1	8FC1 - Wilmslow West - Part 3	1,319	1,346	2.0%
8FE1	8FE1 - Wilmslow East - Part 2	859	1,043	21.4%
8FF1	8FF1 - Wilmslow East - Part 3	1,296	1,290	-0.5%
8FG1	8FG1 - Wilmslow West - Part 4	1,564	1,560	-0.3%
8FH1	8FH1 - Wilmslow West - Part 5	770	768	-0.3%
8FHR	8FHR - Wilmslow West - Part 6	1,201	1,195	-0.5%
8FJ1	8FJ1 - Wilmslow West - Part 7	178	179	0.6%
8FK1	8FK1 - Styal	571	571	0.0%
8FKT	8FKT - Handforth West - Part 3	158	312	97.5%
ALEA	ALEA - Alsager East - Part 1	833	832	-0.1%
ALEB	ALEB - Alsager East - Part 2	1,503	1,821	21.2%
ALEC	ALEC - Alsager East - Part 3	1,715	1,875	9.3%
ALED	ALED - Alsager Central - Part 1	1,887	1,904	0.9%
ALEE	ALEE - Alsager Central - Part 2	1,662	1,679	1.0%
ALEF	ALEF - Alsager West - Part 1	1,964	2,054	4.6%
ALEG	ALEG - Alsager West - Part 2	1,461	1,457	-0.3%
AST1	AST1 - Newbold Astbury	439	454	3.4%

Polling district code	Polling district name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29*
AST2	AST2 - Moreton	142	159	12.0%
AST3	AST3 - Somerford - Part 1	1,281	1,984	54.9%
AST4	AST4 - Hulme Walfield	352	1,952	454.5%
AST5	AST5 - Somerford Booths	166	184	10.8%
AST6	AST6 - Smallwood	540	541	0.2%
BRE1	BRE1 - Brereton	1,359	1,354	-0.4%
BRE2	BRE2 - Bradwall	158	163	3.2%
BRE3	BRE3 - Arclid	336	350	4.2%
BRE4	BRE4 - Moston	280	289	3.2%
BRET	BRET - Middlewich Cledford - Part 5	22	519	2259.1%
BRET2	BRET2 - Sandbach Elworth - Part 4	545	761	39.6%
CNW2	CNW2 - Congleton North - Part 2	1,187	1,196	0.8%
CNW3	CNW3 - Congleton North - Part 3	1,963	1,992	1.5%
COB1	COB1 - Congleton North East - Part 2	1,188	1,182	-0.5%
COB2	COB2 - Congleton North East - Part 3	1,403	1,579	12.5%
COC1	COC1 - Congleton Central - Part 1	1,543	1,779	15.3%
COC2	COC2 - Congleton Central - Part 2	1,014	1,009	-0.5%
COC3	COC3 - Congleton Central - Part 3	1,220	1,233	1.1%
COCT	COCT - Congleton North - Part 4	498	499	0.2%
CON1	CON1 - Congleton North East - Part 4	1,354	1,359	0.4%
CON2	CON2 - Congleton North East - Part 5	1,530	1,523	-0.5%
CON3	CON3 - Congleton North East - Part 6	193	192	-0.5%
COS1	COS1 - Congleton South East - Part 1	1,048	1,046	-0.2%
COS2	COS2 - Congleton South East - Part 2	1,319	1,329	0.8%
COS3	COS3 - Congleton South East - Part 3	1,481	1,481	0.0%
COS4	COS4 - Congleton South East - Part 4	1,317	1,311	-0.5%
COW1	COW1 - Congleton West - Part 1	1,217	1,272	4.5%
COW2	COW2 - Congleton West - Part 2	1,433	1,429	-0.3%
COW3	COW3 - Congleton West - Part 3	969	964	-0.5%
COW4	COW4 - Congleton West - Part 4	1,029	1,024	-0.5%
COWT	COWT - Somerford - Part 2	151	190	25.8%
DAN1	DAN1 - Goostrey - Part 1	988	985	-0.3%
DAN2	DAN2 - Twemlow	166	181	9.0%
DAN3	DAN3 - Cranage	995	1,008	1.3%
DAN4	DAN4 - Swettenham	256	254	-0.8%
DAN5	DAN5 - Goostrey - Part 2	818	814	-0.5%
HCE1	HCE1 - Holmes Chapel - Part 1	1,649	1,641	-0.5%
HCE2	HCE2 - Holmes Chapel - Part 2	1,503	1,499	-0.3%
HCE3	HCE3 - Holmes Chapel - Part 3	1,731	1,903	9.9%
HCE4	HCE4 - Holmes Chapel - Part 4	465	463	-0.4%
LAW1	LAW1 - Church Lawton - Part 1	1,062	1,064	0.2%
LAW2	LAW2 - Church Lawton - Part 2	746	749	0.4%
LAW3	LAW3 - Betchton	556	578	4.0%
LAW4	LAW4 - Hassall	211	209	-0.9%
LAWT	LAWT - Alsager East - Part 4	59	76	28.8%
MIAA	MIAA - Middlewich Kinderton - Part 1	1,694	1,697	0.2%
MIAB	MIAB - Middlewich Kinderton - Part 2	985	979	-0.6%
MIAC	MIAC - Middlewich Cledford - Part 1	1,980	2,288	15.6%

Polling district code	Polling district name	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors, Dec 2029	% change in electors, 2023-29*
MIAE	MIAE - Middlewich Cledford - Part 2	1,359	1,626	19.6%
MIAF	MIAF - Middlewich Cledford - Part 3	1,759	1,750	-0.5%
MIAG	MIAG - Middlewich Kinderton - Part 3	1,343	1,406	4.7%
MIAH	MIAH - Middlewich Kinderton - Part 4	930	926	-0.4%
MIAJ	MIAJ - Middlewich Cledford - Part 4	1,229	1,435	16.8%
ORD1	ORD1 - Rode Heath	1,706	1,699	-0.4%
ORD2	ORD2 - Scholar Green	1,484	1,538	3.6%
ORD3	ORD3 - Mount Pleasant	936	933	-0.3%
ORD5	ORD5 - Mow Cop	315	313	-0.6%
SAE1	SAE1 - Sandbach Heath & East - Part 1	2,004	2,069	3.2%
SAE2	SAE2 - Sandbach Town - Part 1	1,278	1,304	2.0%
SAE3	SAE3 - Sandbach Heath & East - Part 2	1,122	1,121	-0.1%
SAEC	SAEC - Sandbach Heath & East - Part 3	1,069	1,349	26.2%
SAN1	SAN1 - Sandbach Town - Part 2	1,508	1,500	-0.5%
SAN2	SAN2 - Sandbach Town - Part 3	1,478	1,476	-0.1%
SAN3	SAN3 - Sandbach Elworth - Part 1	1,546	1,539	-0.5%
SAW1	SAW1 - Sandbach Elworth - Part 2	1,293	1,297	0.3%
SAW2	SAW2 - Sandbach Elworth - Part 3	2,110	2,169	2.8%
SAW3	SAW3 - Sandbach Ettiley Heath & Wheelock - Part 1	1,814	1,814	0.0%
SAW4	SAW4 - Sandbach Ettiley Heath & Wheelock - Part 2	1,831	1,824	-0.4%
SAWR	SAWR - Sandbach Ettiley Heath & Wheelock - Part 3	727	724	-0.4%
SAWT	SAWT - Winterley - Part 2	89	92	3.4%

This page is intentionally left blank