



Council Summons

Wednesday, 14th May, 2025

11.00 am

The Tenants' Hall, Tatton Park, Knutsford

WA16 6QN

(Postcode for Sat Nav - WA16 6SG)

To all Members of the Council

You are hereby invited to attend a meeting of the Cheshire East Council for the transaction of the business specified in the agenda below.

Yours faithfully

Rob Polkinghorne
Chief Executive

Agenda

The agenda is divided into two 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 are uploaded to the Council's website

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

Mayor Making Ceremony

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

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

3. **Election of Mayor 2025/26**

To elect a Mayor for 2025/26, who will also act as Chair of the Council.

4. **Appointment of Deputy Mayor 2025/26**

To appoint a Deputy Mayor for 2025/26, who will also act as Vice Chair of the Council.

5. **Vote of Thanks to Retiring Mayor**

6. **Mayor's Announcements**

To receive such announcements as may be made by the Mayor.

Adjournment of Meeting and Lunch

Reconvening of Meeting at 1.45 pm

Annual General Meeting

7. **Apologies for Absence**

8. **Declarations of Interest**

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

9. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 5 - 32)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 26 February 2025.

10. **Election of a Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader of the Council for 2025/26** (Pages 33 - 38)

To elect a Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader of the Council for 2025/26.

11. **Political Representation on the Council's Committees** (Pages 39 - 44)

To determine the political representation on the Council's committees.

Appendix to follow.

12. **Appointment of Chairs and Vice Chairs of Committees of the Council** (Pages 45 - 48)

To appoint the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Council's committees.

Appendix to follow.

13. **Recommendation from Finance Sub Committee: Approval of Virement** (Pages 49 - 60)

To consider the recommendation from the Finance Sub Committee.

14. **Appointments to Cheshire Police and Crime Panel and to Cheshire Fire Authority** (Pages 61 - 64)

To approve the appointments to the Cheshire Police and Crime Panel and the Cheshire Fire Authority.

15. **Approval of Absence from Council Meetings** (Pages 65 - 68)

To seek the approval of Council in respect of a Councillor's absence from Council meetings for a period of six months.

16. **Software Defined Wide Area Network (SD Wan) Connectivity Procurement** (Pages 69 - 76)

To consider the report on the procurement of a new connectivity network contract.

17. **Reporting of Urgent Decisions Taken by the Chief Executive** (Pages 77 - 78)

To note the urgent decisions taken by the Chief Executive on behalf of Council.

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**Minutes of a meeting of the Council**

held on Wednesday, 26th February, 2025 in The Tenants' Hall, Tatton Park,
Knutsford WA16 6QN

PRESENT

Councillor M Houston (Mayor/Chair)

Councillor D Edwardes (Deputy Mayor/Vice-Chair)

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

72 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors P Coan, A Farrall and M Simon.

Councillor P Redstone arrived at the meeting during Item 6 – Leader's and Deputy Leader's Announcements.

73 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In relation to Item 16 – Swimming Pool Support Fund Grant, Councillor L Buchanan declared a pecuniary interest as she was an employee of Everybody Health and Leisure and stated that she would leave the Chamber during consideration of this item.

In relation to Item 10 – Supporting Effective Engagement: Cheshire and Warrington Devolution, Councillor S Gardiner stated that he was a named person in the report as he was the deputy leader of the Conservative Group, and the membership of the Members Reference Group was being approved at the meeting.

In relation to Item 16 – Swimming Pool Support Fund Grant, Councillor B Wye declared a pecuniary interest as he was an employee of Everybody Health and Leisure and stated that he would leave the Chamber during consideration of this item.

In relation to Item 16 – Swimming Pool Support Fund Grant, Councillor A Kolker declared that he was a trustee of the Everybody Health and Leisure and stated that he would leave the Chamber during consideration of this item.

In relation to Item 16 – Swimming Pool Support Fund Grant, Councillor L Anderson declared that she was a trustee of the Everybody Health and Leisure and stated that she would leave the Chamber during consideration of this item.

74 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2024 be approved as a correct record.

75 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor announced the passing of Honorary Alderman Ray Stafford and Honorary Alderman Margaret Martin and invited all present to stand in a minute's silence in remembrance.

76 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

Mr R Slater referred to the decision to remove cash payments from the majority of car parks in Macclesfield and asked what research had been undertaken to assess the potential damage to retail businesses in Macclesfield as shoppers may be opting to shop out of town or on-line. He asked what the reduction in car park revenue was since cashless payments had been introduced and stated that the more vulnerable were more likely to fall victim to theft or scam or have their phones or cards stolen at the ticket machine. Mr Slater referred to the decision to remove the access road to Whalley Hayes Car Park and the car park entrance ramp from the gritting route, which had led to parking difficulties particularly during snowy conditions and asked how this decision was justified as it had directly affected shoppers, who were unable to park, and the car park likely generated a substantial amount of revenue.

In response Councillor M Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, stated that contactless payments were popular with consumers and retailers with only 12% of transactions now in cash and this trend was likely to continue. A full Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken to ensure no one was discriminated against or adversely effected. Anybody with a Blue Badge does have to pay to use the car parks. Shoppers had the ability to pay by smartphone and the Ringo App, which they could do so safely in their own car. In terms of overall revenue, payments were down across Cheshire East because of the weather affecting all car parks and people staying at home. The Whalley

Hayes Car Park revenue was £1500 a week and the severe weather may have cost only a few hundred pounds in lost charges.

Mr P Roos asked why it was continually being stated that changes to bin collections will/could go to 3 weekly. He stated that he lived in a block of 26 flats with almost 50 people. The flats had 4 recycle bins and 4 general waste bins and that these got full on fortnightly collections and worse still when tenants move out and new ones move in. He stated missed bin collections were a frequent occurrence, with Fridays being the collection day and if they were missed it was not possible to report it until Monday and then if lucky a clean-up crew might come by the following Friday, and it was therefore unacceptable to even think about going from 2-week to 3-week collections.

Councillor M Warren, Chair of the Environment and Communities Committee, responded that the Environment and Communities Committee had approved the move from two to three weekly residual waste (black bin) collections at its meeting in November 2024. This change would be implemented in parallel with the introduction of weekly food waste collections, which are mandated by legislation to be offered to all households from April 2026. Cllr Warren stated that as part of the same proposal residents would see an increased level of service related to missed bins which would mean that the Council would return within three working days rather than the five days the policy states now. The Council would continue to closely monitor the performance of the service as the changes to waste collection frequencies are implemented.

Mrs V Scaresbrook, speaking on behalf of Congleton Sustainable Travel, which is part of the Congleton Climate Action Group, asked if council members and officers were aware that Council continued to contravene the law, namely the Equality Act 2010? She stated that the Council's shortcomings in equality issues were highlighted last year, by the Local Government Association's Peer Challenge report and that her group was very aware of this weakness. She stated that if the Council had an effective Equality and Inclusion Strategy, then volunteers would not be fighting various departments over existing obstructions to those on foot, with pushchairs, or using mobility aids and that if the Council took note of the law, many would not be so disadvantaged when going about their daily lives. She asked if the Council were preparing the new 2025-29 strategy and requested that it would be precisely written with clear direction, so that officers and members understand that their decisions and implementations complied with equality laws.

Councillor N Mannion, Leader of the Council, responded that the Equality Act 2010 legally protected people from discrimination in both the workplace and in wider society. The Public Sector Equality Duty meant that bodies like Cheshire East Council had to consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, such as shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to our own employees, and that the Council took this responsibility very seriously. He stated he was aware that Mrs

Scaresbrook had raised formal complaints about some specific street furniture, railings and bollards in Congleton, which Mrs Scaresbrook consider to be an obstruction for people with mobility aids such as scooters and that the Council had agreed to remove one set of railings which although not considered urgent would be scheduled into the work programme for completion before the end of March. It was not the intention of the Council to be discriminatory and it needed to ensure the safety of all users as well as our responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Council was developing a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy once the new Cheshire East Plan has been approved.

Mr R Douglas stated that based on the Council's own figures the total S106 monies potentially outstanding from developers was £93.9 million. Many, if not most, of these monies were indexed for inflation, so, that total must surely exceed £ 100 million. Of this £79 million related to agreements signed before 2020. He asked now much of the £93.9 million had now been paid. He stated that the Council had advised that a new software system had been introduced to monitor Agreements more effectively and a key priority is to monitor and recover any overdue monies and asked why the software had not been used to recover the £800,000 from Stewart Milne in respect of the Thistle Way development before the developer went into administration in January 2024.

In response, Councillor M Warren, Chair of Environment and Communities Committee, stated that the Council had introduced a system to record s106 agreements to increase effectiveness and efficiency of monitoring of those agreements and significant progress had been made in transferring previously held information onto this system. The potential outstanding figure of £93.9m was no longer relevant and had been superseded because of the ongoing work and the ever-changing flow of monies received or spent. The new potential outstanding figure was £166.2m but that figure included all sites including those that have not started development. At present there was £52.5m in agreements where development had not yet started. Total monies paid to the Council was £100.7m with £94.9m allocated to actual projects, £55.5m of which had already been spent in delivery of those schemes. Officers were continuing work to allocate all received funding to viable projects. Outstanding monies totalled £9.8m, which were being pursued as a priority, using legal enforcement powers as appropriate, and there was £20.5m attached to sites now under construction which were currently being targeted.

Mr M Unett stated that S106 monies were important for improving communities, education, healthcare, provision of services or a particular piece of infrastructure. He stated that he believed that Alsager alone had over £800k in S106 monies, which if not spent in a certain period the developer could claim back. He asked if the relevant member of the administration or relevant officers could meet with him and other Alsager representatives to discuss the unspent S106 monies, receive regular updates and get the process started to utilise the S106 monies.

Councillor M Warren, Chair of Environment and Communities Committee, in response stated that he would provide a written response and engage with Mr Unett regarding the requested meeting.

Ms S Helliwell referred to speculative planning applications being put in across Cheshire East and asked if the Council had a 5-year housing land supply and, if the Council had not removed sites from the SADPD adopted in 2024, what would the housing supply be now. Ms Helliwell referred to the announcement that the Council would no longer be funding My Cheshire Without Abuse from 31 March and asked what involvement did the Chair and/or the Children and Families Committee have in the ending of the My Cheshire Without Abuse Contract.

In response, Councillor M Warren, Chair of Environment and Communities Committee, stated that based on the increased housing targets within the new national planning policy and the status of the existing housing land allocations in the current Local Plan the Borough no longer had a 5-year housing land supply. He stated that this position was not exclusive to Cheshire East but would be addressed as the Council continued the process of developing and ultimately adopting a new Local Plan over the next few years. The removal of a small number of housing allocations from the draft SADPD would not have made any material difference to the current supply situation.

Councillor C Bulman, Chair of Children and Families Committee, responded as there were a number of questions relating to domestic abuse, she would respond to all the questions in one response.

Ms L Lancaster spoke of her experience of domestic violence and the support she and her daughter had received from MyCWA and asked that the Council continue funding the services they provided.

Ms S Parr asked what advocacy services would be provided for clients if the domestic abuse services were brought in house?

Ms A Blake stated that she was a survivor of domestic abuse and spoke about the support she had received from MyCWA and asked how the Council planned to effectively replace these indispensable services and continue to provide the holistic, compassionate support that MyCWA has consistently delivered.

Ms A Young referred to the Council and Councillor Bulman's statement on 17 January 2025 outlining that the new domestic abuse service provision from April 2025 would provide a "robust suite of in-house services" that offer "comprehensive" support to the whole family including perpetrators of domestic abuse. She asked if any clarity could be provided upon why the recent domestic abuse strategy delivery plan that had been shared with partner agencies outlined an external provider as responsible for the behaviour change interventions moving forward and why My CWA were not given the opportunity to bid for this contract.

