

# Economy and Growth Committee

## Agenda

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<b>Date:</b>	<b>Tuesday 3rd June 2025</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>2.00 pm</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe CW1 2BJ</b>

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

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

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

1. **Apologies for Absence**

To note any apologies for absence from Members.

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. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 3 - 12)**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2025.

4. **Public Speaking/Open Session**

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**Contact:** Rachel Graves

**E-Mail:** [rachel.graves@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.graves@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

**To register to speak on an agenda item:** [Register to Speak form](#)

In accordance with the Council's Committee Procedure Rules and Appendix on Public Speaking, a total period of 15 minutes is allocated for members of the public to put questions to the committee on any matter relating to this agenda. Each member of the public will be allowed up to two minutes each to speak, and the Chair will have discretion to vary this where they consider it appropriate.

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

Petitions - To receive any petitions which have met the criteria - [Petitions Scheme Criteria](#), and falls within the remit of the Committee. Petition organisers will be allowed up to three minutes to speak.

5. **South Macclesfield Development Area (Pages 13 - 26)**

To consider the report on the current status and proposed future direction of the South Macclesfield Development Area.

6. **Interim Housing Strategy 25-28 (Pages 27 - 148)**

To consider and approve the final version of the Interim Housing Strategy 2025-2028.

7. **Home Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Policy (Pages 149 - 212)**

To consider and approve the final version of the Home Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Policy 2025-2028.

8. **Final Outturn 2024/25 (Pages 213 - 324)**

To receive an overview of the Cheshire East Council final outturn for the financial year 2024/25.

9. **Appointments to Member Advisory Groups (Pages 325 - 328)**

To re-appoint the Handforth Garden Village Member Advisory Group and Farms Policy Members Advisory Group.

10. **Work Programme (Pages 329 - 332)**

To consider the Work Programme and determine any required amendments.

**Membership:** Councillors D Brown, L Buchanan, A Burton, P Coan, A Farrall, M Gorman (Chair), A Heler, G Marshall, C O'Leary, J Pearson, P Redstone, R Vernon and F Wilson (Vice-Chair)

**CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Economy and Growth Committee**  
held on Tuesday, 11th March, 2025 in The Capesthorne Room - Town Hall,  
Macclesfield SK10 1EA

**PRESENT**

Councillor M Gorman (Chair)

Councillors S Adams, L Braithwaite, L Buchanan, C Bulman, A Burton,  
R Chadwick, S Gardiner, A Heler, G Marshall, C O'Leary, P Redstone and  
R Vernon

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Phil Cresswell, Executive Director Place  
Peter Skates, Director of Growth and Enterprise  
Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development  
Carol Hyde, Head of Rural and Cultural Economy  
Emma Williams, Carbon Manager  
Julie Gregory, Acting Head of Legal  
Steve Reading, Finance Officer  
Rachel Graves, Democratic Services Officer

**47 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors D Brown, J Clowes, P Coan,  
B Drake and F Wilson. Councillors S Adams, L Braithwaite, C Bulman,  
R Chadwick, and S Gardiner attended as substitutes.

**48 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In relation to Item 11 and 13 – Handforth Garden Village Delivery Strategy,  
Councillor G Marshall declared he was a member of the Strategic Planning  
Board, which may consider future planning applications relating to the  
Handforth Garden Village and stated that he would leave the meeting  
during considerations of Items 11 and 13.

In relation to Item 6 – Rural Action Plan, Councillor C O'Leary declared a  
non-pecuniary interest as he had just submitted a grant application around  
rural housing insecurity.

In relation to Item 5 – Notice of Motion: Protecting Family Farms and  
Preserving Rural Communities across Cheshire, Councillor A Heler  
declared in the interest of openness that her family were farmers.

In relation to Item 11 and 13 – Handforth Garden Village Delivery Strategy,  
Councillor S Gardiner declared he was a member of the Strategic Planning  
Board and was present and voted in favour of the planning application

relating to the Handforth Garden Village and therefore would leave the meeting during considerations of Items 11 and 13.

In relation to Item 11 and 13 – Handforth Garden Village Delivery Strategy, Councillor M Gorman declared he was a member of the Strategic Planning Board and stated that he would take no part in planning matters relating to Handforth Garden Village.

In relation to Item 8 – Macclesfield Car Parking Feasibility Study, Councillor L Braitwaite stated that before she was a substitute on the committee she had intended to speak on this item as local ward member. She stated she would read out her statement and then leave the meeting during consideration of the item.

#### **49 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

##### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 January 2025 be confirmed as a correct record.

#### **50 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION**

Mr Rob Grant spoke on the importance of local agriculture, emphasising its low carbon footprint as imported food had a much higher environmental cost and higher carbon footprint, and that local food production contributed to the local economy. He criticised the inheritance tax policies and stated that they disproportionately burdened family farms, potentially leading to food shortages and environmental neglect.

Mr Richard Yarwood expressed concerns about inheritance tax changes and highlighting their negative impact on elderly farmers who had dedicated their lives to agriculture. He stated that the tax could force farmers to sell land, leading to increased reliance on lower-quality food imports and asked the Committee to support the Notice of Motion opposing the inheritance tax changes.

Ms Sue Helliwell stated that the Council needed to support Cheshire East farmers as they played a crucial role in food production. She opposed the inheritance tax changes and urged the Committee to support local farmers by writing a letter to oppose the Government's changes to inheritance tax affecting family farms and advocate for the exemption of family farms to preserve the UK's food security, rural communities, and environmental initiatives.

Ms Sue Mason spoke on urban planning and the impact of decision-making on the community. Referring to the Macclesfield Car Parking Feasibility Study she stated that it acknowledged the need to ensure adequate parking was retained to support residents, visitors and businesses and the vitality of the town centre and asked that officers

conducted thorough impact assessments on traffic, schools, and hospitals before approving new developments.

**51 NOTICE OF MOTION: PROTECTING FAMILY FARMS AND PRESERVING RURAL COMMUNITIES ACROSS CHESHIRE EAST**

The Committee considered the report, prepared in response to a Notice of Motion: Protecting Family Farms and Preserving Rural Communities across Cheshire East farms, which had been referred to the Committee by Council at its meeting on 11 December 2024

Councillor A Heler addressed the committee as the seconder of the Motion.

The Committee debated the Notice of Motion. Points raised during the debate included:

- the changes having a negative impact on small farmers and family run farms rather than large landowners.
- it could lead to increase reliance on imported food which could be of lower quality.
- the economic damage the tax could have on rural communities as farms supported local businesses and employment.
- the increased financial pressure could worsen the mental health and high suicide rate amongst farmers.
- large corporations could find legal ways to avoid the tax and small farmers would bear the burden.
- farming was not a high-profit industry, and many farmers reinvested earning into their land.
- there was criticism of the Government's justification for the tax changes and that the statistics used were misleading.
- the inheritance tax reforms were necessary to prevent wealthy individuals from using farmland as a tax shelter.
- there should be tax relief for farmers who engage in sustainable environmentally friendly practice rather than applying a blanket exemption.

It was noted that further engagement with farmers and stakeholders would take place during the Rural Action Plan update, and that a rural workstream was being set up within the new devolution framework, and funding would be sought for rural initiatives.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee

- 1 note the Notice of Motion.
- 2 note that engagement will be undertaken as part of the refresh of the Rural Action Plan throughout the year, and therefore to enable opportunities of support to be identified and included in the revised Rural Action Plan 2026-2030.

## **52 RURAL ACTION PLAN 2022 – 2026 UPDATE**

The Committee received an update on the Rural Action Plan 2022-2026.

The Rural Action Plan was part of the Cheshire Plan 2024-25, with the aim of supporting thriving rural communities. The Plan focused on economic growth but also covered digital connectivity, transport, housing, environment, farming, and climate change. The previous plan covered 2018-2022 and was replaced by the current plan for 2022-2026, and discussions were beginning for the next phase for 2026-2030.

The Committee, during the debate, raised the following issues: -

- Rural connectivity issues as some rural areas lacked mobile and broadband access and there had been cases where storm-related service disruption had left residents completely disconnected.
- the lack of availability of affordable rural housing, which meant the often tenant farmers struggled to retire because they had to leave their farms but could not afford housing in their rural communities. It was felt that developers mostly focused on urban areas, with rural villages only getting expensive homes built. It was felt that local planning policies should encourage affordable housing through collaboration with parish councils.
- Rural poverty was often hidden because traditional poverty measures did not account for higher rural costs.
- The higher cost of living in a rural area included the lack of public transport meaning residents had to drive longer distances, with the nearest supermarket often far away, increasing food access challenges.

It was noted that a Member Advisory Group would be set up to shape the 2026-2030 Rural Action Plan, and it was asked that those with real rural experience such as farmers, rural works and local representatives be included. It was asked if the trade unions, especially those representing rural and agricultural workers be included.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Committee note the update report.

## **53 SERVICE BUDGETS 2025/26**

The Committee considered the report which set out the proposed allocation of approved budgets for the Economy and Growth Committee, following approval of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy at full Council on 26 February 2025.

The details of the budget allocations were set out in Annex A to the report. Financial reporting would occur regularly to ensure budget adherence and prevent overspending. The financial reporting timetable for 2025/26 set was out in Annex B to the report.

During discussion it was asked if it would be possible to have a line-by-line document of the budget items the Committee were responsible for, with a traffic-light system (RAG status) to highlight overspending risks early. It was also raised about having a register of assets and investments. It was stated that the investment strategy was included in the MTFS and that the assets management report on general disposals would go to the Finance Sub Committee. The Finance Sub Committee was responsible for property transactions including buying, selling and appropriation of land and property (including compulsory purchase where required) whilst the Economy and Growth Committee was responsible for strategy and policy.

It was also suggested that all future development projects should undergo a comprehensive risk analysis before approval and details be included in the reports before the Committee.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee

- 1 note the decision of the Finance Sub Committee to allocate the approved revenue and capital budgets, related budget changes items and earmarked reserves to the Economy and Growth Committee, as set out in Annex A to the report.
- 2 note the financial reporting timetable for 2025/26, as set out in Annex B to the report, as approved at the Finance Sub Committee on 10 March 2025.

#### 54 **MACCLESFIELD CAR PARKING FEASIBILITY STUDY**

The Committee considered the report on the recent findings of a feasibility study conducted to explore the potential to declare surplus land contained within Duke Street and Churchill Way car parks and for release such land for redevelopment for housing.

Councillor L Braithwaite addressed the Committee in relation to the report and stated that the parking feasibility study provided in this report was not robust. It did not cover potential displacement onto residential streets and the impacts on traffic movement, and it was focused on a pre-determined outcome of surplus capacity on Churchill Way and Duke Street, without considering other town centre car parks.

Having previously declared an interest; Councillor Braithwaite left the meeting whilst the Committee considered the report.

The Committee asked about housing allocation and if any development would count towards the housing targets and in response it was stated that it would only count once any planning permission had been granted. Reference was made to the loss of car park revenue and that no clear assessment had been provided on how this would affect revenue for the Council. In response it was stated that this report was just the start of the

process, and that detailed work would be undertaken to take forward any proposals. Mitigation measures would also be looked at, including the introduction of residents parking permits.

A friendly amendment in relation to recommendation 1 was proposed and accepted by the Committee, to include the additional wording “subject to obtaining suitable planning permission”.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee

- 1 agree the proposal to bring forward land forming part of Churchill Way and Duke Street car parks as housing sites subject to obtaining suitable planning permission and being declared operationally surplus.
- 2 delegate authority to the Executive Director Place to explore and select the most appropriate form of housing redevelopment to be located on the surplus land forming part of Churchill Way and Duke Street car parks.