Mr M Young referred to the decision to not extend the MyCWA contract to provide refuge provision and domestic abuse services and stated that Councillor Bulman was on record confirming that the correct democratic process had been followed by a cross-party committee with a decision being made at the November 2023 Children and Families Committee meeting. He stated that he had reviewed all minutes since November 2023 to date and listened to all recordings of the above committee and could find no evidence of this. The only comments appeared to be at the last committee meeting where a number of councillors raised concerns over the process that had been followed with suggested improvements for future decisions. He stated that he had asked to be provided with any minutes or relevant briefing papers and had not received a response.

In response Councillor C Bulman, Chair of Children and Families Committee, responded that Third Sector organisations played an important part in the provision of local services, and the Council recognised the valuable work MyCWA and other partners continued to provide in the region, alongside our own Cheshire East staff and partners. MyCWA had a contract with the Council for safe accommodation alongside a contractual number of interventions to support standard/medium risk perpetrators, adult victims and children. This contract came to an end in March 2024 and was then extended for two 6-month periods until March 2025. All partners were aware that the extension was in place to allow for the new Domestic Abuse Strategy to be developed, in light of the gaps in provision highlighted by the extensive Needs Assessment commissioned during 2023. The Council would always be required to review contracts and the services they offered as those contracts came to the end of their term. This was the everyday work of commissioners and lead officers. There continued to be weekly meetings to manage the transition between MyCWA and officers.

Councillor Bulman continued by saying that moving forward, following the contract with MyCWA coming to an end on 1 April 2025, the support for standard/medium risk adults and children would be offered through an integrated provision, offering group and one-to-one support based within local community buildings delivered directly by the Council. She stated that this may be supplemented by external commissions, but this was subject to development of service delivery models. Support was offered via statutory and voluntary services in addition to the dedicated domestic abuse service. Those that were suitable to receive medium risk support (and therefore did not meet Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference criteria) would continue to have support from the Council's in-house Domestic Abuse Family Safety Unit Medium Risk Independent Domestic Violence Advocate/Advisor team and would be offered group and one-to-one recovery work. The Council had qualified staff to deliver behaviour change interventions (known as the Engage provision) and also offer a High risk/High harm DRIVE intervention programme. The Council was not the only commissioner of services for behaviour change work and MyCWA

would continue to deliver across Cheshire as commissioned by other public bodies.

Councillor Bulman stated that services that the Council have previously commissioned MyCWA to provide did not include delivery of all aspects of homelessness support, addiction services or food and clothing banks. MyCWA was a charity and may provide these services in their own right under contract to other public sector organisations or third-party funders, but this delivery was separate from and not funded by the work they did under contract to Cheshire East Council. All of these additional services were available locally through other providers, and the Council shared information about all the options available on the Council's Livewell website.

Councillor Bulman continued by stating that within housing legislation any individual/family fleeing Domestic Abuse could approach any Council for assistance irrespective of whether or not they had a local connection to that Council. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced new duties on Councils to ensure that all victims of domestic abuse and their children could access the right support in safe accommodation. Cheshire East Housing had a clear Domestic Abuse Policy which set out how the Council would support survivors of domestic abuse. The Council had dedicated officers who would work with victims/survivors, and they would assess their circumstances and provide temporary accommodation whilst this was carried out. This could be temporary accommodation (owned by Cheshire East), supported accommodation or other specialist domestic abuse refuge out of area. Cheshire East Housing had access to the Gold Book which was the national refuge online service where they can see current refuge vacancies and make referrals. Officers work closely with the Cheshire East Domestic Abuse service and link with them to get further specialist advice, information, and support. In addition to the housing offer, the Council provided a range of services specifically for victims of domestic abuse and currently commissioned some provision externally, including safe accommodation. It was this additional offer that the Council commissioned MyCWA to meet, in conjunction with the internal services within Housing and DAFSU (Domestic Abuse Family Safety Unit). Following the contract coming to an end in March 2024 and during the extended two 6-month periods, until March 2025 there was an open Procurement process (in which MyCWA was involved), for the safe accommodation contract which unfortunately failed, due to a provider withdrawing from the process prior to award. The Council was meeting with the current provider on a weekly basis, as well as internal partners, to consider all available options for ongoing delivery of the service. The current tenants would be secure in their accommodation and the main focus would be on ensuring current and future safe accommodation clients' needs were met.

77 LEADER'S AND DEPUTY LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader, in summary:

- 1 thanked those who had shared their experiences with domestic violence and committed to improving services for victims and their families.
- 2 announced that Councillor Anthony Harrison had been appointed as the Armed Forces Member Champion.
- 3 reported that Councillor Anna Burton had been a finalist for the National Association of Local Councillors' Staff Award, which was a notable achievement for a newly elected councillor.
- 4 reported that the Council continued to make good progress with the Transformation Programme.
- 5 reported that key senior management appointments had been made with the appointment of the Executive Director of Resources (s151) being on the agenda for the meeting.
- 6 reported that the Assurance Panel was providing ongoing oversight on the recommendations from the Peer Challenge and that regular meetings were held between council leaders and LGA colleagues. Out of the 73 recommendations, 35 were now completed with further formal feedback due in coming weeks.
- 7 reported that the Ofsted monitoring visit on the Children's Services was underway with the Inspectors monitoring and reporting on progress since the inspection. They would also check that performance in other areas had not declined since the inspection.
- 8 reported that projected supported by the Future High Street Fund and Towns Fund were due to be completed soon. Work was progressing well with the Cheshire Family History Centre on the old library site in Crewe and the refurbishment of Macclesfield Indoor Market was expected to be completed by mid-2025.
- 9 reported that the Government was progressing devolution across England and that Cheshire East Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council and Warrington Council had successfully submitted an expression of interest for a new strategic authority and, if approved, would see the election for a Mayor in May 2026.
- 10 encouraged all councillors to actively involve their communities in the devolution consultation process.

The Deputy Leader, in summary:

- 1 reported that a recent LGA survey found that 80% of councillors nationally had experienced harassment or abuse, including face-to-face, by mail, or online. A Member Reference Group had been set

up which had commissioned a survey to gather details of harassment and abuse suffered by Cheshire East Council Members and the results would be used to help develop support policies. He encouraged all councillors to complete the survey.

- 2 reported that the Council in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions JobCentre Plus team would be hosting a jobs fair on 27 February 2025 in the Crewe Market Hall.
- 3 reported that the Council had launched a consultation on the Local Transport Plan, which was open for responses until 21 April 2025.
- 4 stated that from 31 March 2025 there would be an hourly service on bus routes 391/392 between Poynton and Stockport, and the reintroduced 71/72/73 Nantwich rural services would provide Nantwich, Wrenbury and Audlem with a direct bus connection to Leighton Hospital.
- 5 reported that he and the Leader had met with the Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust to discuss the £1.2 billion Healthier Futures campus at Leighton Hospital, aimed at improving health, education, jobs, and community connections.
- 6 reported that he and the Leader had met with Cheshire West and Chester, Warrington and Greater Manchester leaders to discuss transport developments, particularly in rail.
- 7 reported that the Council would be launching a prospectus for Crewe Hub, initially at the UK Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum conference in May, to promote its 360° connectivity and its major investment opportunities.
- 8 reported that the Local Government and English Devolution minister, Jim McMahon, had visited Ellesmere Port on 13 February and had met with the leaders of Cheshire East Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council and Warrington Council to discuss plans for devolution in the region.
- 9 reported that Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington had secured £9m for their new Skills Bootcamp programme, which would help to provide technical training for over 2,600 learners.
- 10 reported that he had recently visited Middlewich, Congleton and Nantwich Town Councils and invited town and parish councils to invite him to meet with them.
- 11 highlighted that 'Rock the Civic 2' live music event was taking place at Nantwich Civic Hall on Friday 28 February 2025.

**78 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE:
MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2025/26-2028/29**

The Corporate Policy Committee, at its meeting on 6 February 2025, had considered a report on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for Cheshire East Council for 2025-2029.

The Corporate Policy Committee had recommended to Council the recommendations set out on page 23 and 24 of the agenda pack.

It was reported that the table in paragraph 2.4 on page 91 of the agenda pack and the revenue budget summary table on page 136 of the agenda pack had been revised and circulated to Members.

Following debate, the recommendations were put to the vote, and in accordance with legislation, a recorded vote was carried out with the following results:

FOR

Councillors L Anderson, S Bennett-Wake, J Bird, L Braithwaite, J Bratherton, M Brooks, C Browne, L Buchanan, C Bulman, A Burton, C Chapman, D Clark, A Coiley, N Cook, S Corcoran, L Crane, B Drake, D Edwardes, K Edwards, M Edwards, H Faddes, E Gilman, M Goldsmith, M Gorman, C Hilliard, M Houston, D Jefferay, N Mannion, G Marshall, A Moran, R Moreton, J Place, J Priest, B Puddicombe, J Rhodes, H Seddon, G Smith, J Snowball, R Vernon, M Warren, F Wilson and B Wye.

AGAINST

Councillors S Adams, R Bailey, M Beanland, D Brown, R Chadwick, J Clowes, T Dean, S Edgar, R Fletcher, A Gage, S Gardiner, K Hague, E Hall, A Harrison, G Hayes, A Heler, S Holland, T Jackson, R Kain, A Kolker, R Morris, H Moss, M Muldoon, C O'Leary, J Pearson, B Posnett, J Pratt, P Redstone, J Saunders, M Sewart, L Smetham, John Smith, Julie Smith, L Smith, L Wardlaw, H Whitaker and J Wray.

The motion was declared carried with 42 votes for, 37 against and 0 not voting.

RESOLVED: That Council:

1. note the report of the Council's Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer), contained within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy report, regarding the robustness of estimates and level of reserves held by the Council based on these budget proposals (as set out in Appendix A to the report, Section 2, Section 25 Statement).
2. approve the Revenue estimates for the 2025/26 budget (as set out in Appendix A to the report, Section 2, Overview) and the medium-term Capital Programme estimates 2025-2029, as detailed in the

Medium-Term Financial Strategy report 2025-2029 (as set out in Appendix A to the report, Section 2, Capital budget).

3. approve the setting of Band D Council Tax of £1,882.04 representing an increase of 4.99%. This is below the referendum limit (including 2% ringfenced for Adult Social Care) and arises from the provisional finance settlement (as set out in Appendix A to the report, Section 1, Key Funding Assumptions).
4. approve the utilisation of up to £25.3m conditional Exceptional Financial Support (Capitalisation Direction) via borrowing to balance the 2025/26 budget shortfall (as reflected in Appendix A to the report, Section 2, Balancing the Budget) and to delegate to the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) to review the basis of funding through the 2025/26 year and report to the appropriate committee any recommended change to the funding basis of the Exceptional Financial Support. The 2024/25 planned use of Flexible Capital Receipts is increased to £1.518m, an increase of £0.518m from the £1m approved in the 2024-28 Medium-Term Financial Strategy Report to fund transformational projects within the Council (as set out in Appendix A to the report, Section 1, Key Funding Assumptions).
5. approve the 2025/26 planned use of Flexible Capital Receipts as £1.0m (as set out in Appendix A to the report, Annex 5, Section 3).
6. approve the allocation of Revenue Grant Funding for 2025/26 of £397.080m (as set out in Appendix A to the report, Annex 3), and delegates authority to the Chief Finance Officer, to approve supplementary estimates if the value of any named grant changes from the figures contained within Appendix A, Annex 3 (noting that all such variations will subsequently be reported to the appropriate committee, and that any new, previously unnamed, grants are subject to approval in-line with the Constitution).
7. approve the allocation of Capital Grant Funding for 2025/26 of £99.122m (as set out in Appendix A to the report, Annex 4), and delegates authority to the Chief Finance Officer, to approve supplementary estimates if the value of any named grant changes from the figures contained within Appendix A, Annex 4 (noting that all such variations will subsequently be reported to the appropriate committee, and that any new, previously unnamed, grants are subject to approval in-line with the Constitution).
8. approve the Capital Strategy (as set out in Appendix A to the report, Annex 5).
9. approve the Prudential Indicators for Capital Financing (as set out in Appendix A to the report, Annex 5).

10. approve the Investment Strategy; including the financial limits for various classifications of investment, and the investment decision making process set out in the Strategy (as set out in Appendix A to the report, Annex 6).
11. approve the Treasury Management Strategy (as set out in Appendix A to the report, Annex 7) and the Minimum Revenue Position Statement for 2025/26 to 2028/29 (as set out in Appendix A to the report, Annex 5) which includes a change in the Minimum Revenue Position Policy, with effect from 1 April 2024.
12. approve the Reserves Strategy (as set out in Appendix A to the report, Annex 8), which includes proposed movements to and from reserves.
13. note that the Corporate Policy Committee considered the Budget Engagement exercise undertaken by the Council, as set out in Appendix B to the report, and the results contained within that report.

79 COUNCIL TAX STATUTORY RESOLUTION

Consideration was given to a report relating to the setting of the Council Tax for 2025/26

As a billing authority Cheshire East Council was responsible for the billing and collection of Council Tax from local taxpayers and must, therefore, make a resolution to set the overall Council Tax level. This meant the Authority also collected Council Tax income to cover not only its own services but also precepts set by other authorities.

The Council Tax levied was therefore made up of four elements:-

- Cheshire East Borough Council
- Town & Parish Council precepts
- Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire precept
- Cheshire Fire Authority precept.

The motion in respect of the setting of the Council Tax was proposed and seconded. Following debate, in accordance with legislation a recorded vote was carried out in respect to this item, with the following results: -

FOR

Councillors L Anderson, S Bennett-Wake, J Bird, L Braithwaite, J Bratherton, M Brooks, C Browne, L Buchanan, C Bulman, A Burton, C Chapman, D Clark, A Coiley, N Cook, S Corcoran, L Crane, B Drake, D Edwardes, K Edwards, M Edwards, H Faddes, E Gilman, M Goldsmith, M Gorman, C Hilliard, M Houston, D Jefferay, N Mannion, G Marshall, A Moran, R Moreton, J Place, J Priest, B Puddicombe, J Rhodes, H Seddon, G Smith, J Snowball, R Vernon, M Warren, F Wilson and B Wye.

AGAINST

Councillors S Adams, R Bailey, M Beanland, D Brown, R Chadwick, J Clowes, T Dean, S Edgar, A Gage, S Gardiner, K Hague, E Hall, A Harrison, G Hayes, A Heler, S Holland, T Jackson, R Kain, A Kolker, R Morris, H Moss, M Muldoon, C O'Leary, J Pearson, B Posnett, J Pratt, P Redstone, J Saunders, M Sewart, L Smetham, John Smith, Julie Smith, L Smith, L Wardlaw, H Whitaker and J Wray.

NOT VOTEING

Councillor R Fletcher

The motion was declared carried with 42 votes for, 36 against and 1 not voting.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1 approves a Council Tax for Cheshire East Council for the financial year 2025/26, at £307,263,921 in accordance with the formal resolutions as set out in paragraphs 20-24 of the report, as follows:

Formal Resolution

- 1 That it be noted that on 11 December 2024 the Council calculated the Council Tax base 2025/26.

(a) for the whole Council area as 163,261.10 (item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")).

(b) for individual parishes, as in Appendix A.

- 2 Calculated that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2025/26 (excluding Parish precepts) is £307,263,921.

- 3 That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2025/26 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

a. £895,825,778 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.

b. £575,740,023 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.

c. £320,085,755 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council

Tax requirement for the year (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).

- d. £1,960.58 being the amount at 3(c) above divided by the amount at 1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
- e. £12,821,834 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act
- f. £1,882.04 being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by the amount at 1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.
- g. **Appendix A** being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulations 3 and 6 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its total council tax base for the year and council tax base for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.
- h. **Appendix B** being the amounts given by adding to the amount at (f) above, the amounts of special items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided by in each case the appropriate tax base from Appendix A, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34(3) of the 1992 Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of the area to which one or more special items relate. (Band D charges for each Parish area).
- i. **Appendix C** being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at (h) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the 1992 Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the 1992 Act,

as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands (Local charges for all Bands).

j. **Appendix D** being the aggregate of the local charges in (i) above and the amounts levied by major precepting authorities, calculated in accordance with Section 30(2) of the 1992 Act (The total Council Tax charge for each band in each Parish area).

4 note that the Police & Crime Commissioner and the Fire Authority have issued precepts to Cheshire East Council in accordance with section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as shown in paragraphs 17 and 18 of the report.

5 accepts that Cheshire East Council's basic amount of Council tax for 2025/26 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB and 52ZC of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

2 notes that the Council Tax precept of Cheshire Fire Authority, Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire and each Town and Parish Council have been approved and notified to the Council in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by sections 72 to 79 of the Localism Act 2011.

3 notes the average Council Tax for the Cheshire East Borough is £2,332.61 in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by sections 72 to 79 of the Localism Act 2011.

80 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE: CHESHIRE EAST CORPORATE PLAN 2025-29**

Consideration was given to the recommendations from the Corporate Policy Committee on 6 February 2025 in relation to the Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2025-2029.

RESOLVED:

That Council approve the Cheshire East Plan 2025-29, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

**81 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE:
SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT: CHESHIRE AND
WARRINGTON DEVOLUTION**

Consideration was given to the recommendations from the Corporate Policy Committee on 6 February 2025 in relation to Supporting Effective Engagement: Cheshire and Warrington Devolution.

It was reported that there was an error in the Cheshire and Warrington Committee Terms of Reference, on page 349 of the agenda pack, and that in paragraph 5 the period for CEC should read with track change “CEC (until May 202~~7~~8)”.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1 approve the expansion of the membership of Member Reference Group to include the Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group. This will increase its membership to seven.
- 2 approve the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group to attend as a substitute to the Member Reference Group, in the event that the Leader of the Group cannot.
- 3 the Member Reference Group continues to provide guidance and advice towards identifying a devolution proposal for Cheshire and Warrington, enabling officers to further progress opportunities and discussions with government officials.
- 4 delegate authority to the Member Reference Group to make any further amendments its membership, such amendments to be approved by a majority of the members of the Member Reference Group.
- 5 The Terms of Reference for the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee be amended to extend the rotation of the current Chair (Cheshire West and Chester Council) for a further 12 months to May 2026 and amend accordingly the dates for the following rotations by the same period, including the Vice Chair, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

**82 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE:
PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2025-26**

Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Corporate Policy Committee in respect of the Pay Policy Statement for 2025/26.

The Corporate Policy Committee, at its meeting on 6 February 2025, had considered the draft Pay Policy Statement and resolved that Council be recommended to approve the Pay Policy Statement 2025/26 and that any

in-year changes be approved by the Monitoring Officer and published accordingly.

RESOLVED: That

- 1 the Pay Policy Statement for 2025/26 be approved; and
- 2 any in-year changes be approved by the Monitoring Officer and published accordingly.

**83 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE:
CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2025-2026**

Consideration was given to the recommendations from the Corporate Policy Committee on 6 February 2025 in relation to the Calendar of Meetings for the municipal year 2025/26.

RESOLVED: That Council agrees

- 1 the approval of the Calendar of Meeting for Cheshire East Council for the municipal year 2025-26 and notes the draft Calendar for June to October 2026.
- 2 that the start times for morning meetings, excluding full Council, be 10.30 am.
- 3 that each committee determine whether their committee meetings during the 2025-26 municipal year should include twilight meetings, which should start no earlier than 5.30 pm.

**84 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE:
APPROVAL OF SUPPLEMENTARY REVENUE ESTIMATES**

Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Finance Sub Committee on 9 January 2025 in relation to the Supplementary Revenue Estimates for the allocation of additional grant funding over £1m, as set out in Annex 1, Section 3, Tables 1 to the report.

RESOLVED: That Council approve the following Supplementary Revenue Estimates for the allocation of additional grant funding:

- | | | |
|---|---|------------|
| 1 | Children and Families –
Dedicated Schools Grant | £1,089,000 |
| 2 | Economy and Growth –
Enterprise Cheshire Warrington
Skills Bootcamp | £1,717,000 |

**85 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE:
APPOINTMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RESOURCES (S151)**

Consideration was given to the recommendation of the Appointments Committee held on 13 February 2025 in relation to the appointment of the Executive Director Resources (s151).

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1 approve the recommendation of the Appointments Committee that Ashely Hughes be appointed as Cheshire East Council's Executive Director Resources (s151) as the Chief Finance Officer at an annual salary of £142,951 (CX3) at a date to be confirmed.
- 2 note that the Appointments Committee has decided not to proceed with the appointment to the role of Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer.

86 AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

Cllr Michael Beanland, Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee, presented the Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2023/24 to Council.

The report provided details of the work undertaken by the Committee and the assurances received during that year.

The Annual Report was received and noted.

87 SWIMMING POOL SUPPORT FUND GRANT ACCEPTANCE

Having previously declared an interest Councillors L Anderson, L Buchanan, A Kolker and B Wye left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Consideration was given to the report requesting the acceptance of a capital grant from Sport England's Swimming Pool Support Fund to fund energy efficiency measures across three leisure centres within Cheshire East.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1 accept a capital grant of £625,933 from Sport England's Swimming Pool Support Fund – Phase 2 to fund energy efficiency investments at Crewe Lifestyle Centre, Macclesfield Leisure Centre and Bollington Leisure Centre.
- 2 approve supplementary capital estimates of £365,235 to Crewe Lifestyle Centre SPSF and £209,961 to Macclesfield Leisure Centre SPSF.

- 3 note that a supplementary capital estimate for Bollington Leisure Centre was approved in November 2024 and noted by the Environment and Communities Committee in January 2024.

88 DELIVERY PROPOSAL FOR THE HOLIDAY ACTIVITY AND FOOD PROGRAMME FOR 2025/26

Consideration was given to the report requesting the acceptance of a grant for the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Programme Delivery for 2025/26.

The Council had been allocated £908,330 of HAF funding. As £900,000 was included in the MTFS 2025/26 budget, Council was being asked to approve a supplementary revenue estimate of £8,330.

The Mayor proposed and it was agreed that recommendation 1 be amended to commence with “To accept the grant and ...”.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1 accept the grant and approve the supplementary revenue estimate of £8,330, which is above the estimated value of £900,000 in the 2025/26 budget.
- 2 approve the extension of the delivery model of Holiday Activity and Food for a further year in line with the proposals set out in the report.
- 3 delegate authority to the Executive Director Children Services to incur expenditure in line with the grant conditions.

89 NOMINATION OF MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR FOR THE 2025-26 CIVIC YEAR

Consideration was given to the nominations for the office of Mayor and Deputy Mayor for 2025/26.

Mayor for 2025/26

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor David Edwardes should become Mayor Elect for 2025/26.

Councillor Edwardes declared an interest in respect of this item and left the Chamber during its consideration.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor David Edwardes be designated as the Mayor Elect with a view to their formal election and appointment as Mayor for Cheshire East for 2025/26, at the Mayor Making ceremony to be held on 14 May 2025.

Councillor Edwardes returned to the meeting.