## **55 CARBON NEUTRAL UPDATE AND MERSEY FOREST PARTNERSHIP**

The Committee considered the report on the progress against the Council’s internal targets for carbon neutrality and on the Council’s partnership with the Mersey Forest.

It was reported that the Council had achieved a 15.3% reduction in its omissions and had offset almost 52% of its emissions through insetting projects within the Borough. Solar panels had been Solar panels had been installed on car parks, and a solar farm was operational, and the Council had started electrifying its fleet, with 22 electric vans and 11 electric sweepers.

The Council had been a partner in the Mersey Forest since 2020 and had been awarded a Trees for Climate grant of £570,719.50 for woodland creation on the Batherton Estate which would enable a 33ha tree planting scheme.

The Committee asked whether the Council could afford electric vehicles as they were more expensive and if the electric vans could complete a full day’s work without the need for recharging. In response it was stated that electric vehicles were generally more expensive initially but over the lifetime of the vehicle it usually worked out to be cheaper to run. In relation to productivity for electric vehicles part of the business case for each vehicle was looking at the number of miles they could do in a day and also providing driver training as how they were driven could have an effect on the battery life of the vehicle.

Concern was raised about using productive farmland for tree planting. It was stated that no tenant farm would be affected.



It was asked if there were any plans to work with town and parish councils to plant trees. In response it was stated that the Council did want to work with them to identify land that could be used for tree planting but there were challenges around funding and if the land was next to the highway.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee

- 1 note the progress made towards the Council's carbon neutral target and the Wider Borough Carbon Action Plan 2025-30.
- 2 accept the Trees for Climate grant of £570,719.50 for woodland creation on the Batherton Estate.
- 3 delegate authority to the Director of Growth and Enterprise, in consultation with the Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer, and the S151 Officer, to take all necessary steps to enter into legal agreements with The Mersey Forest Partnership.

## 56 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered the Work Programme.

It was noted that the next meeting in June 2025 would receive reports on the Final Outturn Report 2024/25, End of Year Performance for the Growth and Enterprise Department, the outcomes of the consultation on the Home Repairs and Adaptions for Vulnerable People Policy, the outcome of the consultation on the Interim Housing Strategy 2025-28 and on the South Macclesfield Development Area.

It was requested if the Committee could receive information on the financial performance for the first two months of 2025/26 rather than waiting for the first quarter report at the September meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Work Programme be noted.

## 57 **HANDFORTH GARDEN VILLAGE DELIVERY STRATEGY**

Having previously declared an interest Councillors S Gardiner and G Marshall left the meeting before consideration of this item and did not return.

The Committee considered the report which provided an update on the progress towards delivering Handforth Garden Village and outlined options for delivery and proposed progressing with the option of exploring a joint venture with MADE Partnership.

Consideration had been given to potential delivery options and the option to enter into a joint venture with MADE Partnership was being considered, with a proposed 18-to-24-month exclusivity period for due diligence and partnership evaluation.

During consideration of the report concerns were raised about the risks involved in a large development and in response it was stated that the project had an extensive risk register. Reference was made to the adoption of the roads, and it was stated that discussions were being held with the Highways Authority at present on this matter.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee

- 1 approve the Council entering into an exclusivity agreement with MADE Partnership to explore the principle of forming a joint venture partnership that would lead the development of Handforth Garden Village.
- 2 delegate to the Executive Director Place authority to:
  - i. negotiate and enter into the exclusivity agreement in the consultation with the Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer.
  - ii. renegotiate terms, conditions, and milestones of the Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF) agreements with Homes England as necessary and take all actions required to enter into any updated or new agreements.
- 3 note that a further report will be brought back to the Economy and Growth Committee for a decision as to whether the Council should proceed to enter into a joint venture with MADE Partnership.

**58 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:**

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended on the grounds that it involves the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 2, 3, 5 and 7a of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

**59 HANDFORTH GARDEN VILLAGE DELIVERY STRATEGY**

The Committee considered the information in the confidential appendix.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.51 pm

Councillor M Gorman (Chair)

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OPEN

## **Economy and Growth Committee**

**Date: 03 June 2025**

### **South Macclesfield Development Area – Future Direction**

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**Report of: Peter Skates, Director of Growth and Enterprise**

**Report Reference No: EG/15/25-26**

**Ward(s) Affected: Macclesfield South and Sutton**

**For Decision or Scrutiny: Decision**

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Economy and Growth Committee with an overview of the current status and proposed future direction of the South Macclesfield Development Area (SMDA). It outlines key decisions needed to balance the interests of different stakeholders and ensure that any development recognises the Council's environmental objectives for the site.
- 2 This report contributes to the strategic aims and objectives of the Council's Corporate Plan 2025-29 to enable prosperity and wellbeing for all in Cheshire East

#### **Executive Summary**

- 3 The SMDA Site is in divided ownership with part owned by the Council and part owned by Barratt, a national housebuilder. The Council has been working with Barratt to delivering development on the totality of the site.
- 4 Reserved Matters planning applications submitted by the Council and adjacent landowners who are party to this development have generated objections and local opposition due to concerns about the environmental impact of the proposals. The presence of peat and ecology on the site was known about and considered at the time the site was allocated in the Local Plan Strategy and when the outline planning application was approved at Strategic Planning Board in January 2019.

- 5 There is a variation of depth of peat across the entire wider site but is present in both landownerships. Because of the hydrological properties of the ground, it is conceivable that undertaking works on one part of the site could impact another part.
- 6 Within the Council, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of carbon and value of peat, and this is reflected in more recent changes in Council policies including environment, carbon reduction and planning that have been adopted to guide future actions.
- 7 Further technical work has been undertaken by Barratt to address the issues of concern. This has highlighted the challenge of reconciling delivery of the current proposals for the whole site with the Council's policies and aspirations around nature, sustainability, and carbon. It has also highlighted the limitation of developing an alternative strategy based on a divided land ownership. It is therefore recommended that the Council does not proceed with the current proposals. The Council should instead, continue to cooperate with Barratt to determine if there is a comprehensive form of development that can be delivered across both landownerships. In doing so both parties recognise the requirement to balance delivery of housing with a need to protect the broader environment.
- 8 A budget allowance of £150,000 is proposed to fund consultant advice that will evaluate any alternative development proposal. Depending on the nature of the emerging proposals, the type of advice required may include commercial, highways, technical, ecological, arboriculture, and delivery strategy.
- 9 The current proposals for the site include a new link road that would provide access to all the development parcels and relieve local traffic issues. The road was to be part funded partly by fixed contributions from Homes England through a Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) grant and a fixed contribution from the other landowner with the balance being met by the Council's capital programme funded through receipts from land. However, the cost of the road substantially increased due to construction inflation and technical issues, and this would have increased the Council's share. The grant expired and the link road is unlikely to be delivered as part of any alternative proposal for the site. It is therefore proposed that the Council formally withdraws from the grant funding agreement and continues to work with Homes England to identify other sources of funding to support the delivery of alternative development proposals.
- 10 There are several Reserved Matters planning applications still to be determined by the local planning authority for this site. It is proposed that the applications relating to the Council's land will be withdrawn.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Economy and Growth Committee is recommended to:

1. Delegate to the Director of Growth and Enterprise to take all actions necessary to review alternative options for the site. This will include disposal, development on this site, or taking no further action, and bring forward a recommendation to Economy and Growth Committee.
2. Approve further capital expenditure of up to £150,000 to fund a review of the alternative options and the associated due diligence against legal obligations and policy objectives.
3. Approve the withdrawal from the Housing Infrastructure Fund agreement and continue to work with Homes England to identify alternative means of financial support.
4. Note that the current reserved matters planning applications will be withdrawn.

## Background

### Location and Site Description

- 11 SMDA is located two miles south of Macclesfield town centre at the southern edge of the built-up area. It lies to the south of Moss Lane between Congleton Road to the west and the West Coast Mainline railway to the east.
- 12 The majority of the site is currently undeveloped. It consists of scrub, woodland and grassland. Some of site is developed. This includes playing fields located to the southwest of the site and a scrap yard to the east. Surrounding the site, there are residential areas to the north and west, commercial uses to the east, a former landfill site directly south and Danes Moss Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to the southeast. The site is underlain by peat, of varying depths and hosts willow tits, an endangered species of bird.
- 13 The Council owns approximately 55% of the SMDA Site, while Barratt owns about 41%. The remainder is held by other landowners. It is important to note that the Council's ownership includes playing fields that are not part of the current development proposals. Consequently, the Council controls around 38% of the land designated for development, with Barratt holding approximately 62%.

### Planning History

- 14 The SMDA site was allocated for development by Macclesfield Borough Council in 1997. The principle for development on this site was essentially carried forward in the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, adopted in July 2017. The allocation is for around 1,050 housing units with a new link road and ancillary uses, including a primary school, local shops and extensive green space.
- 15 In 2014, Engine of the North (the Council's former development company whose functions were taken into the Economic Development function of the Council in 2019) submitted an outline planning application to develop the Council's landholding at SMDA. The proposals included up to 325 residential units, a supermarket and a new access off Congleton Road. Strategic Planning Board resolved to approve this application in 2015 but the proposals were not taken forward.
- 16 In 2016, the Council entered into a Collaboration Agreement with the then adjoining landowner, TG Limited which led to the submission of a new application for a comprehensive development of the whole site, including both land ownerships. The new application sought approval of a proposal for up to 950 houses, a new link road through the site to serve both landholdings, a primary school and a local retail centre. Permission was granted in 2019.
- 17 Following approval of the outline application, a Reserved Matters application was submitted for a first phase of development, comprising the new link road and green infrastructure. In 2021 and 2022 Reserved Matters applications were submitted for all remaining phases of development.

#### Environmental Issues

- 18 The environmental and ecological value of the site and the adjoining Danes Moss SSSI were considered when the site was allocated for development in the Local Plan Strategy in 2017 - the policy specifying that no development would be permitted until it had been demonstrated that no significant impact would be caused to the SSSI. The policy document also referenced the need to carry out an ecological survey and incorporate appropriate mitigation measures.
- 19 An environmental statement was submitted with the outline planning application in 2017. It recognised the environmental and ecological impacts of development and identified appropriate mitigation and compensation measures. Strategic Planning Board (SPB) met in August 2017 to consider the application. The report received by the SPB included an ecological assessment which referred to the presence of peat and highlighted other environmental issues. It noted that Natural England had commented on the proposals but did not object to them. A representative



of Cheshire Wildlife Trust addressed the SPB to highlight environmental concerns and urge refusal of the application. The SPB resolved to approve it.