Deputy Mayor for 2025/26

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Judy Snowball be designated as Deputy Mayor Elect.

Councillor Snowball declared an interest in respect of this item and left the Chamber during its consideration.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Judy Snowball be designated as the Deputy Mayor Elect, with a view to their formal election and appointment as Deputy Mayor for Cheshire East for 2025/26, at the Mayor Making ceremony to be held on 14 May 2025.

Councillors Snowball returned to the meeting.

90 NOTICES OF MOTION

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

Motion 1 From Exceptional Weather Events to Securing Telecare Services: Meeting the Challenges presented by the Analogue to Digital Upgrade by 2027

Proposed by Councillor J Clowes and Seconded by Councillor A Kolker

"At December's Full Council Meeting, a question was raised regarding the loss of power and digital communications for significant periods during Storm Darragh on the 6th – 9th December 2024.

Whilst many areas experienced power outages, they were most extreme in more rural and remote areas of the borough.

It highlighted that analogue landlines that had already been converted to digital systems failed as soon as the power failed. Mobile phone batteries failed a short time into the power outages which in some cases lasted 2 – 3 days.

These areas are also more vulnerable to intermittent power outages caused by aging and vulnerable power infrastructure, by digital "black spots", poor reception and slower broadband speeds.

Nonetheless, the national digital upgrade continues apace and is due to be completed during 2027.

Whilst the Council Leader and Chairs of relevant committees acknowledged these problems at the December Council Meeting and identified potential strategies to address them, a more formal, multi-agency approach is urgently required, to bring these forward in the limited time-frame available.

The Government has now recognised this issue in relation to telecare services. *“...old landlines are still vital lifelines for very many people, including users of telecare, and it is crucial that we take people through the digital phone switchover safely. Upwards of 2 million people in the UK use telecare - the most common example being personal alarm pendants or buttons that many of us have seen family members use - and most of these telecare devices have historically relied on the analogue landline network”.*

“Telecare users have been identified as being at risk during the digital phone switchover, with past serious incidents underscoring the importance of safeguarding these individuals”. (DHSC: 11.02.2025)

Working collaboratively and closely with stakeholders from across the telecommunications and adult social care sectors, a new Telecare National Action Plan was launched on 11th February 2025.

“Helping people to stay independent in their own homes, joining up services and improving the quality of care is essential to the future of Social Care. Technology enabled care (TEC) plays an important part in achieving this. The action plan sets out our vision for how to transition telecare provision into a modern, digital and resilient part of adult social care. The migration to digital telephone networks will lay the foundations for a next generation of telecare services so that care is personalised and preventative.” (DHSC: 11.02.2025)

This approach is not just a national requirement but is a necessity for Cheshire East Council, if it is to take control of social care expenditure and bring spiralling care costs under control.

It is therefore proposed that this Council moves:

1. To implement the National Telecare Action Plan and its outcomes as follows:
 - no telecare user will be migrated to digital landline services without the communication provider, the customer or the telecare service provider confirming that the user has a compatible and functioning telecare solution in place
 - use of analogue telecare devices is phased out to ensure that only digital devices are being used
 - telecare users, their support networks and their service providers understand what actions they need to take
 - stakeholders collaborate to safeguard telecare users through the digital phone switchover

2. That the data acquired through implementation of the Telecare Action Plan is recognised as the baseline for further work with other vulnerable residents:
 - to identify those communities with no/poor digital access (black spots).
 - to identify other vulnerable residents (eg older residents, residents still dependent on analogue phones, residents dependent of 2G and 3G that are also being phased out) and expand the data base.
3. To design and distribute a Residents' Safety Toolkit – providing advice, guidance and practical support, to enable residents to better prepare for periods of power or signal outages.
4. To lobby Government to further invest in those areas that have little or no digital access, in particular to ensure that residents in rural or otherwise isolated areas are not excluded from accessing effective digital services that would enable them to stay in their own homes for longer.
5. Work with NALC, CHALC, Town and Parish Councils to develop their own Local Resilience Plans, utilising local knowledge and skills to further mitigate the impacts of extreme weather events or other local, critical incidents.”

RESOLVED:

That the Motion be referred to the Adults and Health Committee.

91 QUESTIONS

Cllr Arthur Moran asked if information could be provided on the grant which Cheshire East has received to plant a new woodland near Nantwich.

Cllr Mick Warren, Chair of Environment and Communities Committee, responded that the Council had been awarded around £478,000 as part of Trees for Climate grant to plant two new woodlands near Nantwich and Cranage. This project would help the Council to beat its target to offset 37,500 tonnes of CO².

Cllr Chris Hilliard asked when the construction of the Handforth to Wilmslow Active Travel Route would commence and finish.

In response Cllr Mark Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, stated that Active Travel England, who provided funding for this project, had agreed in principle to the plans for the scheme, from Handforth Train Station to Style Road in Wilmslow. The route would connect the two towns and integrate with wider cycle routes. The design would soon go out to public consultation. Local cycling schemes and Town Councils had already been consulted and were supportive.

Installation was being scheduled for the 2025 school summer holidays to limit disruption, with final works to complete in 2026.

Cllr Andrew Kolker referred to the prevalence of Bird Flu in Cheshire East and asked if the Public Health Team could issue a notice to all Councillors on what residents should do, and how to keep safe if they found a sick or dead bird.

Cllr Jill Rhodes, Chair of Adults and Health Committee, agreed to ask the Public Health Team to provide a written response.

Cllr Chris O'Leary stated that the B5470 Macclesfield Road had been closed for some time, and investigations were ongoing to identify what caused the road to collapse. In the meantime, several businesses along the road were being adversely affected as were local farmers and parents doing the school run. Cllr O'Leary sought assurance that once the Council knew what happened, that immediate action would be taken to repair and reopen the Macclesfield Road.

In response from Cllr Mark Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, stated the dealing with the collapse of the road was technically complex, with 3 phases to resolving the issue - ground investigations, design and construction. The Council was working hard to understand the causes of the failure and were currently undertaking ground investigations of the embankment and surrounding area. This would inform the design and delivery of the solution. A solution would be delivered as soon as it was practicable. The Council had a web page dedicated to the issue, which would be updated with a programme of work as soon as a solution had been identified.

Cllr Rod Fletcher asked if the Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee could provide information on how much income had been received from the Well Lane car park in Alsager between 2 December 2024 and 2 March 2025.

In response from Cllr Mark Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee stated he would provide a written response after 2 March 2025.

Cllr Lata Anderson stated that the main road through Wilmslow, MacLean Way, was resurfaced in 2024 but within weeks it was damaged with loose stones on the surface. Highways had confirmed that they would be sweeping the road surface and assurances were given that the road would be resurfaced again. She asked when the resurfacing would take place and what should be done for those who had suffered damaged windscreens as a result of the loose stones on the road.

Cllr Mark Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee responded that repair work was due to be carried out in April / May 2025, and that claims could be made on the Council's website and that these would be reviewed by an independent claims company.

Cllr David Jefferay stated that for the past two years in late March, a car park in Wilmslow had been used by members of the Iranian community to celebrate the Iranian Festival of Nature. Whilst the visitors were welcome, it had previously caused issues with traffic congestion, unsafe parking, public toilet provision, and overflowing bins. He asked if Cheshire East could provide support for this event, such as traffic officers, temporary toilets, rubbish skips, liaison with police, and enforcement officers.

Cllr Mick Warren, Chair of Environment and Communities Committee, undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr Brian Puddicombe stated that parking outside schools at pick up and drop off times could be chaotic and potentially dangerous. He stated that the Safe Haven Pilot Parking scheme had chosen four schools in Macclesfield and asked if the Chair of Highways and Transport Committee could explain how the schools were chosen, what was the cost to Cheshire East Council, where would the revenue from fines be spent, and how were parents being encouraged to use more Active Travel means to get their children to school.

In response from Cllr Mark Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, stated that a recent press release had detailed Cheshire East Council's intention to explore the benefits of using cameras to enforce school Keep Clear markings. Priority locations for the pilot had been identified from reports and monitoring from Parking Services. Contracts with service providers were being finalised. Prior to the cameras being installed there would be consultation with schools, residents, and Ward Members would be briefed in advance. The priority was to change driver behaviour, and not to generate revenue.

Cllr Fiona Wilson asked if the Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee could confirm that the pot hole funding grants from the Government have been, and would continue to be, all spent on pot holes. She also asked if the Chair could comment on the difference kind of repairs undertaken.

Cllr Mark Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, responded that it had been confirmed at the Highways and Transport Committee that all money received from the Government on pot holes was spent. There were specific rules concerning what money can be spent on different type of emergency pot hole repairs. He stated that the three levels of repair were:

Level 1 – Emergency repairs to pot holes caused by icy weather. It was common for there to be a large number of these around the Borough in a short space of time following cold wet weather, and emergency repairs were carried out on these to ensure that they do not damage vehicles where possible. These repairs were designed to make the roads as safe as possible as quickly as possible.

Level 2 and 3 – Larger resurfacing repairs and making good Level 1 repairs. These were time consuming and expensive.

Cllr Linda Buchanan stated that complaints had been received regarding the state of the road surface of the A500 from Roundabout Three to Cheerbrook Roundabout and that the road surface is peeling away causing stones to damage wind screens. She had been informed that remedial work would be carried out by the contractor in May 2025 at no cost to tax payer. Cllr Buchanan asked if the Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee could confirm that members of the public who had submitted claims for damaged windscreens as a result of the road surface issues, would not be burdened by covering legal and reimbursements costs, and these would be covered by contractor.

In response Cllr Mark Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee stated that it had been confirmed that the contractor would cover all remedial costs. The issue in question was as a result of faulty bitumen, but unfortunately the repairs could not happen until the weather warmed up in April / May 2025. In the meantime, roads were being inspected and swept. Members of the public were encouraged to report damages caused by the road surface on the Council's website.

Cllr John Bird asked what assurances Cheshire East could provide to small towns and rural communities in relation to benefits and improvements to services following devolution.

In response Cllr Michael Gorman, Chair of Economy and Growth Committee, stated that the Cheshire East Member Reference Group for Devolution would focus on integrated transport, jobs and skills, affordable housing, planning, digital isolation and the dairy industry. The rural community was a major and central focus in any devolution deal. Cheshire East also chaired a housing and regeneration working group which would look at the regeneration of towns in Cheshire East. The position of Town Councils would also be looked into in any devolution deal.

Cllr Liz Wardlaw asked how roads were repaired in colder climates.

Cllr Mark Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, responded that emergency repairs could be carried out in winter in colder weather, but they do not last well. Warmer weather in spring and summer is required for repairs in the UK.

Cllr Allen Gage referred to the statement released by the Chair of Highways and Transport Committee regarding contractor maintenance issues concerning the A500. He asked if details of the issues could be provided, and what assurances could be provided that residents would be reimbursed for any damages incurred to their vehicles.

In response Cllr Mark Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, stated that these issues had already been covered in previous questions.

Cllr Sam Corcoran stated that there has been a significant increase in house sale boards being placed on Council owned green spaces in Sandbach, which effected the looks of the area. He stated that other councils issued fines for estate agents boards on council land and asked if this could be something that the Council would consider and whether this could also be extended to vinyl signs on railings advertising businesses.

In response Cllr Mick Warren, Chair of Environment and Communities Committee, stated that he thought it was a good idea and worth investigating. Local town and parish councils could enact bylaws to remove banners from roundabouts and fences.

Cllr Mark Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, responded that there was a legal right for yellow housing development signs to be erected, but Cheshire East must approve them beforehand. The Council did not currently charge for this, but other councils did, so officers had been asked to look into this.