- 20 In May 2018, Cabinet approved the implementation of this project. and the report identified SMDA as a priority project for the Council. The report delegated authority to the Executive Director of Place to use the Homes England Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) grant to contribute to the cost of enabling infrastructure development. To progress these activities, the Council entered into a legal agreement with TG Limited (then the current owner of the adjacent site) regarding other contributions towards the construction and payment for the site's infrastructure. Since the Council only had outline planning permission for the site, it was necessary to submit a Reserved Matters application for the first phase of development comprising the link road between Congleton Road and Moss Lane.
- 21 In 2019, Natural England responded to the Reserved Matters application stating that the proposed development would not have a significant adverse impact on protected nature conservation sites or landscapes. However, following the submission of amended plans in 2021, Natural England responded stating that it required further information to enable it to assess the impact of the proposals on the Danes Moss SSSI. Referring to the peat as a 'precious and irreplaceable resource with the potential to act as a vast carbon store', they went on to state that the environmental significance of the proposed development had not previously been fully recognised.
- 22 Around the end of 2021, there emerged significant local opposition to development at SMDA. This galvanised around a community group calling itself Save Danes Moss. The group has since formed itself into the Danes Moss Trust and registered the organisation as a charity. The stated aims of the campaign are "To defend the Danes Moss peatland without compromise" on the basis that "no development on peatland is acceptable" and restore the site to an active lowland bog.
- 23 The Council and Barratt engaged directly with Natural England and agreed a scope of work to address their concerns. Barratt were better resourced to carry out this work, and they have led this stage of the project.
- 24 Barratt has conducted further due diligence which included various appointments of 3rd party consultants to carry out further investigations and surveys to determine the ground conditions, hydrology, ecological constraints and to further develop remediation strategies including platform remediated levels and various different options for development which also included drainage strategies and abnormal costs. In addition to the technical due diligence, Barratt have also continually engaged with

local, key stakeholder groups including Cheshire Wildlife Trust, Saves Dane Moss, Cheshire East Council and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

- 25 After reviewing relevant material, both Barratt and officers of the Council have concluded that the approved development proposals cannot be fully reconciled with the current Council policies relating to peat and carbon management. A smaller scale of development might strike an acceptable balance between housing and environmental policies, and that a comprehensive strategy dealing with the whole of the Site rather than individual land ownerships, probably offers the best prospect of achieving that balance.
- 26 It is proposed therefore to undertake a review of alternatives for the site which balance all the priorities and objectives from the different stakeholders and bring this back to the Economy and Growth Committee for consideration later in the 2025-26 municipal year.
- 27 It will be necessary to support this evaluation of alternative option(s) with specialist advice. A budget allowance of £150,000 is recommended for this purpose funded from the current capital scheme.

#### Homes England Relationship

- 28 The Council has a positive and collaborative relationship with Homes England, and has a conditional HIF grant offer towards the cost of the link road.
- 29 The Council is unable to meet the contractual milestones set out in the grant funding agreements or to propose an alternative programme that would be acceptable to Homes England within the bounds of this current funding programme as the link road that the funding would provide cannot be delivered in the required timeframe. The Council and Homes England agree that there is no prospect of taking forward the current proposals as set out in the planning permission. However, both parties are aware that this is an ongoing allocated site with planning permission and contributes a component of the Borough's housing supply.
- 30 It is necessary to complete the administrative process of entering into the deed of termination so that both the Council and Homes England are released from further obligations in relation to the HIF funding, so that there is a full and final settlement.
- 31 No grant has been drawn down to date as the infrastructure elements of the scheme remain in the planning and feasibility stage. Despite the withdrawal from the HIF agreement, the Council is continuing to engage constructively with Homes England to identify alternative mechanisms and funding streams to deliver a sustainable development at SMDA.

## Other Considerations and Options Development

- 32 Local Planning Authorities (LPA) are facing increasing pressures to make decisions on sites outside of local plans due to the National Planning Policy Framework introduced by the new government. The Cheshire East planning authority will also be affected by this issue. Regarding the Cheshire East local plan, SMDA is still anticipated to contribute to the Council's housing supply in the Macclesfield area. It is important for the Committee to recognise that other housing development sites are being promoted in the broader south Macclesfield location by developers and landowners, and these sites are likely to have similar constraints to SMDA. However, unlike SMDA, where the council has control over the development through its ownership, these other sites will only be subject to decisions made by the LPA and the broader planning process.
- 33 The Council has made a substantial investment of £3.283 million to date in promoting SMDA for residential development in line with its Local Plan strategy. It is intended that this investment be recovered via capital receipts from land sales. If the Council were to abandon these proposals, there would be serious impacts on the revenue budget.
- 34 It is anticipated that a strategy that reconciles competing Council policy objectives will consist of a reduced number of residential units built on the least environmentally sensitive parts of the site combined with positive actions to enhance and improve the remainder. Reducing the scale of development and funding environmental improvements would impact on financial viability but has the potential to unlock resources for peat restoration and nature conservation measures that might otherwise be unfunded and undeliverable.
- 35 In analysing options and adopting a strategy for the site, the Council must be mindful of a wide range of considerations and implications, issues and risks, benefits and challenges. It is recommended that the Director of Growth & Enterprise is asked to consider future options, prepare an options appraisal and recommend a preferred option for decision by this committee in due course.

## Consultation and Engagement

- 36 The current proposal has been subject to formal consultation and engagement as part of the planning process, which includes the Local Plan Strategy, the Outline Planning Applications submitted in 2014 and 2017, and the Reserved Matters Applications submitted in 2019, 2021 and 2022.
- 37 The Local Plan process considered hundreds of potential housing sites before SMDA was allocated for development. There were 13 rounds of public consultation and 60,000 comments, resulting in the adoption of a

plan that identified a total of 50 strategic site, 3 strategic locations and 8 safeguarded sites.

- 38 In considering future options, it will be important to maintain and develop positive and constructive relationships with statutory organisations such as Homes England and Natural England, and other stakeholders, including Cheshire Wildlife Trust and the Save Danes Moss Trust.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 39 The matters raised in this report have been progressed in partnership with the adjacent landowners for a number of years and it is appropriate that progress is now reported to Committee on the project and there is a discussion on the next steps. The recommendations discussed above are relevant to both Commitment 1 – unlocking prosperity for all and Commitment 3 An effective and enabling council as set out in the Cheshire East Plan 2025-29.

### **Other Options Considered**

- 40 Two other options have been considered: to dispose of the Council's land holding or do nothing.
- 41 A sale of the Council's landholding raises several issues. The value of the site is a function of the development that it will support and the costs of delivering it. It has been concluded that the current proposals for the Site cannot be implemented without significant modification. Until there is an alternative strategy, there will be uncertainty about the amount and type of development that might be approved and uncertainty too about the cost of delivering it because this will depend on the type of construction methods used and the nature and extent of environmental improvements that will be required to make any proposals acceptable in planning terms. The risk associated with the uncertainty would impact the value of the land and whilst there are contractual arrangements that could mitigate that risk, the likely consequence is low values driven by a high-risk premium.
- 42 Another issue is that the Council's ability to influence the future of the site would be diminished following a sale. As planning and highways authority, the Council could exercise regulatory control, but their decisions would be subject to appeal and review by a government committed to increasing the volume of housing development.
- 43 A variation of this option may see the Council identifying some less sensitive areas of the site and offering them for sale. This would avoid to some degree the issues identified above but, in the absence of a strategy for the whole site, the option is likely to prove sub-optimal both from a development and from an environmental perspective.

- 44 Doing nothing would require abandonment of development proposals. This would result in the Council potentially having a £3.283m charge to its revenue account for items previously held as capital expenditure (plus any additional spend in 2025/26).
- 45 However, if a scheme progresses, it would require the council to forward fund the scheme with borrowing prior to the receipt of any capital receipts which will also have revenue consequences. In addition, the peat on the Site is degraded and continues to degrade. Without investment in restorative improvements, this process would continue. The financial costs, potential capital receipts and the environmental impacts and benefits that can be achieved through different solutions will be considered during the optioneering.
- 46 The abandonment of development would impact the Council's housing land supply, putting development pressure on non-allocated, less sustainable locations.

## **Implications and Comments**

### *Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance*

- 47 This report involves the SMDA project it is therefore necessary to ensure that the decision makers have the necessary authority to authorise the proposed transactions. Under the current Constitution dated December 2024 at Chapter 2 part 4 paragraph 2.2 under the heading Economy and Growth Committee, the committee have within their responsibilities the remit to consider the development of policies and make decisions in relation to economic development, regeneration skills and growth. The content of this report falls under that remit.
- 48 The Council has sought grant funding for the development of the project, it was necessary to ensure that the Council adhered to any grant funding conditions associated with the receipt of the monies. It is understood that the project has not met the necessary milestones, it will therefore be necessary for the Council to enter into a deed of termination with Homes England.
- 49 The ecological and environmental factors associated with the development of the whole of the site are now fully known, the aspiration of the Council to develop the site as a whole is not possible, the only alternative it to develop land that has the least ecological importance. The Council will need to consider how it takes the project forwards with any necessary public consultation taking place at the appropriate time and ensuring that the Gunning Principles are adhered to.

### *Section 151 Officer/Finance*

- 50 The Council's MTFs report approved at February 2025 Full Council reflects expected committed spend of £3.359m. That figure is £3.283m at draft outturn. The additional spend of £150k may be charged to the current capital scheme and is within the overall approved budget for the scheme. If the scheme does not proceed there is a risk that expenditure to date (including the £150k) may be charged back to revenue which is a financial challenge.
- 51 Depending on the course of action a review of spend to date will be needed to identify items that are related to the end scheme and those that are abortive costs to be charged to revenue. The basis for the £150k will need to be monitored to ensure spend stays within that envelope and further approvals are sought before exceeding that figure.
- 52 Further research may be needed on the financial options here given the potential next stages and the original timeline for the scheme. If the scheme progresses in its current format this would require the council to forward fund the scheme with borrowing prior to the receipt of any capital receipts which will also have revenue consequences.

#### *Human Resources*

- 53 Staff resources and external specialist expertise will be required to effectively deliver and manage this project. The internal capacity allocated by the Council to this scheme is current limited This is not sufficient or sustainable to effectively deliver and manage this scheme.
- 54 Capacity is likely to be required across a number of specialist disciplines including ecology, planning, legal, development surveying, master planning, civil engineering, carbon and energy, open space management, community and stakeholder engagement, highways and transportation, project management, sports need, contaminated land.
- 55 It is self-evident that the limited capacity within the Place Directorate, other parts of the Council and other statutory agencies will presents challenges to achieving a satisfactory outcome.

### *Risk Management*

- 56 A comprehensive refreshed risk assessment will be prepared as part of the optioneering and review of the delivery strategy going forward.
- 57 Operational issues and risks are reported, monitored and managed through the processes established Strategic Housing Sites Programme Board, and an escalation pathway through to the Place Board existing. There has been minimal activity within the Council on the scheme over the past two years and new governance and reporting processes will need to be established.
- 58 Setting aside the current planning permission might suggest that a quantum of the historic investment was abortive and this may need to be written off to the revenue account.
- 59 The condition of the land presents substantial risks to the Council both in terms of finance and estate management. There are legacy environmental issues, and the land is not being proactively managed from a carbon or habitat perspective. It is intended that, the future management of the site and the associated costs will be addressed in conjunction with the technical work to support this options appraisal.

### *Impact on other Committees*

#### *Strategic Planning Board*

- 60 The report details the history of the site and decisions made by Strategic Planning Board. Any future development will be considered by SPB.

#### *Finance Sub-Committee*

- 61 Any future disposal will be reported to Finance sub-committee in line with the constitution, and where a disposal of land has a capital receipt over £2M.

### *Policy*

- 62 SMDA is an allocated site in the Borough's Local Plan strategy and as such is intended to deliver on a wide range of Council priorities relating to ecology, carbon, housing, education, open space, and infrastructure. It is intended that the future delivery strategy for the site balances these.

### *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*

- 63 An equality impact assessment will be prepared as part of the analysis and development of a future delivery strategy and will inform the decision making relating to this.

### *Other Implications*

#### *Rural*

- 64 There are no direct impacts from this report on rural communities. However there is an indirect impact that housing development as an urban extension may protect the rural villages from over development.

#### *Children and Young People*

- 65 It would be the intention, because SMDA is a development at scale that education, play and sports facilities and informal open space be designed into the masterplan for the development. The Council's leading role in this scheme should mean that this will be well planned and high quality.

#### *Public Health*

- 66 Potential development may provide opportunities for outdoor activities including informal recreation, play and sports. As a new urban extension, the ability for people to sustainably and actively travel will be designed in. Through s.106 obligations, financial contributions will flow from the development into health provision.

#### *Climate Change*

- 67 Any revised or updated proposals for the scheme need to be fully cognisant of the carbon implications of development and the implications for the peat material on the site. It will be a consideration of any future plans that the carbon sink provided by the peat is restored or enhanced through funding and measures taken on site to maximise improvements and mitigate against any further deterioration. It is anticipated that any future development on this scheme would provide value to enable investment in the wider site to help mitigate climate change.

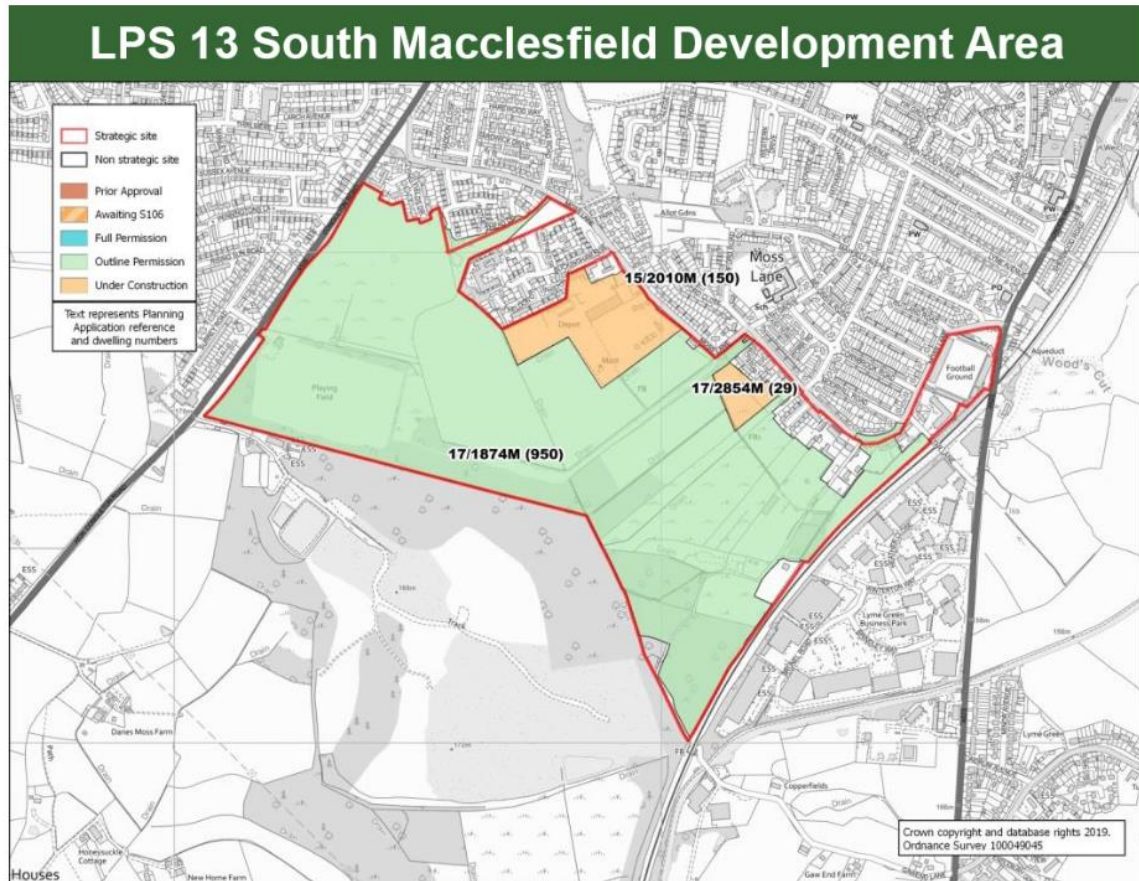


*Consultation*

<b>Name of Consultee</b>	<b>Post held</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date returned</b>
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy) :</i>			
Sal Khan	Deputy S151 Officer		22/05/25
Janet Witkowski	Acting Monitoring Officer		20/05/25
<i>Legal and Finance</i>			
Steve Reading	Accountancy		01/05/25
Mandy Withington	Principal Lawyer – Commercial Property and Projects		29/04/2025

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Charles Jarvis Head of Economic Development Charles.Jarvis@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Site Plan
Background Papers:	None

## Appendix 1 – Site Plan



The South Macclesfield Development Area, taken from the [Local Plan Strategy](#) document

OPEN

## **Economy and Growth Committee**

**3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025**

### **Interim Housing Strategy 2025-2028**

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**Report of: Phil Cresswell – Executive Director - Place**

**Report Reference No: EG/09/25-26**

**Ward(s) Affected: All Wards**

**For Decision or Scrutiny: Decision**

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 On 12<sup>th</sup> November, the Economy and Growth Committee approved consultation on the Interim Housing Strategy 2025-2028.
- 2 Consultation took place for a period of 12 weeks ending on 25th February 2025. This report provides a summary of the responses and presents the findings.
- 3 The Strategy contributes towards a number of commitments within the new Corporate Plan (2025-2029) including unlocking prosperity for all and improving health and wellbeing.

#### **Executive Summary**

- 4 The Economy and Growth Committee in November were advised that due to the challenges that we have faced over the last few years, including the impact of the pandemic and war in Ukraine on the global economy, a change in Government, who are progressing a number of policy changes and the move towards the revision of the Local Plan, we have focused on the development of a three year Interim Housing Strategy, which sets out what our priority areas of work will be during this time frame.
- 5 This provides time to develop a long-term Housing Strategy which will draw on the evidence due to be commissioned for the development of a

new Local Plan and we will have a clearer position in relation to the introduction of new Government Legislation.

- 6 The Interim Housing Strategy went out for a period of public consultation between 25th November 2024 and 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025, the aim of which was to seek views on the strategy and the outlined priorities. There were a number of questions which were circulated to Committee Members prior to the start of the consultation and are also provided in Appendix one.
- 7 At the close of the consultation 229 responses had been received, a summary of which is outlined in Appendix two
- 8 The summary outlines where changes are to be made to the Interim Housing Strategy as a result of the responses and these have been incorporated into the final version Appendix three.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Economy and Growth Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the consultation responses and amendments made to the Interim Housing Strategy 2025–2028
2. To approve and adopt the final version of the Interim Housing Strategy 2025-2028
3. Delegate authority to the Director of Growth and Enterprise to approve any further updates to the Interim Housing Strategy Action Plan up and to 2028.

#### Background

- 9 Housing plays a crucial role in peoples' quality of life, health, and wellbeing. The Interim Housing Strategy 2025-2028 supports the Council's aims and objectives for housing in the Borough, to improve the choice, quality, and supply of housing for a diverse population, support people to buy or rent their own home, prevent homelessness, improve options for older people and protect the most vulnerable.
- 10 Whilst not a statutory requirement to publish a Housing Strategy it is deemed to be best practice to set out the Council's vision and priorities for housing over a prescribed period of time.

- 11 Since the end of the previous strategy the services have continued to explore new opportunities and continue to provide essential services to our residents, we are however working in a fast-changing environment.
- 12 The Government are progressing a number of policy changes, which will bring forward new requirements. We continue to work in a challenging financial climate and there is a review of the Local Plan on the horizon, which will bring forward further housing needs evidence and policy changes. It is considered that to undertake any longer-term planning at this stage would be at risk of those plans then being subject to further change.
- 13 The Housing Services have therefore focused on developing an Interim Housing strategy to cover the period 2025-2028 and outlines our priority areas of work, specifying the actions we will undertake during this timeframe. This will help inform our partners of our strategic direction and so help inform their own plans. It will provide a period when we can also respond more readily to the changing environment, collating evidence to inform our housing priorities and the development of a long-term Housing Strategy.
- 14 The Interim Housing Strategy focuses on a number of key strategic priorities which include:
  - Improving access to affordable housing
  - Meeting Peoples specialist housing needs
  - Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping
  - Improving housing standards
  - Enabling independent living
- 15 The Councils Transformation Programme recognises a number of projects associated with assets and good asset management. Housing being one of those core plans at the heart of the Councils corporate responsibilities, and our statutory duties around housing. This is sometimes called the “front door.”
- 16 There are clear links to the Council’s Transformation agenda, service areas across the Council have been identified within the Strategy where Strategic Housing will work closely with them to understand the accommodation needs, formulate an Accommodation Strategy and identify mechanisms in which to bring forward the required accommodation. These will be incorporated within future iterations of the Strategy, which will be updated.

- 17 The Interim Housing Strategy was publicly consulted on for a 12-week period and a summary of the consultation responses can be found in Appendix two. A number of changes have been made to the strategy following consultation and these are outlined in the Consultation and Engagement section below.

## **Consultation and Engagement**

- 18 Following approval, the draft Interim Housing strategy was subject to a period of 12-week consultation, which ran from 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024 to 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025. Consultation took the form of:
- 19 Online questionnaire and survey seeking views of residents and stakeholders via the Cheshire East Council website
- 20 Presentations to encourage participation in the consultation
- 21 Social media and website campaign to advise local residents of the consultation
- 22 Hard copies along with questionnaires placed in libraries to allow response by people without access to computer or smart 'phone.
- 23 The responses to the consultation were collated by the Research and Intelligence Team and the results provided to enable the further development of the final strategy.
- 24 In total, there were 229 responses received via the online questionnaire/survey, and these have been collated into a Summary, outlined in Appendix two.
- 25 The responses ranged from general comments about the strategy, feedback on the proposed actions and some specific comments regarding key areas. The amendments to the strategy included:
- 26 A definition of 'cost of living crisis', as this much used term was in need of a focus; text concerning 'future proofing' of new homes, recognising the importance of suitable homes for older and disabled people; reference to access to green space and public transport; text on the Armed Forces Covenant; comments on Registered Providers of social housing and Private Developers.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 27 The Housing Strategy is a significant contributor to achieving the aims and objectives of the Corporate Plan including "Unlocking prosperity for

all and improving health and wellbeing". It also contributes to the delivery of the vision of the current Local Plan Strategy.

- 28 The strategy outlines the priorities which the Housing Services will concentrate on over the next three years to inform our partners of our strategic direction, which has the potential to influence their own plans and strategies. The lack of a strategy and strategic direction can lead to uncertainty not only for our partners, but Housing staff and other service areas.

### Other Options Considered

- 29 Due to the changing environment we are currently working in, the decision has been taken to develop an Interim Housing Strategy which focuses on a three year period, instead of the longer term strategies usually developed.
- 30 We have the option to produce a longer-term strategy (5 to 10 years), but the likelihood it that this would need to be changed, within a shorter period of time to reflect new Government policies, new evidence commissioned to support the new Local Plan and new Corporate Plan priorities.
- 31 With the challenges that the current financial position presents, services and priorities could change within the near future and therefore having a short-term plan provides services with focus until future decisions are taken.