Cllr Kate Hague stated that the Tabley Brook Bridge had been closed due to structural damage which had led to the suspension of the bus route 89 for 12 months which was of concern to residents. The closure would also impact local roads during the Cheshire Show. The Cheshire East Flexi Bus was designed to help rural areas with poor public transport options; however, it had limited criteria for use. She asked if there were any plans to reroute the 89 bus to serve the residents of Pickmere during the bridge closure and would the Flexi Bus be used as an interim solution to this, with fares aligned. She also asked if a timeline for the bridge was to be reopened could be provided and if there were any plans to mitigate disruption in connection with the Cheshire Show.

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

92 REPORTING OF URGENT DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Council received a schedule of urgent decisions taken by the Chief Executive on behalf of the Council, which were reported for information in accordance with the Council procedure rules.

RESOLVED:

That the schedule of urgent decisions be noted.

The meeting commenced at 11.00 am and concluded at 4.55 pm

Councillor M Houston (Mayor/Chair)

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OPEN

Council

14 May 2025

Election of a Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader of the Council 2025/26

**Report of: Janet Witkowski, Acting Governance, Compliance and
Monitoring Officer**

Report Reference No: C/1/25-26

All Wards affected

For Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 To secure as a resolution of Council to elect a Leader of the Council and a Deputy Leader of the Council for the municipal year 2025/26.

Executive Summary

- 2 The Constitution states that the functions of full Council include the election of the Leader of the Council and the Deputy Leader of the Council.
- 3 The roles of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council are not formal legal roles, but they are in practice the political heads of the Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council;

- 1 Elects a Leader of the Council for the municipal year 2025/26.
- 2 Elects a Deputy Leader of the Council for the municipal year 2025/26

Background

- 4 The Annual General Meeting of the Council is required to elect a councillor to be the Leader of the Council and a councillor to be the Deputy Leader of the Council for that municipal year.
- 5 The Councillors appointed will hold these offices until:
 - (a) The next Annual Meeting of the Council; or
 - (b) The Leader or the Deputy Leader resigns from the office; or
 - (c) The Leader or the Deputy Leader is no longer a Councillor; or
 - (d) The Leader or the Deputy Leader is removed from the office by resolution of the Council requiring a simple majority, in respect of which the motion has been fully set out in the agenda for the meeting
- 6 The roles of the Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader of the Council are not formal legal roles, but in practice, these office holders are jointly the political heads of the Council, and the Members with greatest responsibility for driving forward the broad policies of the Council.
- 7 The Council expects that the Leader and Deputy Leader will
 - be the political (rather than ceremonial) leaders of the Council, for the benefit of all the Borough's Communities - its citizens, taxpayers, businesses, public bodies and other public authorities.
 - lead and work with the Council, particularly the Chairs of its Committees and Sub-Committees.
 - lead upon the development of the Council's political vision for the future, policy framework, budgets and strategies.
 - represent and pursue the interests of the Council in the community and at international, national and regional levels.
 - the Leader to serve as Chair of the Corporate Committee.
 - the Deputy Leader will be appointed as the Vice Chair of the Corporate Policy Committee of the Council
 - fulfil the role of Leader and Deputy Leader at full Council.
 - lead in providing political policy direction and guidance to the Chief Executive and Chief Officers.
 - meet regularly to progress the Council's objectives with Committee Chairs, Vice Chairs, the Chief Executive and Chief Officers, Leaders of other political groups on the Council, partner organisations, stakeholders, community representatives, government representatives, local Members of Parliament etc

- 8 The Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader of the Council shall be recognised in the following ways:
- They have the right to attend and speak at any meeting of a Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council, provided that they will only be entitled to vote if appointed as a voting member of that Committee or Sub-Committee.
 - To be available to respond to questions at Full Council meetings.
 - They establish policy direction, and the Council's priorities, and facilitate discussion thereon.
 - To be principal ambassadors for the Borough and the Council (recognising the role of the Mayor).
 - They represent the Council on external bodies, as considered appropriate, and make decisions and vote on behalf of the Council at meetings of such bodies.
 - To be involved in arrangements relating to major emergencies. They must be informed if an emergency is likely to take place or has been declared under the Council's emergency planning or business continuity procedures.
 - They promote and uphold high standards of ethical conduct by Members, and the Council's equalities policies

Reasons for Recommendations

- 9 To ensure that the Council elects a Leader and Deputy Leader.

Other Options Considered

- 10 Whilst the Council could choose not to elect a Leader or Deputy Leader, to do so would be contrary to the assumptions made in the Council's Constitution that it will do so.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 11 Under the Council's Constitution, appointment of the Leader and Deputy Leader can only be done via a decision of full Council.
- 12 As the Council operates a committee system of decision-making governance, the Leader and Deputy Leader have no formal legal powers and duties vested in them under the Local Government Act 1972, or the Local Government Act 2000. However, in practice, the Council needs to appoint to these offices, and they will be the chief advocates and ambassadors for the Borough.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 13 The positions of Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader of the Council receive a special responsibility allowance.

Policy

- 14 There are no direct policy implications

Commitment 3: An effective and enabling council

effective and responsive governance, compliance and evidence-based decision making

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 15 There are no direct implications.

Human Resources

- 16 There are no direct HR implications.

Risk Management

- 17 There is no evident risk associated with the election of a Leader and a Deputy Leader of the Council.

Rural Communities

- 18 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

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

- 19 There are no direct implications for children and young people.

Public Health

- 20 There are no direct implications for public health.

Climate Change

- 21 There are no implications relating to climate change.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Brian Reed Head of Democratic Services brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	Role of Leader and Deputy Leader

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OPEN

Council

14 May 2025

Political Representation on the Council's Committees

**Report of: Janet Witkowski, Acting Governance and Compliance
and Monitoring Officer**

Report Reference No: C/4/25-26

Ward(s) Affected: All

For Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 To report to Council changes in political group membership and to secure a resolution from Council in respect of the political proportionalities of the Council, and committee memberships.

Executive Summary

- 2 The law requires that each relevant Council decision-making body must be politically balanced as far as reasonably practicable, and that there is an appropriate total balance of Committee seats across the political structure of the Council of the whole.
- 3 This report addresses the changes in political group memberships since the last report to Council in May 2024.
- 4 At the time of writing this report, discussions had not been concluded with the Council's political groups. The Council's revised political proportionalities and the allocation of committee places had not therefore been finalised. The Appendix to this report, which will reflect the product of those discussions, will be circulated to all Members, and distributed around the Council Chamber at the Council meeting.

- 5 The report recommendations seek a resolution of Council, as required by legislation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 That the Committees, set out in the Appendix to this report, be appointed with the same functions, roles and responsibilities as are currently set out in the Constitution.
- 2 That the political group and other representation, as set out in the Appendix to this report, and the methods, calculations and conventions used in determining this, as outlined in the report, be adopted and the allocation of places to Committees be approved.

Background

- 6 The Appendix sets out the political representation on committees, this being based on the political structure of the Council as a whole.
- 7 The proportionalities in the Appendix are based, as far as is reasonably practicable, upon the following methods and conventions:
- applying the relevant percentage to each body
 - rounding up from 0.5 and above, and rounding down below 0.5
 - where rounding up would result in more than one political Group receiving an additional seat, and the total allocation of seats exceeding what is required, the Group having the lowest residual entitlement will not receive an additional seat
 - where the required number of members for a decision-making body cannot be achieved using the above methods and calculations, the political group having the largest residual entitlement for that body will be entitled to be awarded the additional place (e.g. if one group is entitled to 4.25 places, and another group is entitled to 1.48 places, the first group will be awarded 4 places on the body in question, and the second group will be awarded 2 places)
 - where two or more political Groups have an identical residual percentage, the agreement of one Group to sacrifice a seat will be observed. Alternatively, the matter will be resolved by the toss of a coin.

Consultation and Engagement

- 8 In preparation of the Appendix to this report, officers liaised with the Council's political groups.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 9 To comply with primary legislation, the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and supporting secondary legislation, Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.

Other Options Considered

- 10 Legislation requires that the Council's political representation on committees, and its political structure, be reviewed upon a change in political group membership. Whilst one option might be for the Council to take no action this is not an option which Council is advised to take.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 11 The main rules on political proportionality are set out in S. 15(5) Local Government Housing Act 1989, and they are to be applied sequentially. The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, made pursuant to the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, make additional provisions in respect of the political group and non-grouped representation on a local authority's committees, in relation to the overall political composition of the Council. The legislation applies to overview and scrutiny committees and the decision-making committees and sub committees of the Council.
- 12 The legislation requires that, where proportionality applies, and seats are allocated to different political groups, the authority must abide by the following principles, so far as is reasonably practicable:
- Not all of the seats can be allocated to the same political group (ie there are no single-group committees).
 - The majority of the seats on the body are to be allocated to a political group with a majority membership of the authority.
 - The total number of seats on all ordinary committees and sub committees allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the proportion on the full Council.
 - The proposals contained in this report meet the requirements of the legislation.
 - The 1990 Regulations require political group leaders to notify the Proper Officer of the groups' nominations to the bodies in question.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 13 There are no direct financial implications.

Policy

14 There are no direct implications for policy.

An effective and enabling Council

Effective and responsive governance, compliance and evidence-based decision making

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

15 There are no direct implications for equality.

Human Resources

16 There are no direct human resource implications.

Risk Management

17 Failure to comply with the Act and Regulations when appointing its committee memberships would leave the Council open to legal challenge.

Rural Communities

18 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

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

19 There are no direct implications for children and young people/Cared for Children.

Public Health

20 There are no direct implications for public health.

Climate Change

21 There are no direct climate change implications.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix A - Political Proportionalities
Background Papers:	The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.

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OPEN

Council

14 May 2025

**Appointment of Chairs and Vice Chairs
of Committees of the Council**

**Report of: Janet Witkowski, Acting Governance, Compliance and
Monitoring Officer**

Report Reference No: C/2/25-26

All Wards: Affected

For Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 To appoint Chairs and Vice Chairs to the Council's committees.

Executive Summary

- 2 The Constitution states that one of the functions of full Council is to appoint the Chairs and Vice Chairs to committees.
- 3 This report sets out the nominations to the positions of Chairs and Vice Chairs to the Council's committees.

<p style="text-align: center;">RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>That the offices of Chairs and Vice Chairs be allocated, as detailed in the Appendix to the report.</p>
--

Background

- 4 For the forthcoming Municipal Year there is an expectation that the Chairs and Vice Chairs of each of the Council's decision-making bodies be allocated by Council.

- 5 The Appendix to the report details the councillors who are proposed to be appointed to the positions of Chair and Vice Chair.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 6 To appoint the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Council's committees.

Other Options Considered

- 7 Whilst the Council could choose not to appoint Chairs and Vice Chairs to the Council's committees this would create an administrative burden for those committees, given that a person would have to be appointed at each meeting to preside.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 8 The Annual Meeting of the Council appoints the Council's decision-making committees. It also determines the allocations of Chairs and Vice Chairs of these bodies.
- 9 The appointment of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Committee can only be made by full Council in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 10 Some of the listed Chairs and Vice Chairs attract a Special Responsibility Allowance, in accordance with the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme.

Policy

- 11 There are no direct implications for policy.

Commitment 3: An effective and enabling council

effective and responsive governance, compliance and evidence-based decision making

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 12 There are no direct implications.

Human Resources

- 13 There are no direct implications for Human Resources.

Risk Management

- 14 Failure to comply with the requirements of the Constitution would leave the Council open to legal challenge.

Rural Communities

- 15 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

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

- 16 There are no direct implications for children and young people.

Public Health

- 17 There are no direct implications for public health.