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	No strategic direction to inform services and external partners.	Services focus on areas which may not be a strategic priority for the Council.
Implement a short-term three-year strategy	Provides strategic direction, explains our vision and priorities for focus, also providing an opportunity to plan for a longer-term strategy.	Requires planning to start on the revision of the strategy within a year of adoption and resources may not be available.
Develop a longer-term strategy (5 to 10 years)	The intelligence / evidence is not available to plan for a long term strategy	Due to the fast changing environment, the risk is that the strategy will be out of date within a shorter

		period of time. Further intelligence could influence a change in priorities and require a review of the strategy.
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## Implications and Comments

### *Monitoring Officer/Legal*

- 32 The committee's remit set out in the Constitution includes 'determination of policies and making of decisions in relation to housing management and delivery.' Approval of the housing strategy is therefore within its remit.
- 33 The Deregulation Act 2015 Section 29 removed the legal requirement for a local authority to have a housing strategy. However, preparation of such a strategy is deemed as good practice.
- 34 The proposed amendments to the strategy have been out to public consultation and the outcomes of consultation have been taken into account which demonstrates informed decision making taking into account relevant considerations.

### *Section 151 Officer/Finance*

- 35 The development of an Interim strategy has been undertaken taking into consideration the Medium-Term Financial Position and the resources available to the Housing Services currently. A number of actions will require partnership working and do not place a financial pressure on the Council.
- 36 Any reduction in funding and resources has the potential to impact on the ability to deliver all the actions outlined within the strategy and therefore the action plan will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it is still deliverable.
- 37 Some actions will be funded through external funding for example the Homelessness Prevention Fund. These grants have been in place for a number of years but could be reduced or cut; if this happens the actions associated with this funding will be reviewed.
- 38 All major projects, for example, the review of temporary accommodation will be subject to detailed business cases and if not supported will not proceed.



### *Policy*

- 39 The Interim Housing Strategy will contribute towards the vision and commitments outlined within the new Corporate Plan 2025-2029 including unlocking prosperity for all and improving health and wellbeing.
- 40 The strategy identifies a number of strategies in which there are strategic links including the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Carbon Neutrality Action Plan, Local Plan Strategy and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

### *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*

- 41 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out. Concern was raised about the lack of data regarding disabled households. This has been addressed with data now included. Reference was made to exclusion of Roma, and a change was made to Gypsies Roma and Travellers.
- 42 Attention was drawn to the reference to supporting our care leavers to ensure they have the skills to prepare for and sustain their tenancy, which is now included.
- 43 Concern was raised about accommodation provision for young people, and about the lack of data regarding disabled households, now included. Mention of sensory disability has been included. It was suggested that age is not a contributing factor to deprivation. Age is a Protected Characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. Old people in rural areas have more difficulty in accessing services which are further away, and this is reflected in the Strategy.

### *Human Resources*

- 44 It is not anticipated that there will be any additional staff resources required to enact the actions in the strategy, and any resulting tasks and workgroups will be facilitated and completed within existing staff resources.

### *Risk Management*

- 45 Priorities are derived from a strong evidence base which have taken consideration of resident requirements, as well as other local authority departmental ambitions. We are however working in a very fast changing environment which may result in other Government requirements being placed on services, and this would have the potential to impact on our

ability to deliver the outlined actions. We would therefore have to review the deliverability of the actions and reprofile time frames.

- 46 A number of actions within the strategy will involve collaborating with external partners, stakeholders and other CEC departments. They may also be impacted by future financial pressures and changes. We will try and mitigate this risk via regular communication and monitoring.
- 47 There is a risk that delivery of actions within the strategy may be delayed due to staff resources and availability. This will be monitored and the action plan reviewed on a regular basis.

### *Rural Communities*

- 48 The Interim Housing Strategy outlines the rural housing challenges including high house prices, ageing demographics, low wages and access to services. It emphasises that central to addressing deprivation in rural areas is making sure rural housing markets work for their resident populations by providing affordable accommodation across a range of tenures and types of home.
- 49 The strategy highlights the need to continue to engage with Parish councils and residents to address identified housing needs.

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

- 50 We recognise the need to deliver a range of housing and housing support options appropriate to the needs and preferences of young people. One of the priority areas of work identified within the Interim Housing Strategy is providing specialist housing and there are a number of actions which have been highlighted to support the creation of housing options and pathways for our Care Leavers.

### *Public Health*

- 51 Housing is a key social determinant for a person's mental and physical health. Furthermore, people who experience homelessness are significantly more likely to suffer mental and physical health issues. Poor housing conditions can result in health issues, with cold and damp homes increasing the risk of cardiovascular, respiratory and rheumatoid diseases, as well as hypothermia and poor mental wellbeing. Young children, older people and people with an illness or disability are more likely to suffer the effects of cold and damp housing.
- 52 The priorities and actions set out within the Interim Housing Strategy will help to reduce the prevalence of homelessness, make better quality housing more accessible to residents and improve housing standards.

This will, in turn, deliver direct and indirect health and wellbeing benefits to Cheshire East residents.

*Climate Change*

- 53 Energy use in homes accounts for 28% of carbon emissions in Cheshire East. The Council has committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2027 and to encourage all businesses, residents and organisations in Cheshire East to reduce their carbon footprint. The Council made a further pledge to make Cheshire East a carbon neutral borough by 2045.
- 54 The Interim Housing Strategy contributes towards the delivery of this ambition through the priority of improving housing standards, where we will continue to enable and advise vulnerable households how to improve their home's energy efficiency.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Karen Carsberg  Karen.carsberg@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix One – Consultation questions  Appendix Two – Consultation Results  Appendix Three – Housing Strategy 25-28
Background Papers:	<Provide a list of the background papers/information relevant to this report and/or recommendations>

## Draft Housing Strategy 2025 – 2028

### Online consultation

Housing plays a crucial role in peoples' quality of life, health, and wellbeing. The draft Housing Strategy 2025-2028 supports the Council's aims and objectives for housing in the Borough, to improve the choice, quality, and supply of housing for a diverse population, support people to buy or rent their own home, prevent homelessness, improve options for older people and protect the most vulnerable.

This draft Housing Strategy has been developed at a time of significant challenges within the housing market, including continuing economic instability and the cost-of-living crisis, a reduction in public funding, and the election of a new Government.

This draft Strategy has been developed as an interim Housing Strategy, and outlines our priorities over a 3-year period, instead of the Council's previous 5-year Strategy, recognising that that we will have to respond to change and to emerging evidence through the development of the next Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy.

This is a consultation on the draft Housing Strategy, running from 25th November 2024 to the 25th February 2025. Questions follow which ask about different aspects of the draft Strategy.

### Questions

1. Do you agree or disagree that the evidence base, which covers the National context and challenges, is robust?

Yes

No

If 'No', what do think is missing?

2. Do you agree or disagree that the document accurately summarises the local picture when talking about the local housing market, tenures, homelessness, and vulnerabilities?

3. Do you agree or disagree that the 5 strategic priorities are the right ones? If not, why?

4. Do you agree or disagree that the action plan for **Priority 1** will achieve the priorities? If not, why?

5. Do you agree or disagree that the action plan for **Priority 2** will achieve the priorities? If not, why?

6. Do you agree or disagree that the action plan for **Priority 3** will achieve the priorities? If not, why?

7. Do you agree or disagree that the action plan for **Priority 4** will achieve the priorities? If not, why?

8. Do you agree or disagree that the action plan for **Priority 5** will achieve the priorities? If not, why?

9. Are there any additional issues that need to be added, and if so against which Priority?
10. Are there other issues which should be prioritised in 2025-2028?
11. Do you have any further observations on the Strategy as a whole?



# A summary of responses to Cheshire East Council's Housing Strategy Consultation 2025-2028

## Contents of report

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Contents of report .....	1
Executive summary and conclusions .....	2
Introduction .....	4
Section 1: National and local housing context and challenges.....	5
Section 2: Strategic priorities and actions .....	5
Section 3: Further comments .....	10
Appendix 1: Demographic breakdowns .....	14
Appendix 2: All consultation comments received along with CEC responses.....	16



DRAFT

# Executive summary and conclusions

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## Introduction

During November 2024 – February 2025 Cheshire East Council conducted a consultation to seek views on its draft Housing Strategy for 2025 – 2028. In total, 229 responses were received. This report aims to summarise all the responses received during the consultation.

## National and local housing context and challenges

When asked whether the evidence base used within national and local housing context and challenges sections of the draft strategy covered all the relevant information, opinion seemed to be split. 39% of respondents agreed (either strongly agree or tend to agree) that the local housing context and challenges covered all the relevant information whereas 43% disagreed. For the national context and challenges section, 38% agreed that this covered all the relevant information whereas 37% disagreed.

## Strategic priorities and actions

Encouragingly the majority of respondents agreed that the 5 strategic priorities identified were the right areas to focus on. Agreement (those answering tend to agree or strongly agree), ranged from 63% to 70% for each strategic priority.

Opinion, however, was more split when respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed that the details within the action plan would help achieve each strategic priority. Those agreeing ranged from 36% to 43% and those disagreeing ranged from 31% to 35%.

### Improvements to supporting infrastructure, affordable and social housing / support

Within the comments sections respondents highlighted the need for more supporting infrastructure to keep up with new house builds. They also felt that affordable housing needs to be truly affordable and that there is a vital need for such houses as well as more social housing and / or housing support.

### Longer term look on planning, greater range of properties to upsize / downsize into

A longer term look on planning was felt to be needed with more thinking on community living, environmental considerations and lifetime homes. To free up housing for entry level bands there needs to be more homes for people to move up into and also smaller properties for people to downsize into - priority should be made for suitable disabled and elderly accommodation to release larger housing stock.

### Strategy document needs to be more detailed / measurable / adequacy resourced

The document was felt to need more direction, substance and detail - the action plans don't outline how the outcomes of the strategy will be measured. More consideration of geographical differences were also required. Respondents suggested that the strategy needs to be adequately resourced to meet every aspect of the policy and that it would be beneficial to link in with businesses. The housing strategy also needs to become part of the Local Plan and the Labour governments drive to increase housing stock.



### **Less house building on greenfield sites / at all**

There were respondents who suggested less housing on greenfield sites and more utilisation of brownfield sites and / or the adaption of existing buildings. There were some who did not believe there was a need for any more house building at all.

## **Recommendations**

The Engagement and Communications Team recommend that the details within this report are thoroughly reviewed and considered alongside other key evidence before finalising the draft strategy.

# Introduction

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## Purpose of the consultation

During November 2024-February 2025 Cheshire East Council conducted a 12-week consultation to seek views on its draft Housing Strategy for 2025-2028.

Housing plays a crucial role in peoples' quality of life, health, and wellbeing. The draft Housing Strategy 2025-2028 supports the Council's aims and objectives for housing in the borough, to improve the choice, quality, and supply of housing for a diverse population, support people to buy or rent their own home, prevent homelessness, improve options for older people and protect the most vulnerable.

The draft Strategy has been developed as an interim Housing Strategy and outlines our priorities over a 3-year period, instead of the Council's previous 5-year Strategy, recognising that that we will have to respond to change and to emerging evidence through the development of the next Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy.

This report aims to summarise all the responses received during the consultation.

## Consultation methodology and number of responses

The consultation was mainly hosted online however paper versions were made available at libraries throughout Cheshire East. They were also available on request. It was promoted to:

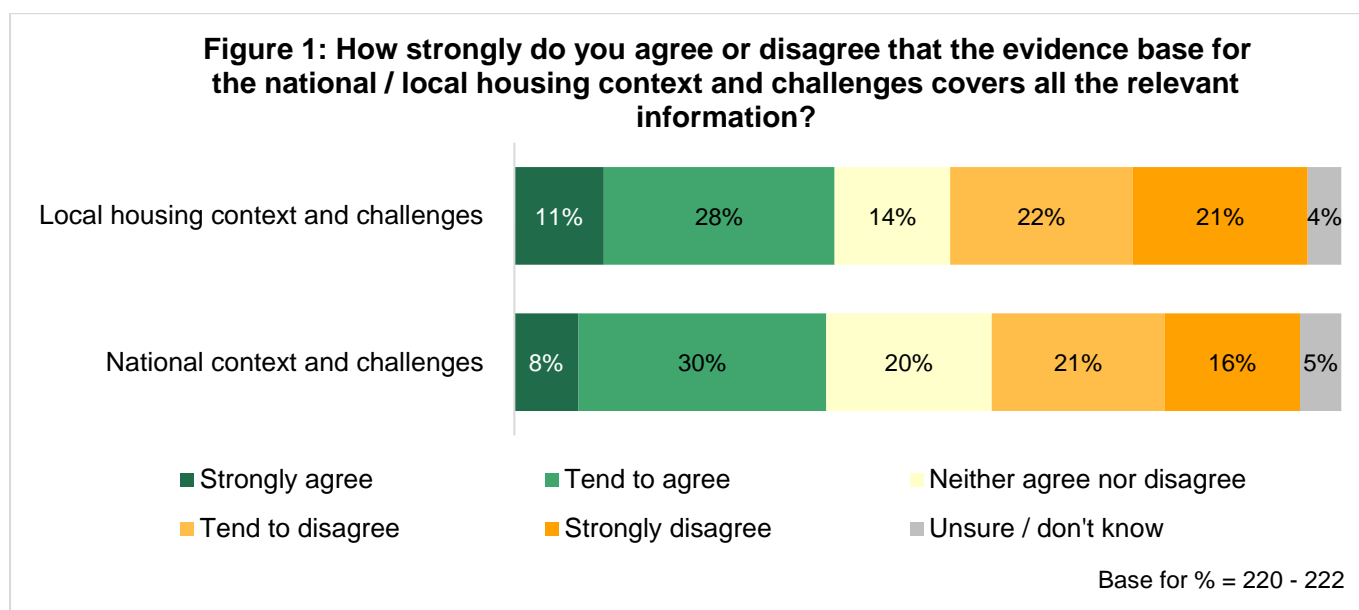
- Residents of Cheshire East and the general public
- The Cheshire East Digital Influence Panel
- Town and Parish Councils
- Elected Members

In total, 225 responses were received to the survey along with 4 responses via email, a summary of the email responses can be viewed in Table 3. A breakdown of survey demographics can be viewed in Appendix 1.

## Section 1: National and local housing context and challenges

The draft strategy set out details of the national and local housing context and challenges. Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed that the evidence base used within these sections covered all the relevant information.

Opinion seemed to be spilt, 39% of respondents agreed (either strongly agree or tend to agree) that the local housing context and challenges covered all the relevant information whereas 43% disagreed. For the national context and challenges section, 38% agreed that this covered all the relevant information whereas 37% disagreed. Figure 1 shows the full breakdown of results.



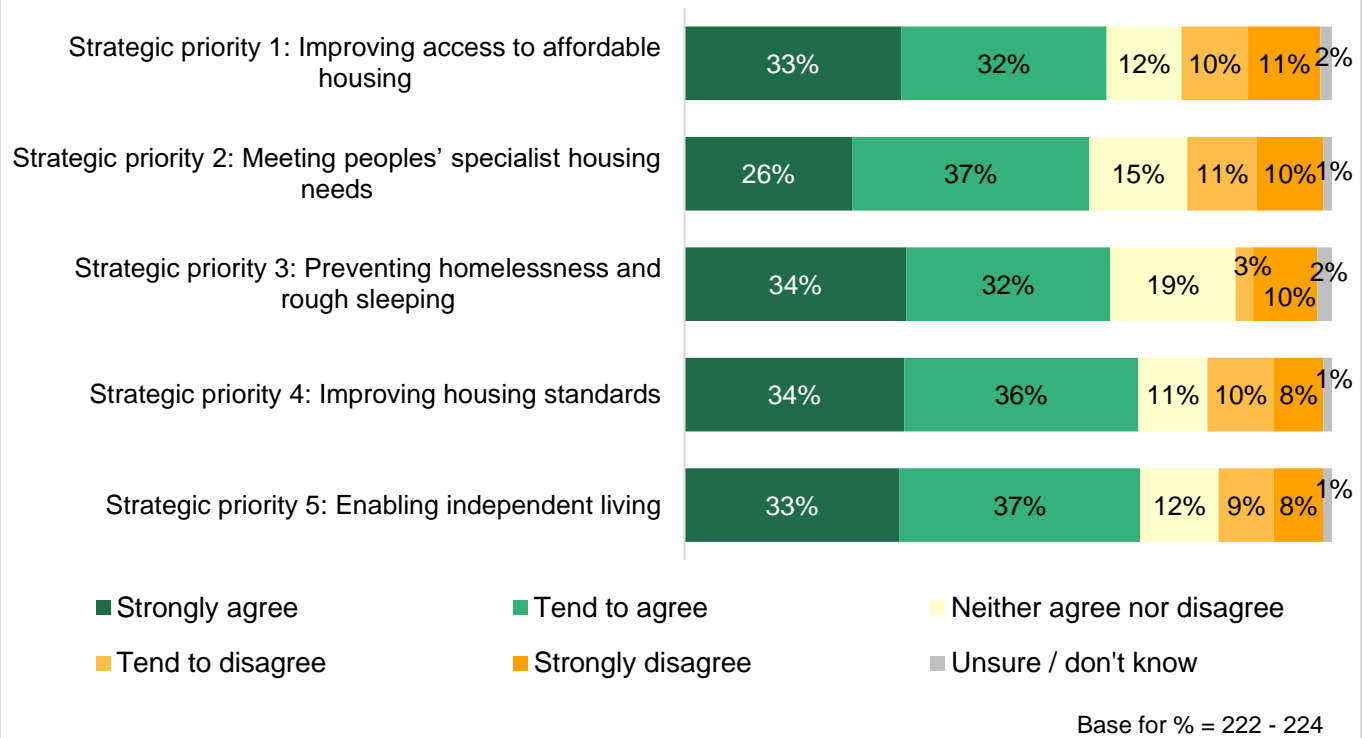
## Section 2: Strategic priorities and actions

There were five strategic priorities identified within the draft strategy:

- Strategic priority 1: Improving access to affordable housing
- Strategic priority 2: Meeting peoples' specialist housing needs
- Strategic priority 3: Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping
- Strategic priority 4: Improving housing standards
- Strategic priority 5: Enabling independent living

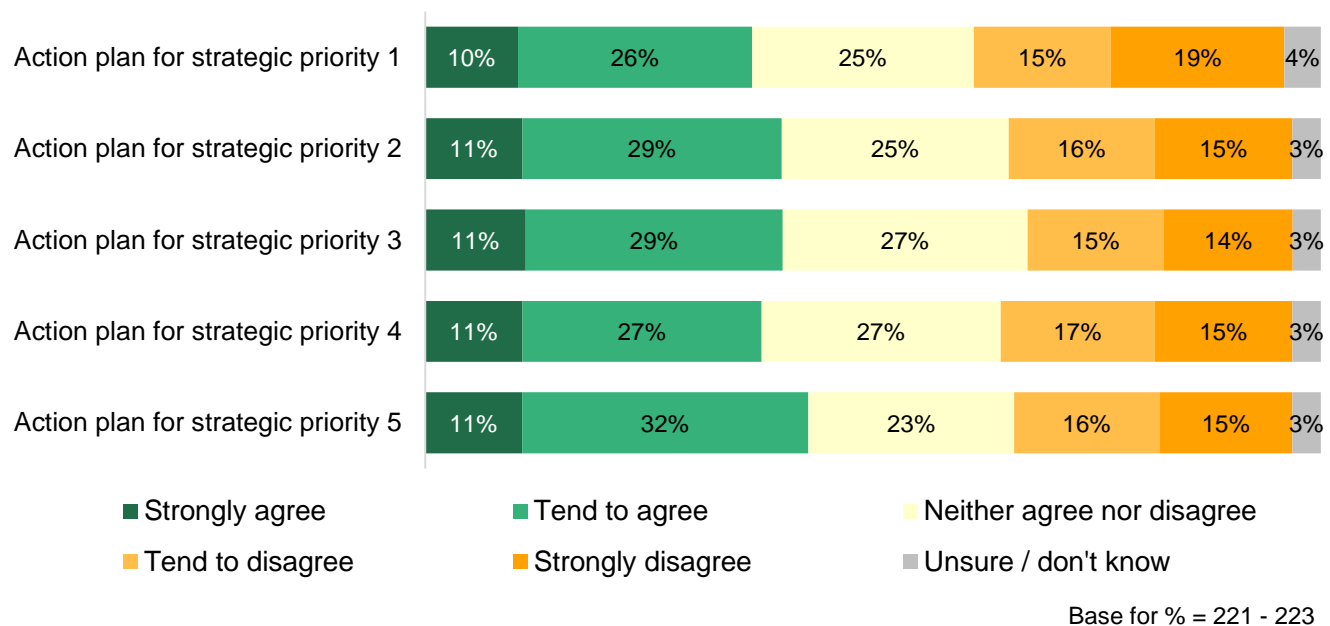
The majority of respondents agreed that the priorities identified were the right areas to focus on. Strategic priority 4: Improving housing standards and strategic priority 5: Enabling independent living received the highest level of agreement (70% stated that they strongly or tend to agree with these priorities). Figure 2 shows the full breakdown of results.

**Figure 2: How strongly do you agree or disagree that the priorities identified within the draft housing strategy are the right areas to focus on?**



Each strategic priority also had an associated action plan. Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed that the details within the action plan would help achieve each strategic priority. Responses to this question were more split with those agreeing ranging from 36% to 43% and those disagreeing ranging from 31% to 35%. Figure 3 shows the full breakdown of response.

**Figure 3: How strongly do you agree or disagree that the details within the action plan will help achieve each strategic priority?**



Respondents were asked if there were any other housing issues/challenges which should be prioritised during 2025-2028. In total 107 respondents chose to leave a comment. The comments provided were coded into the following overall themes and sub themes:

- Need supportive infrastructure, 22 mentions.
- Don't build on greenfield sites / use brownfield sites, 19 mentions.
- Affordable housing / rent considerations, 17 mentions.
- Need more social housing / housing support, 15 mentions.
- No more houses / general negative comment, 17 mentions.
- Need new / longer term thinking on planning, 14 mentions
- Suitable properties to downsize into / for the elderly & disabled, 8 mentions.
- Needs to be more detailed / measurable / adequacy resourced, 7 mentions.
- Geographic considerations, 5 mentions.
- Reduction in HMO's, 3 mentions.
- Maintenance of homes & properties / antisocial behaviour, 3 mentions.
- Second homes / extended rooms, 3 mentions.
- Other comment, 4 mentions.

Some respondents will have referred to more than one theme therefore total mentions won't add up to the total number of respondents who left a comment. The full summary of the comments received by theme and sub theme is presented in Table 1 on the next page.