Climate Change

- 18 There are no implications for climate change.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Brian Reed Head of Democratic Services brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix – Chairs and Vice Chairs
Background Papers:	None

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COUNCIL MEETING – 14 MAY 2025**RECOMMENDATION FROM FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE: APPROVAL OF VIREMENT****RECOMMENDATION**

That Council approve the virement of up to £8m from the central Contingency budget to the Adults and Health budget to cover inflationary pressures in 2025-26.

Extract from the minutes of the meeting of Finance Sub Committee held on 10 March 2025.

51 SERVICE BUDGETS 2025/26

The committee considered the report which set out the proposed allocation of approved budgets to each service committee, following approval of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) at Full Council on 26 February 2025.

The committee noted the recommendation to approve the virement of up to £0.7m from the central contingency budget to the children and families budget to cover inflationary pressures in 2025/26 however queried the proposal to recommend to full council the approval of the virement of up to £8m from the central contingency budget to the Adults and Health budget to cover inflationary pressures in 2025/26. The committee felt this was a significant amount and sought assurance that this was a reasonable sum to transfer at present. It was confirmed that the majority of the £8m related to people costs within contracts and packages of care and reflected the nature of the adult social care workforce.

The committee noted that the transformation programme budget lines that were held centrally by the Corporate Policy Committee, however it was anticipated that during 2025-26 these would be transferred to the services which would be responsible for delivery of the savings. It was anticipated that there would be significant savings made during 2025-26 and the committee asked at which point further detail on the proposals under transformation would be shared. It was confirmed that there would be more detailed monitoring around transformation throughout the financial reporting year to all committees as part of the usual budget management reports. It was requested that the financial timetable also included graphics, as done in previous years.

The committee took the opportunity to thank the Interim Executive Director of Resources and S151 for all her hard work during her time with Cheshire East.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Finance Sub Committee:

1. Approve allocation of the revenue and capital budgets, approved budget change items and earmarked reserves to the following committees in accordance with the approved MTFS 2025-29, as set out in Annex A.
 - Adults and Health Committee
 - Children and Families Committee
 - Corporate Policy Committee
 - Economy and Growth Committee
 - Environment and Communities Committee
 - Finance Sub Committee
 - Highways and Transport Committee
2. Approve the virement of up to £0.7m from the central Contingency budget to the Children and Families budget to cover inflationary pressures in 2025/26.
3. **Recommend to Full Council to approve the virement of up to £8m from the central Contingency budget to the Adults and Health budget to cover inflationary pressures in 2025-26.**
4. Note the draft financial reporting timetable for 2025-26 set out in Annex B.

OPEN

Finance Sub-Committee

10 March 2025

Service Budgets 2025/26

**Report of: Adele Taylor, Interim Executive Director of Resources
(s151 Officer)**

Report Reference No: FSC/20/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: All Wards

For Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report will determine the allocation of the approved budgets to each of the service committees and inform the financial reporting cycle for 2025/26.
- 2 The report contributes to the commitment of being an effective and enabling Council.

Executive Summary

- 3 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for Cheshire East Council for the four years 2025/26 to 2028/29 was approved by full Council on 26 February 2025.
- 4 Service committees will be allocated budgets for 2025/26 in line with the approved MTFS. The financial reporting cycle will provide regular updates on progress on delivery of the budget change items, the forecast outturn position, progress on capital schemes, movement on reserves and details of any supplementary estimates and virements.
- 5 Following on from the implementation in 2024/25, in addition to the usual comprehensive reporting at First, Second and Third Financial Reviews (September, November and January cycles) and in recognition of the Council's continuing challenging financial position and the importance of achieving a balanced outturn, service committee

meetings during 2025/26 will continue to receive an update report on the delivery of the approved budget change items. This will be based on the Section 2 items shown in Annex A, for each respective committee, and will include RAG-rating and accompanying commentary in respect of each item.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Finance Sub Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve allocation of the revenue and capital budgets, approved budget change items and earmarked reserves to the following Committees in accordance with the approved MTFS 2025-29, as set out in Annex A:
 - Adults & Health Committee
 - Children & Families Committee
 - Corporate Policy Committee
 - Economy & Growth Committee
 - Environment & Communities Committee
 - Finance Sub-Committee
 - Highways & Transport Committee
2. Approve the virement of up to £0.7m from the central Contingency budget to the Children and Families budget to cover inflationary pressures in 2025/26.
3. Recommend to Council to approve the virement of up to £8m, from the central Contingency budget to the Adults and Health budget to cover inflationary pressures in 2025/26.

The Finance Sub Committee is being asked to note:

4. The draft financial reporting timetable for 2025/26 set out in Annex B.

Background

- 6 All councils are legally required to set a balanced budget each year. The MTFS for 2025-29 was approved by full Council on 26 February 2025.
- 7 The MTFS includes a Report from the Chief Finance Officer in line with the Section 25(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 2003. This report confirms that the MTFS is balanced for 2025/26 with the use of Exceptional Financial Support. The report also highlights the factors

taken into account in arriving at this judgement including relevant financial issues and risks facing the Council during the medium term.

- 8 Finance Procedure Rules set limits and responsibilities for movement of funds, treating reserves as part of this overall balanced position. Any movement within this balanced position is treated as a virement. To increase the overall size of the MTFS requires a supplementary estimate, which must be backed with appropriate new funding and approved in-line with the Finance Procedure Rules.
- 9 To support accountability and financial control under the committee system the 2025/26 budget is being reported across the service committees based on their associated functions. This report sets out the allocation of the revenue and capital budgets and earmarked reserves to the relevant service committee in accordance with their functions.
- 10 Each committee function has been associated with a Director budget. Budget holders are responsible for budget management. Where a team supports multiple Directorates (most notably in Corporate Services) the budget remains with the Service Director and is not split; for example, Governance and Democratic Services budgets are aligned to the Corporate Policy Committee even though the activities of the team relate to services provided to all Directorates of the Council.
- 11 The financial alignment of budgets to each Committee is set out in Table 1 with further details in Annex A.

Table 1: Revenue and capital budgets allocated to service committees as per the approved MTFS				Capital Budget	Total Revenue and Capital Budget
Service Area	Expenditure £000	Income £000	Net Budget £000	£000	£000
Adults and Health	252,154	-92,705	159,449	389	159,838
Children and Families	107,383	-10,095	97,288	37,723	135,011
Corporate Policy	108,802	-66,014	42,788	12,745	55,533
Corporate Policy – Council Wide Transformation	-12,702	-750	-13,452		-13,452
Economy and Growth	38,144	-9,703	28,441	36,081	64,522
Environment and Communities	68,964	-23,263	45,701	19,357	65,058
Highways and Transport	28,370	-11,469	16,901	66,782	83,683
Finance Sub – Central	54,012	-3,492	50,520		50,520

Total Cost of Service	645,127	-217,491	427,636	173,077	600,713
Total Funding		-402,375	-402,375		
Exceptional Financial Support	-25,261		-25,261		
Net Position	619,866	-619,866	-		

- 12 The MTFS 2025-29 includes a net revenue budget of £402.4m and an approved capital programme of £173.0m for the financial year 2025/26. Further details on the schemes within the capital programme are provided in Annex A.
- 13 Annex A sets out the list of budget change items that were approved as part of the MTFS. All budget changes must be successfully delivered during 2025/26 to avoid a further overspend in the coming financial year. Detailed monitoring of these items will continue at every reporting opportunity and the Council's reporting 'masterplan' and committee work programmes will reflect reporting on the monitoring and delivery of all MTFS change items, including matters requiring consultation and/ or decisions. This will ensure regular reporting to Corporate Leadership Team and all service committees on implementation of the MTFS and achievement of savings, throughout the coming year. In addition to reporting at the formal 'financial review' points in the year, other progress reports will be scheduled for reporting to particular service committees, on their items as appropriate.
- 14 Annex A sets out the capital programme tables by committee. The four-year capital programme includes investment plans of around £0.6bn. It is proposed that it will be funded through a mixture of Government grants, contributions from other external partners and Council resources. During 2024/25 all schemes requiring borrowing as part of their funding have been subject to review with a view to reducing their impact on the revenue budget and this has mainly been achieved through reprofiling and some budget reductions. There remains a significant amount of borrowing required to fund the programme in 2025/26 and the Capital Programme Board will provide review of and challenge to projects with a view to reducing the revenue cost impact.
- 15 The 2025/26 budget was approved at full Council in February 2025 including the use of up to £25.3m of Exceptional Financial Support to balance the overall budget, as expenditure outweighed the income forecast. Further information on this can be found in the MTFS, Appendix A, Section 2.

Transformational savings

- 16 During 2024/25, in developing this MTFS, the Council has worked with an external partner, Inner Circle, to develop a Transformation Plan. The Transformation Plan is designed to ensure that Council can deliver sustainable services and support infrastructure projects that reflect 'whole life' costs. The production and implementation of a Transformation Plan to deliver key Council objectives and secure the medium-term financial position is also a pre-condition of MHCLG approving the Council's bid for Exceptional Financial Support.
- 17 The Transformation Plan will support the delivery of approved/proposed savings, cost avoidance, cost mitigation and identify new savings for the coming years. There are six programmes within the plan agreed in 2024/25, each containing a range of projects and other initiatives across:
- Workforce
 - Social Care
 - Place
 - Early Intervention and Prevention
 - Digital
 - Special Projects
- The approved Transformation Plan can be accessed here:
<https://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/documents/s119437/Transformation%20Plan%20V1%20Final%20CPC%20003.pdf>
- 18 The revenue and capital implications for growth, investment and savings associated with the above initiatives have been reflected in the MTFS 2025-29. For the financial year 2025/26, there are 19 Transformation projects which are also MTFS approved budget changes; in total these will deliver net budget savings of £24.4m for 2025/26. Within this total budget saving, there are £13.452m of Council wide cross cutting savings which are held centrally; work is continuing to refine how these savings will be delivered in detail and these savings will be allocated to service committee budgets as soon as possible.
- 19 Progress on the delivery of Transformation projects and their associated budget savings will be reported on a monthly basis to the Council's Transformation Board. In addition, all Transformation savings will form an integral part of the Council's existing comprehensive financial reporting process which is set out in paragraph 13.
- 20 The headline reserves table, as included in the MTFS, is shown below:

	Opening Balance 2024/25 £m	Forecast Closing Balance 2024/25 £m	Forecast Closing Balance 2025/26 £m	Change from closing 2024/25 £m
General Reserves	5,580	3,696	5,000	1,304
Earmarked Reserves**	32,277	11,539	9,386	-2,153
Total Revenue Reserves	37,857	15,235	14,386	-849

* Closing and Opening balances are dependent on outturn at 31 March 2025.

** All remaining Earmarked reserves, excluding those held for ring-fenced purposes or forecast for use in 2025/26, are being transferred into the General Fund reserve during 2024/25 to support the forecast deficit position.

- 21 The detail behind the earmarked reserve balances included in the table above, by Committee, is set out in Annex A.
- 22 Further background information on the reserves balances is available in the Reserves Strategy and the S.25 statement which was approved as part of the MTFS for 2025/26 at the Council meeting on 26 February (MTFS - Appendix A, Annex 8 (Reserves Strategy) and Page 42 (S.25 statement)).
- 23 The Finance Sub-Committee has additional responsibility for the oversight, scrutiny and budget review of the following functions: Land and Property; Central budgets; Pensions; Grants; Council Tax; Business Rates; Reserves; and other funding.
- 24 The table below summarises the estimated four-year position, as included in the MTFS. Early work on business planning for 2026/27 and future years will continue, as part of the Transformation Programme.