**Table 1: Are there any other housing issues/challenges which should be prioritised during 2025-2028?**

Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Need supportive infrastructure	Need the infrastructure to keep pace with any additional housing, for example access to schools, medical facilities, the transport network, green spaces. Parking and roads are inadequate for the increase in the volume of traffic. Support people to find good jobs to fund mortgage payments by providing training & office spaces for businesses.	22
Don't build on greenfield sites / use brownfield sites	No more building on green field sites, protect key areas of biodiversity such as Danes Moss. These sites are unsuitable and lead to flooding. Use and develop brown field sites, adapt existing buildings - for example turn empty shops and offices into housing / living accommodation.	19
Affordable housing / rent considerations	Ensure that "affordable" housing is affordable, affordable houses should be affordable for the low paid. Insist on more affordable housing, secured for local people. Prevent landlords buying up affordable housing. Property prices are steadily increasing across all types and sizes of properties, making them increasingly unaffordable. There is no focus on young, single people who could possibly make it on to the housing ladder with the provision of flats or maisonettes - no lone person could possibly afford 'affordable' houses. Need to retain the younger demographic, young people's first homes. Private rent charges to be in line with the benefits allowance for single people in houses.	17
Need more social housing / housing support	No description of or background on social housing in the plan, no commitment to build and manage more social housing. Need more social housing and a determined effort to reduce private landlords. Find empty private properties and see if they would be willing to sell to the council for social housing. Need more four bed social housing for families, need more one private room but shared kitchen and bathroom style accommodation. Women's refuges, consider those in the armed forces. Prioritise those who have been on the list the longest.	15
No more houses / general negative comment	Stop building more houses. There is enough housing stock already. General negative comment or statement in relation to a housing situation / the council / council services.	14
Need new / longer term thinking on planning	Doesn't consider community living or the environmental issues associated with housing. There is nothing about requiring new houses to meet improved housing standards, particularly to ensure they are carbon zero. There needs to be an urgent move towards factory built smaller single units – these can be quickly built and can provide the highest EPC rate of A with the use of the right material. Lifetime homes should be encouraged, this will minimise expensive home alterations. To free up housing in the entry level bands there will be a need to provide more housing for people to move upwards.	14

**Table 1: Are there any other housing issues/challenges which should be prioritised during 2025-2028?**

Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Suitable properties to downsize into / for the elderly & disabled	Require developers to include bungalows / smaller properties / ground floor accommodation for people to downsize into. Priority should be made for suitable disabled and elderly accommodation to release larger housing stock. Supported accommodation for disabled adults.	8
Needs to be more detailed / measurable / adequacy resourced	All the priorities have good intentions but with no real direction or content, the action plans don't outline how the outcomes of the strategy will be measured. Need adequate resources to meet every aspect of the policy. This strategy must become part of the Local Plan and must be used to strengthen the need for such housing.	7
Geographic considerations	There needs to be a close correlation between strategy plans and demographic and socio-economic characteristics for settlement areas to strengthen potential for relevant improvement in the individual areas. The physical/geographical location of housing development is critically important. One strategy does not fit the whole Borough, the strategy needs to be area specific, plans based on a percentage of market value will never provide affordable housing in Wilmslow. In Buerton, the current parish plan only includes a restricted small area, the plan should include all areas within the development boundaries. Spread housing developments fairly across the borough.	5
Reduction in HMO's	Further reduction in the number of HMO's, bring them back into family homes or self-contained accommodation. Reduction of HMOs in Crewe.	3
Maintenance of homes & properties / antisocial behaviour	Maintenance of homes, damp issues. Tenants not keeping the home or surrounds in good repair. Monitor unneighbourly behaviour in social housing.	3
Second homes / extended rooms	Make it harder to own second homes / second homes should be vetoed. Charge higher council tax for people who have extended or added habitable rooms upon completion of the works rather than when the property is sold.	3
Other	Hold developers to account and ensure they deliver what is promised at the time of the planning application. Strategic priority 3 - should be recognised that a few people living rough do not want to be rehoused / generally driven by more fundamental issues, not a lack of housing.	4

## Section 3: Further comments

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At the end of the survey respondents had the opportunity to let us know if they had any further comments to make on the proposal. 91 respondents chose to leave a comment. The comments provided were coded into the following overall themes and sub themes:

- No more houses / general negative comment, 19 mentions.
- Don't build on greenfield sites / use brownfield sites, 16 mentions.
- Need more affordable housing and / or more social housing / support, 16 mentions.
- Needs more specific targets / joined up approach / less jargon, 15 mentions.
- Need the supporting infrastructure, 14 mentions.
- Need new / longer term thinking on planning, 12 mentions.
- Suitable properties to downsize into / for the elderly & disabled, 8 mentions.
- Effective monitoring of developers, 4 mentions.
- Other comment, 7 mentions.

Some respondents will have referred to more than one theme therefore total mentions won't add up to the total number of respondents who left a comment. The full summary of the comments received by theme and sub theme is presented in Table 2, on the next page.



**Table 2: If you have any further comments to make on the draft housing strategy, please let us know below**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Summary of comments received</b>	<b>Number of mentions</b>
No more houses / general negative comment	Stop building houses. CE has its 5-year plan so no more estates should be built. General negative comment or statement in relation to a housing situation / the council / council services.	19
Don't build on greenfield sites / use brownfield sites	Do not build on greenfield sites. There needs to be environmental considerations as all this building on greenbelt or rural land is taking away plants which generate oxygen and absorb rain. Develop within the towns, there are multiple redundant buildings / sites / shops that can be utilised for housing.	16
Need more affordable housing and / or more social housing / support	The strategy doesn't address the real affordability of buying or renting a property. Affordable housing is a vital need. Ensure commercial builders include affordable housing and appropriate/specialist housing - need less affordable housing 'plonked' on estates with no governance or oversight and we need true local authority housing. There is no affordable housing in Buerton this needs to be addressed. Build flats for those who cannot afford to buy. Need much more social housing / provide council housing. The 'right to buy' is reducing social housing stocks. Homelessness prevention should be much higher than current - review the social issues contributing to homelessness.	16
Needs more specific targets / joined up approach / less jargon	Surprised that there are no specific targets for the action plan. Lacks substance and detail - does not address all the housing needs. Please ensure your staffing levels to monitor/ report progress is maintained. Links with businesses / economic development's needed, provide more support and direction for local parish councils when developing or reviewing parish neighbourhood plans. Would be good to illustrate how this strategy sits in the context of Labour Government's drive to increase numbers of housing stock and local plan developments in supporting infrastructure. The document is too wordy and full of jargon, too much background info.	15
Need the supporting infrastructure	There needs to be more infrastructure coordination with the housing strategy. No new houses without new infrastructure. Need shops, schools, medical facilities, childcare facilities, bus services and road improvements etc to support new build developments. Think about disabled & mental health support, support for the aged, safe walking. No strategy should be considered in isolation.	14
Need new / longer term thinking on planning	The strategy should be about creating places where people can thrive, which means connected communities. Involve occupational therapists when designing/approving housing schemes. More trees native hedging, more communal open space, benches and cycle etc. More consideration needs to be given as to how to prevent young people from moving away. What about future proofing all new housing with electric charging facilities and disabled living standards. Households will need advice and help to make the transition to heat pumps.	12

**Table 2: If you have any further comments to make on the draft housing strategy, please let us know below**

Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Suitable properties to downsize into / for the elderly & disabled	Not sure that the strategy concerning older people's accommodation offers the full range of options. Single storey living for older pensioners is both desirable and healthier with less risk of trips and falls. All new housing developments should have to provide a proportion of affordable for the elderly and/or disabled. Starting a conversation with empty nesters to downsize sooner rather than later is crucial.	8
Effective monitoring of developers	It is vital that effective monitoring takes place to ensure that the required number of houses are being provided and developers held to account should this not occur. Need to address rigorous enforcement of agreements with private developers for affordable housing and actively monitor / enforce environmental mitigation as part of development. Ensure that all developers pay sufficient S106 monies to the local infrastructure.	4
Other comment	Planning sign-off is very slow, a significant improvement is needed. Want to be more effective in starting to expand housing. need more development in and around the Knutsford Town area. Have a strict/rapid process where landlords/ individuals are not on compliance. Prioritise housing for those with local connections.	7

During the consultation period 4 emails were also received. These have been summarised in the table below.

**Table 3: Email Responses**

Responding as	Summary of comments received
An individual	Please share information on how the external funding for a rough sleeping was spent and point me towards the current service for a homeless person seeking emergency accommodation in Macclesfield. The number of people sleeping on the streets in Macclesfield Town centre seems to be at a constant and is not reducing. The 2018-2023 Housing Strategy delivered some key achievements. What about 2024 outcomes? Can we add some relevant recent information?
Holmes Chapel Parish Council	Disagree that the five objectives of the Housing Strategy are the only areas to cover. With the changes and increased requirement for housing supply because of the changes in calculation of need, this strategy and its objectives only covers a minority of the requirements under housing supply. The strategy does not present any plans for addressing most of the housing need. The Local Plan and SADPD only provide policies and guidance under which planning applications will be considered - this is reactive not proactive. It is accepted that many sites for development are identified in the SADPD, but where in the Housing Strategy are there specific plans for encouraging this development. The objectives identified in the draft Housing Strategy should be modified to address a priority for encouraging the

Table 3: Email Responses	
Responding as	Summary of comments received
	overall Housing need - support the 5 identified objectives as far as they go but would want to see more visible management of these as well as some performance measures on their achievement. The annual housing monitoring update is at least one year old when published, so does not reflect accurately the housing supply that has been met.
Gawsworth Parish Council	The policy should be updated to provide that any strategic development sites on the periphery or within rural parishes should give equal priority to residents of the parishes as to those of the town (whose spatial needs the development is seen to meet) in order to meet rural housing needs. For example, the developments south of Macclesfield should meet the housing needs of residents of Gawsworth, Henbury, Sutton etc.
An individual	This individual suggested several specific recommendations to the draft strategy which have been sent to the relevant department for full review. This included suggestions for further detail, scope, definitions and references and for a final review to be made of the document to help rationalise and standardise content and format within the strategy. Also suggested that the document is re-formatted to include: Document Control and Content (Authored; Checked; Approved; Consulted; Issue Purpose; Date of Issue; Revision).

## Appendix 1: Demographic breakdowns

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

**Table 5: Number of survey respondents by representation. Respondents could select all that apply.**

Category	Count	Percent
As a resident of Cheshire East	209	93%
As a Cheshire East Ward Councillor, or Town/Parish Councillor	9	4%
An elected Member of Cheshire East	2	1%
On behalf of a group, organisation, or club	2	1%
On behalf of a local business	< 5	< 1%
Other interested party	< 5	< 1%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 6: Number of survey respondents by gender**

Category	Count	Percent
Female	77	37%
Male	115	56%
Prefer not to say	15	7%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 7: Number of survey respondents by age group**

Category	Count	Percent
16-24	-	-
25-34	7	3%
35-44	8	4%
45-54	29	14%
55-64	50	24%

65-74	58	27%
75-84	31	15%
85 and over	< 5	1%
Prefer not to say	26	12%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 8: Number of survey respondents by ethnic origin		
Category	Count	Percent
White British / English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / Irish	181	86%
Any other White background	< 5	1%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	< 5	< 1%
Any other ethnic origin	< 5	1%
Prefer not to say	25	12%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 9: Number of survey respondents by religious belief		
Category	Count	Percent
Christian	93	45%
No Religion	66	32%
Muslim	< 5	1%
Jewish	< 5	< 1%
Other religious belief	7	3%

Prefer not to say	38	18%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 10: Number of survey respondents by limited activity due to health problem / disability		
Category	Count	Percent
Yes, a lot	24	11%
Yes, a little	44	21%
Not at all	122	58%
Prefer not to say	21	10%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>100%</b>

Appendix 2: All consultation comments received along with CEC responses

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Below are the consultation comments received, with CEC’s responses and an indication of amendments to the Draft Strategy document.