	Approved Net Budget 2025/26 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2026/27 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2027/28 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2028/29 £m
Total Service Expenditure	377.1	362.6	356.3	366.1
Central Budgets:				
Capital Financing	35.0	38.8	41.9	43.2
Income from Capital Receipts	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0
Bad Debt Provision (change)	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1
Contingency Budget	16.0	30.9	42.8	55.7
Risk Budget	0.0	3.8	2.0	0.8
Pension adjustment	-0.7	-0.7	-0.7	-0.7
Use of Reserves	1.3	5.0	8.9	8.9

	Approved Net Budget 2025/26 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2026/27 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2027/28 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2028/29 £m
Total Central Budgets	50.5	76.6	93.7	106.9
TOTAL: SERVICE + CENTRAL	427.6	439.3	450.0	473.0
Funded by:				
Council Tax	-307.3	-325.6	-345.0	-365.5
Business Rates Retention	-57.1	-57.1	-57.1	-57.1
Revenue Support Grant	-0.8	-0.8	-0.8	-0.8
Specific Unringfenced Grants	-37.1	-34.1	-34.1	-34.1
TOTAL: FUNDED BY	-402.4	-417.7	-437.0	-457.6
Exceptional Financial Support - Capitalisation Direction	-25.3			
FUNDING POSITION	0.0	21.6	13.0	15.4

Note – table may not add across/down due to roundings

Consultation and Engagement

- 25 The annual business planning process involves engagement with local people and organisations. Local authorities have a statutory duty to consult on their budget with certain stakeholder groups including the Schools Forum and businesses. In addition, the Council chooses to consult with other stakeholder groups. The Council continues to carry out stakeholder analysis to identify the different groups involved in the budget setting process, what information they need from us, the information we currently provide these groups with, and where we can improve our engagement process.
- 26 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy has been developed during 2024 and an online budget engagement survey was published on 19 December 2024.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 27 In accordance with the Cheshire East Plan and the Policy Framework the Finance Sub-Committee has the responsibility to co-ordinate the management and oversight of the Council's finances, performance and risk management arrangements.
- 28 The Sub-Committee is responsible for allocating budgets across the service committees. This responsibility includes the allocation of revenue and capital budgets as well as relevant earmarked reserves.
- 29 The Sub-Committee has responsibilities within the Constitution to approve, or recommend for approval, virement and supplementary

estimates that will amend the MTFs. Such requests are brought to the Committee as they arise.

- 30 Recommendations 2 and 3 in this report request approval from the Finance Sub Committee to vire values from the Contingency budget to the service budgets, these requests are linked to proposed fee increases to providers. Commissioners, finance and service managers have considered and calculated many options and variations for fee increases in order to arrive at the recommended options. The recommended values in this report aim to provide balance between the market pressures linked to increases in National Living Wage and National Insurance, alongside the financial challenges the Council faces. These were first considered by the Interim Executive Director of Resources (S151) and Chief Executive Officer.

Other Options Considered

- 31 Not applicable.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 32 The legal implications surrounding the process of setting the 2025 to 2029 Medium-Term Financial Strategy were dealt with in the reports relating to that process.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 33 Contained within the main body of the report.

Policy

- 34 The Cheshire East Plan sets the policy context for the MTFs and the two documents are aligned. Any policy implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that this report deals with will be dealt within the individual reports to Members or Officer Decision Records to which they relate.

Commitment 3: An effective and enabling council
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 35 Under the Equality Act 2010, decision makers must show 'due regard' to the need to:
- 36 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;

- 37 - Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it; and
- 38 - Foster good relations between those groups.
- 39 The protected characteristics are age, disability, sex, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership.
- 40 Having “due regard” is a legal term which requires the Council to consider what is proportionate and relevant in terms of the decisions they take.
- 41 The Council needs to ensure that in taking decisions on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the Budget that the impacts on those with protected characteristics are considered. The Council undertakes equality impact assessments where necessary and continues to do so as proposals and projects develop across the lifetime of the Corporate Plan. The process assists us to consider what actions could mitigate any adverse impacts identified. Completed equality impact assessments form part of any detailed Business Cases.
- 42 Positive impacts include significant investment in services for children and adults (protected characteristics primarily age and disability).
- 43 The Cheshire East Plan’s vision reinforces the Council’s commitment to meeting its equalities duties, promoting fairness and working openly for everyone. Cheshire East is a diverse place and we want to make sure that people are able to live, work and enjoy Cheshire East regardless of their background, needs or characteristics.

Human Resources

- 44 Any HR implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that this report deals with will be dealt within the individual reports to Members or Officer Decision Records to which they relate.

Risk Management

- 45 Financial risks are assessed and reported on a regular basis, and remedial action taken if and when required. Risks associated with the achievement of the 2025/26 budget and the level of general reserves were factored into the 2025/26 financial scenario, budget and reserves strategy.

Rural Communities

- 46 The report provides details of service provision across the borough.

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

47 The report provides details of service provision across the borough.

Public Health

48 Public health implications that arise from activities that this report deals with will be dealt with as separate reports to Members or Officer Decision Records as required.

Climate Change

49 Any climate change implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that this report deals with will be dealt within the individual reports to Members or Officer Decision Records to which they relate.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	<p>Adele Taylor</p> <p>Interim Executive Director of Resources Services (Section 151 Officer)</p> <p>adele.taylor@cheshireeast.gov.uk</p>
Appendices:	<p>Annex A - Allocation of revenue and capital budgets, budget change items and earmarked reserves to service committees</p> <p>Annex B – Draft Financial Reporting Timetable 2025/26</p>
Background Papers:	<p>The following are links to key background documents:</p> <p>Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2025-2029</p>

OPEN

Council

14 May 2025

**Appointments to Cheshire Police and Crime Panel and
to Cheshire Fire Authority**

**Report of: Janet Witkowski, Acting Governance, Compliance and
Monitoring Officer**

Report Reference No: C/5/25-26

Ward(s) Affected: All Wards

For Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 The report invites Council to make appointments to the Cheshire Police and Crime Panel and the Cheshire Fire Authority.

Executive Summary

- 2 The Cheshire Police and Crime Panel and the Cheshire Fire Authority are bodies which carry out statutory functions and therefore the Council is required to make appointments to ensure that the Council meets its obligations.

RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Council is asked to appoint: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. three councillors and a nominated substitute to the Cheshire Police and Crime Panel2. nine councillors to the Cheshire Fire Authority.

Background

Cheshire Police and Crime Panel

- 3 In accordance with Section 28 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibilities Act 2011, each Police Area must establish a Police and Crime Panel.
- 4 The Cheshire Police and Crime Panel comprises ten councillors appointed by the constituent Councils and the allocations of seats to Cheshire East Council is three.
- 5 The Council is asked to appoint three members, on a political proportional basis of 1 Conservative, 1 Labour and 1 Independent. Council is also requested to nominate a substitute member.
- 6 The members for the 2024/25 municipal year were Councillors S Edgar, J Snowball, and R Moreton, together with Councillor S Gardiner as the nominated substitute.

Cheshire Fire Authority

- 7 The Cheshire Fire Authority is the Combined Fire Authority of Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East, Halton and Warrington Councils and it has a membership of 23:

Halton – 3 members
Warrington – 4 members
Cheshire West and Chester – 7 members
Cheshire East – 9 members
- 8 The Council is asked to appoint nine members on a political proportional basis of 4 Conservatives, 3 Labour and 2 Independent.
- 9 The members for the 2024/25 municipal year were Councillors R Bailey, J Bird, D Brown, P Coan, L Crane, N Mannion, M Simon, G Smith, and M Warren.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 10 These bodies carry out statutory functions and appointments are needed to ensure that the Council meets its obligations.

Other Options Considered

- 11 Whilst the Council could choose to not make appointments, this would be contrary to legislation governing the Cheshire Police and Crime Panel and the Cheshire Fire Authority.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 12 There are no direct legal implications.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 13 An annual allowance is paid to permanent members of the Cheshire Police and Crime Panel, which comes from payments made by Central Government to the Panel's host authority.
- 14 Members of the Cheshire Fire Authority are paid a basis allowance in accordance with the Cheshire Fire Authority Members' Allowance Scheme.

Policy

- 15 There are no direct implications for policy.

An effective and enabling Council

Effective and responsive governance, compliance and evidence-based decision making

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

- 16 There are no direct implications for equality.

Human Resources

- 17 There are no direct implications for Human Resources.

Risk Management

- 18 There are no direct risk management implications.

Rural Communities

- 19 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

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

- 20 There are no direct implications for children and families and young people.

Public Health

21 There are no direct implications for public health.

Climate Change

22 There are no implications for climate change.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None

OPEN

Council

14 May 2025

Approval of Absence from Council Meetings

Report of: Janet Witkowski, Acting Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer

Report Reference No: C/3/25-26

Ward(s) Affected: Knutsford

For Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report seeks the approval of Council in respect of Councillor Peter Coan's absence from Council meetings for a period over six months, due to reasons of ill-health.

Executive Summary

- 2 If a Council member fails to attend a meeting of the authority in a period of six consecutive months, they cease to be a member of the authority, unless approval for the absence is given by full Council. This report provides an opportunity for Council to approve any absence which might be required by the date of the Council meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Council is asked to approve Councillor Peter Coan's absence from Council meetings for a period of over six months, due to reasons of ill-health; such approval to apply for a period of a further six months.

Background

- 3 By the date of the Annual Council meeting Councillor Peter Coan will have been absent from Council meetings for over five months, due to reasons of ill health
- 4 Legislation states that, if a Council Member fails to attend council meetings throughout a period of six consecutive months, they shall cease to become a member of the authority in question, unless such failure was due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of the six-month period.
- 5 This report asks Council to formally approve Councillor Coan's absence from all Council meetings due to reasons of ill health, and to agree that such approval will continue to have effect for a further period of six months. This will ensure that Councillor Coan's membership of the Council will continue for an appropriate period of time, if he continues to find himself unable to attend Council meetings.

Consultation and Engagement

- 6 Not applicable.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 7 The authority of the Council is required to ensure that an individual's membership of the authority does not inadvertently cease, in circumstances where they find themselves unable to attend a meeting for the period in question due to a reason beyond the individual's control.

Other Options Considered

- 8 To do nothing – an individual's membership of the local authority would cease, as no approval would be in place to extend the six-month attendance period.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 9 Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 states that, if a member of a local authority fails, throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of their last attendance, to attend any meeting of the authority, they shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the authority. If necessary, the authority may grant further approvals if the reason for non-attendance continues beyond the initially approved period.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

10 No implications have been identified.

Policy

11 There are no direct implications for policy

Commitment 3: An effective and enabling council

Effective and responsive governance, compliance and evidence-based decision making

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

12 There are no direct implications.

Human Resources

13 There are no direct implications for Human Resources.

Risk Management

14 There are no direct risk management implications.

Rural Communities

15 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

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

16 There are no direct implications for children and young people.

Public Health

17 There are no direct implications for public health.

Climate Change

18 There are no direct implications for climate change.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Brian Reed Head of Democratic Services brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None

OPEN

Council

14 May 2025

**Software Defined Wide Area Network (SD Wan) Connectivity
Procurement.**

Report of: Adele Taylor, Interim Executive Director of Resources

Report Reference No: C/6/25-26

Ward(s) Affected: All

For Decision

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to ask the Council to agree to the commission and subsequent award of a contract for the connectivity of all its sites to a new corporate digital network. There is an imperative need to ensure that the council has dependable network connectivity to underpin the Council's evolving digital communication and business applications used by its residents, stakeholders and staff. The Council requires a robust network which meets the forecasted technical and business needs and delivery of new digital capabilities.

Executive Summary

2. Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Councils are seeking to procure a partner to replace the existing connectivity network. Modern technologies will enable a flexible and more efficient solution to provide best value.
3. The Hybrid ICT (known as the Gemini Programme), which forms part of Transformation Programme Digital workstream, is designed to address

the separation and sovereignty of both Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Council. The current network contract is governed under a shared partnership between both Councils (including some schools), Police, Fire and Rescue. This procurement is therefore being delivered under the remit of this Programme with benefits expected to include increased flexibility, service improvements, simplification, and efficiencies.

4. Cheshire East Council has an existing connectivity contract with a third-party supplier, Capita Business Services Ltd. ('Capita'), which ends on the 3 February 2026 with 1 options to extend. However, extending the existing contract for a further 2 years will contractually incur large inflation costs. Therefore, a soft market exercise has been undertaken with other third-party suppliers. This has confirmed other suppliers and products are available to deliver this service competitively, therefore we request approval to continue with a procurement mini competition to ensure best value across all sites to deliver these essential network services for both Councils.
5. Because of the tight timescales for both the procurement and implementation of the preferred network solution, the Council is asked to note that the full cost options are not currently known but the expected contractual cost will be between £1m- £3.4m between the 2 authorities and therefore a significant decision.
6. Governance arrangements are in place with all partners, Cheshire East Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Police, Fire and Rescue. Consultation on the way forward continues to be undertaken with respect to the leadership of the procurement and the options to be considered. Network connectivity is a critical service that underpins frontline blue light services, so any solutions need to meet the requirements of all partners or parties agree to separation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council:

- 1 approve in principle the procurement of a new connectivity network contract which is expected to cost more than £1m.
- 2 delegate authority to the Director of Digital of Cheshire East Borough Council to award the contract to the successful bidder following the competitive procurement process.

Background

7. Cheshire East Council (CEC) and Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC), along with other (Cluster members) including Cheshire Police and Cheshire Fire and Rescue services (together, 'The Partnership'), currently lease Wide Area Network (Wan) connections from Capita.
8. The current contract with Capita is owned by Cheshire East Borough Council and is a 'service call-off contract' where the councils and cluster members, specify the requirements (e.g. bandwidth, location, resilience, information classification and service level) for each site, and Capita provides the appropriate technology to meet those requirements.
9. The initial term of the contract with Capita expires in February 2026, marking the end of the initial five-year period within a 5-year +2-year +2-year +1-year (overall 10-year) contractual structure available through contract extension, however a 2-year extension would contractually incur at least 31.9% inflation costs.
10. Contract Review meetings have been established with all members of the Partnership. These governance arrangements and discussions on the future network options aim to establish the best solutions for each partner, either as a joint procurement, separate procurements, or a contract novation. Cheshire East Council has previously procured the network connectivity contract on behalf of its partners, but if the current requirements do not align, this may result in a dissolution of the partnership by either a contract novation or contract exit.
11. Cheshire Police (who also look after network provision for Cheshire Fire and Rescue) are looking to move away from the existing Capita contract from 2.2.2026 to more cost efficient, modern technologies. This will have a contractual impact on the costs of any remaining Partners.
12. The annual connectivity expenditure for 2024 with Capita was circa £1 million split as follows:

Cheshire East Council	£257,505
Cheshire West & Chester Council	£170,322
Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service	£184,645
Cheshire Constabulary	£392,054
Cheshire East Schools	£ 27,490
Cheshire West Schools	£ 29,827
13. A Project Governance Board with all key stakeholders has been established to ensure the solution aligns to the strategic aims of each partner

organisation and will include robust risk management strategies to address any potential challenges and ensure successful implementation.

14. The Council has an established and comprehensive risk management framework that includes regular monitoring, reporting, and contingency planning to address any issues that may arise during the transformation process. This risk will be mitigated by tactical interim solutions, utilising existing broadband contracts, or utilising the Capita “exit assistance” to extend the contract short term if required, however it is intended to have the any new solution procured and implemented before February 2026
15. ICT Shared Services currently provide the support and contract management for Network Services for Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Councils. Separate contracts will be agreed if possible as part of the procurement process to negate the need for future contract changes or novation during the 5-year term (when the two Authorities split). The Target Operating Model and training will also be considered to assist with a smooth transition.
16. Currently, estimated 5-year tender costs from soft market testing range from £1 million and £3.4 million.

Consultation and Engagement

17. The Cheshire Constabulary (who also look after network provision for Cheshire Fire and Rescue) have been consulted by a series of Contract Review Meetings during February and March 2025. Discussions will continue to establish the best solutions for each partner either as a joint procurement, separate procurements, or a contract novation.
18. Most schools have procured network contracts independently with suppliers, however there are three Cheshire East Schools who are included in the existing call off contract and ten Cheshire West Schools who will need to make alternative network arrangements if the current contract is not extended in February 2026. Full consultation and support to procure will be provided by the project team to ensure business continuity.
19. Both CE and CWaC Procurement and Legal Teams have been engaged to advise on the contractual terms and procurement procedures.
20. This report was discussed and agreed at the Gemini SD WAN Project Board held on 26th March 2025 and will progress to Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) for feedback and approval.

Reasons for Recommendations

21. Network connectivity is essential for business continuity across all Council buildings and provision of public services. The existing Capita contract expires 3rd February 2026 therefore a procurement exercise is essential.
22. Procurement via the CCS Networks Services 3 Framework (lot 1a) would enable a Mini competition across the industry 'Best of Breed' vendors. This will enable best value to be achieved with flexible, innovative technologies and reputable support partners.

Links to the Strategic Aims and Objectives Council's Corporate Plan 2025-2026

23. In Cheshire East Council, this procurement underpins the following strategic aims and objectives under commitment 3:
 - An effective and enabling council:
 - Financially sustainable council, enabled by council-wide service transformation and improvement.
 - Innovative solutions are developed through a culture of collaboration across the council and with residents, businesses, and partners.
 - Service delivery and new ideas are shaped by consultation and engagement.
 - Contact with the council and access to services is consistent and easy.
 - Service delivery and ways of working are improved through a digital first approach, while supporting residents who need it.

Other Options Considered

Option	Impact	Risk
1.Continue as is	The current contract expires 03.02.2026 therefore this was not considered feasible.	Business Continuity for all key services. Concerns and issues have not been addressed by the supplier and through contract management to date.
2. Extend the existing Capita contract.	Ensures Business Continuity with minimal change.	This may not provide best value so was considered not feasible but will be considered after soft market testing.
3. Full competitive tender	Wider reach of suppliers. Extends Procurement timeline	Affordability to develop the full tender documentation and undertaking full procurement dialogue, and delivery within the timescales. Governance determined that this was not

		achievable to ensure business continuity and would occur additional procurement costs.
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Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

24. CEC legal have been involved in the discussion with both the internal project team and the Supplier. In the event that the current contract is extended for two further years (at CEC's option) CEC is on notice from the Supplier that a dispute will accrue regarding the application of indexation.
25. By virtue of the clear contractual hierarchy provisions, the position of CEC on indexation is far stronger than that of Capita. They rely on mistake and rectification of the contract and unless agreement is reached by way of compromise that dispute may be lengthy and costly.
26. Pursuant to the Contract, termination assistance is available to CEC if the contract is not extended (subject to cost to be determined) so this may permit some additional time for a reprocurement of the entire system.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

27. This Proposal replaces existing connectivity provision though the development of a complete SD Wan. The budget within the retained shared service for 2025/26 is £465,000 reflecting both Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester usage of the service. Negotiation of a new contract with a value above the revised 2025/26 budget would cause a pressure which may not be containable within existing budgets.

Policy

28. This project supports the CE priority, within the 2025-2026 plan, to be an effective and enabling council:
 - Financially sustainable council, enabled by council-wide service transformation and improvement.
 - Innovative solutions are developed through a culture of collaboration across the council and with residents, businesses, and partners.
 - Service delivery and new ideas are shaped by consultation and engagement.
 - Contact with the council and access to services is consistent and easy.

- Service delivery and ways of working are improved through a digital first approach, while supporting residents who need it.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

29. An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this procurement.

Human Resources

30. The recent shift of staff working from home has resulted in many offices being underutilised however we have sustained fixed network costs. The new flexible technologies will enable both Authorities to change and scale its network resource in line with changing demands.
31. Cheshire East Council has previously procured the network connectivity contract on behalf of its partners, however if the current requirements do not align then this may result in a dissolution of the partnership by either a contract novation or contract exit.
32. Cheshire East are consulting with Cheshire Constabulary and hope a successful approach can be agreed with all partners.

Risk Management

33. The procurement and approval process introduces an element of risk due to the tight timescales. Various tactical solutions are being explored to ensure business continuity is maintained including:
- Utilising alternative broadband contracts in the interim.
 - Extending the existing Capita contract by utilising the “exit assistance” terms for a reduced period (e.g. 6/12 months etc.)
34. The project will include robust risk management strategies to address potential challenges and ensure successful implementation. A monthly Project Board has been established to manage.
35. The council has an established and comprehensive risk management framework that includes regular monitoring, reporting, and contingency planning to address any issues that may arise during the transformation process.

Rural Communities

36. The project will consider the unique needs of rural communities and ensure that all residents maintain access to public buildings providing high quality network connectivity.

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

37. The project will cover all Children's centres, Libraries, Leisure Centres, and all public facilities to ensure all residents have access to high quality internet connectivity.

Public Health

38. A flexible and efficient network solution will enable Business Continuity for all sites providing key services, including Adults and Children's Social Care across the estate of central and rural locations.

Climate Change

39. The programme will help the council reduce its carbon footprint and achieve environmental sustainability by promoting cloud technologies and reducing energy consumption.
40. The review of how the network is provisioned will support rationalisation of datacentres and more efficient use of resources, and lower energy consumption.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Gareth Pawlett (Director of Digital) gareth.pawlett@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	n/a
Background Papers:	n/a

**Schedule of Urgent Decisions Made by the Chief Executive
following consultation with Members**

Date	Summary of decision	Decision on behalf of
21 March 2025	<p>Warm Homes Local Grant Award</p> <p><u>Decision</u></p> <p>That the Chief Executive agrees that the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accepts the Warm Homes Local Grant award of £7,792,725 • agrees supplementary estimates of £1,353,704 for the 2025/26 financial year, £3,252,420 for the 2026/27 financial year, and £3,186,601 for the 2027/28 financial year. • accepts the grant terms and enters into the Memorandum of Understanding, Data Sharing Agreement and Non-Disclosure Agreement with the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero • enters into an amended Collaboration Agreement with Cheshire West and Chester Council and Warrington Borough Council for the effective administration and governance of the scheme 	Council
23 April 2025	<p>Local Transport Grant, Integrated Transport Block Grant and Local Transport Resource Funding</p> <p><u>Decision</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To authorise the Section 151 Officer to accept the grant of £10,137,000 by signing and returning the Acknowledge and Acceptance Declaration to DfT. To agree the terms and conditions for the funding set out in the DfT letter at Appendix 1 to this urgent decision report. To agree to a Supplementary Capital Estimate (SCE) of £7,754,000 and Supplementary Revenue Estimate (SRE) of £380,000 for the 2025/26 financial year Authorise the Director of Transport and Infrastructure to spend the 2025/26 allocation from the DfT Integrated Transport Block (£2,003,000) in line with the Council's approved MTFS for 2025/26. Authorise the Director of Transport and Infrastructure to spend the 2025/26 allocation of DfT Local Transport Resource Funding (£380,000) to update the Council's 	Council

	<p>Local Transport Plan in line with the terms and conditions of funding.</p> <p>VI. Authorise the Director of Transport and Infrastructure to spend the Local Transport Grant funding (£7,754,000) in accordance with the Council's Local Transport Plan priorities and taking account of consultation with Highways and Transport Committee.</p>	
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