Comment	CEC response	Draft Strategy amended to include:
<p>Page 1</p> <p>How is this document managed and controlled?</p> <p>It is also later described as an 'interim' housing strategy yet labelled as 'Housing Strategy 2025- 2028' - suggest amending to 'Interim Housing Strategy...'</p> <p>There is no issue date and no details of who authored it, was consulted on it, who checked it and subsequently approved it and for what purpose.</p>	<p>This is a typo as the official title is Interim Housing Strategy 2025-2028.</p> <p>The date of consultation was Nov 2024-Feb 2025. A report on the consultation process and analysis of the results will be produced in March 2025.</p>	<p>'Interim' included in the title.</p>
<p>Page 2</p> <p>Suggest that this much used term is backed up by referencing appropriate sources:  <a href="https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/articles/costofliving/latestinsights">https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/articles/costofliving/latestinsights</a>            NC02 - Although the former is now longer being updated</p> <p><a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2021%E2%80%93present_United_Kingdom_cost-of-living_crisis">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2021%E2%80%93present_United_Kingdom_cost-of-living_crisis</a>            and  <a href="https://www.bigissue.com/news/social-justice/will-prices-uk-ever-go-down-cost-of-living-crisis/">https://www.bigissue.com/news/social-justice/will-prices-uk-ever-go-down-cost-of-living-crisis/</a></p>	<p>Data is changing, but a figure has been used from the Joseph Roundtree Foundation.</p>	<p>Circa 5m households on low-income continue to face a very high risk of going without essentials, such as food and</p>

Comment	CEC response	Draft Strategy amended to include:
		heating showing persistent and embedded hardship in the UK.
<p>Page 3</p> <p>Where does Priority 2; 4 and 5 fit into these 6 key points of the 25/28 Housing Strategy?</p>	<p>P2: HRSS, Tenancy Strategy, Allocations Policy</p> <p>P4: Home Repairs and Adaptation, Housing Enforcement</p> <p>P5: HRSS, Tenancy Strategy, Allocations Policy</p>	
<p>Page 4</p> <p>We need the context of these achievements to determine how they fit with what was planned else this is just a list of things that have been done and not necessarily achieved.</p> <p>What was planned for each of these strategic priorities and what specifically was delivered e.g. 'Housing Quality - .... improve their living conditions...' - how, what was specifically done?</p>	<p>This is a review of the action plan of the HS and shows what has been achieved based on the stated objectives and tasks.</p>	<p>...through things like adaptations and repairs, and help with heating peoples'</p>



Comment	CEC response	Draft Strategy amended to include:
		homes through energy efficiency measures.
<p>Page 4</p> <p>Suggest include a list of 'Definitions' to at least provide suitable context.</p> <p>What is the definition used for 'Affordable Home'?</p>	<p>Definitions will be included in the Glossary at the end.</p>	<p>Glossary</p>

<p>NC06 – Page 4</p> <p>What is the definition of 'Homeless'; rough sleeper and all other used terms.</p> <p>What are the current numbers of known and estimated number of homeless people; rough sleepers?</p>	<p>Definitions will be included in the Glossary at the end.</p> <p>Headline rough sleeper data will be included.</p>	<p>Rough sleeping data included.</p>
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<p>Page 4</p> <p>What does this specifically mean and how many does 'small' mean.</p> <p>We have no context.</p>	<p>Text removed to clarify:  '<del>...reducing repeat homelessness for a small cohort of people</del>  by overcoming barriers to accommodation and supporting people to sustain accommodation.'</p>	<p>'...reducing repeat homelessness by overcoming barriers to accommodation and supporting people to sustain accommodation'</p>
<p>NC08 – Page 5</p> <p>Empty Homes Definition - 'long-term..'?</p>		<p>... for 6 months or more...</p>
<p>Page 5</p> <p>Incentives - Financial and/or other?</p>		<p>We have an established landlord offer that helps landlords to work with lower income families who may be helped by Cheshire East Emergency Assistance or our Homelessness Prevention Fund</p>

<p>Page 5</p> <p>How many tenants were helped and in what ways?</p>		<p>Over the last financial year 106 households secured private rented accommodation (88 prevention and 18 relief)</p>
<p>Page 6</p> <p>Definition 'NPPF'?</p> <p>National Planning Policy Framework'?</p>	<p>National Planning Policy Framework, or NPPF, is explained on page 4.</p>	<p>Definitions will be included in the Glossary at the end, and AH will be included.</p>
<p>Page 8</p> <p>Rural - Remove 'the' or specifically define those instances of inequality and/or deprivation.</p>		<p>'the' removed to read: 'Rural communities are vulnerable to the significant levels of inequality and deprivation.'</p>
<p>Page 8</p> <p>Rural- Define these circumstances - e.g. lack of scheduled and/or sufficient public transport; lack of mains utilities; other?</p>	<p>'..high house prices, high fuel prices, low wages, seasonal renting, a high level of second home ownership, and an</p>	

	ageing population' are all mentioned.	
<p>Page 8</p> <p>This sentence doesn't make much sense to me.</p> <p>What is/are the point(s) that are trying to be made?</p> <p>Something like "Availability of affordable rural housing is challenged by ....."</p> <p>Although I struggle to understand why being old (an ageing population) provides an additional challenge to those already identified, unless council believes that being old creates other challenges, if so then this would apply everywhere that 'old' people lived and would not be restricted to rural areas.</p>	<p>Age is a</p> <p>protected characteristic under the</p> <p>Equality Act 2010. Old people in rural areas have more difficulty in accessing services which are further away.</p>	
<p>Page 9</p> <p>State which of the 5 priorities are relevant here.</p>	<p>Reference to 'strategic priorities will be removed.'</p>	<p>'..there is a clear need for this to be addressed within the Interim Housing Strategy.'</p>
<p>NC17 – Page 9</p> <p>Define 'deprivation' and those specific areas that can be described as such.</p>	<p>'High levels' changed to 'levels', and a definition of 'deprivation' is included.</p>	<p>There are also other challenges including areas that have levels of deprivation (which looks at factors such as</p>

<p>Council has already defined rural communities as having '..significant levels of ... deprivation...'</p> <p>This doesn't really stack up when compared with the latest information held on the ONS.</p> <p><a href="https://explore-local-statistics.beta.ons.gov.uk/areas/E06000049-cheshire-east/indicators">https://explore-local-statistics.beta.ons.gov.uk/areas/E06000049-cheshire-east/indicators</a></p> <p>"A mixture of urban and rural local authorities are contained in this cluster, the cluster is generally situated in the commuter belt around major urban centres with the South East and East most represented. Local authorities in this cluster have a high employment rate, a low proportion of children in relative poverty and high healthy life expectancy."</p>		<p>income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services, and the living environment.)</p>
<p>Page 9</p> <p>General note - include a section 'References' which defines all quoted information sources including URL links.</p> <p>Specific - Include URL where this information was obtained.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dwelling-stock-estimates-in-england-2020">https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dwelling-stock-estimates-in-england-2020</a> ?</p>		<p>URL links included as footnotes</p>
<p>NC20 – Page 9</p> <p>ONS states second:</p> <p><a href="https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/housingpriceslocal/E06000049/">https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/housingpriceslocal/E06000049/</a></p>	<p>Prices can go up monthly and will be different between when the figure was quoted and when this comment was received.</p>	
<p>Page 10</p>	<p>Prices can go up monthly and will be</p>	

<p>Average house price £302,000.</p> <p><a href="https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/housingpriceslocal/E06000049/">https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/housingpriceslocal/E06000049/</a></p>	<p>different between when the figure was quoted and when this comment was received.</p> <p>Housing affordability statistics are published annually (in or around March) by the Office for National Statistics. Figures for 2023 were published only in March 2024 and ONS' current advice is that the 2024 figures will not be available until March 2025.</p>	
<p>Page 14</p> <p>Consider amending to Gypsy, Roma and Travellers else ask their community their preference.</p> <p><a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Names_of_the_Romani_people">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Names_of_the_Romani_people</a></p>		<p>Changed to Gypsies Roma and Travellers</p> <p><a href="https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/about-us/">https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/about-us/</a></p>
<p>Page 15</p> <p>Slavery- And.....?</p>	<p>No update</p>	

<p>Is this being currently and actively considered?</p> <p>What is the status?</p>		
<p>Page 15</p> <p>Clarify Article 4 and include in References</p>		<p>This will mean that a planning application will have to be submitted for work which normally does not need one.</p> <p><a href="https://www.planningportal.co.uk/permission/responsibilities/planning-permission/permitted-development-rights">https://www.planningportal.co.uk/permission/responsibilities/planning-permission/permitted-development-rights</a></p> <p>DONE</p>
<p>Page 18</p> <p>Green Doctor - I was not aware of this.</p> <p>How would a resident know when to find out about these and all other Cheshire East initiatives and where would they look?</p>		<p>Energy efficiency experts offering free, impartial advice to help people take control of their bills and save energy in the home, with information available on the LiveWell Cheshire East website.</p>

<p>Page 18</p> <p>Health and Wellbeing - Include all referenced strategies and/or other similar within a separate section 'References' and also URL (Uniform Resource Locator).</p>	<p>Strategies are mentioned in the text.</p>	
<p>Page 20</p> <p>Mental Health - What about those whose conditions are such that residential care is the only practicable solution for the foreseeable future?</p>	<p>The aim is to <i>reduce</i> reliance on residential care, not <i>end</i> it. Anyone requiring residential care will receive it.</p>	
<p>Page 20</p> <p>Surely this information must already be known to Cheshire East, specifically with current mental health and associated legislation. (Mental Health Care Act; Care Act etc).</p> <p>Consider additional, qualifying text.</p>	<p>The Housing team <del>will</del> works closely with Mental Health Services to identify individuals</p>	<p>The Housing team works closely with Mental Health Services to identify individuals.....</p>
<p>Page 21</p> <p>There is no mention of new builds and the need to incorporate suitable and appropriate provision for people with disabilities both current and future-proofing.</p>	<p>This was flagged at the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group.</p>	<p>There is a focus on raising accessibility standards of new homes, recognising the importance of suitable homes for older and disabled people.</p> <p>The provision of appropriate</p>



		<p>housing for older and disabled people makes an important contribution to a safe and independent life. An ageing population will see the numbers of disabled people continuing to increase and it is important we plan early to meet their needs through policy change.</p> <p>The consultation sought views on options to raise the accessibility of new homes which included mandating a higher accessibility standard.</p>
Page 21	Older people can develop disabilities...	'...for disabled people...'

<p>'for older age' - amend text "...for disabled and older people...".</p> <p>Current text excludes those with a disability.</p>		
<p>Page 22</p> <p>Older People is covered in 'Disability' and here, suggest that it is covered in this section only and appropriate references are made in all other sections where there is a need to consider the needs of older people.</p>		<p>Some text re: 'disabled and older people' changed to just refer to 'disabled people'</p>
<p>Page 22</p> <p>Community services- Who is responsible to ensure that the proposed demographic (current and reasonable future forecast) of all proposed new builds has been adequately considered with the continued availability of these services to both the indigenous and new residents?</p> <p>How can residents check to ensure that this has been done?</p>	<p>Text added to reflect monitoring.</p>	<p>This will be monitored during the life of the Strategy.</p>
<p>Page 23</p> <p>Consistency - use numbers, not bullets - this aligns with later use of numbers, else only use bullets.</p>		<p>Bullet points changed to numbers 1-5.</p>
<p>Page 23</p> <p>What are the specific, measurable objectives?</p>	<p>The Action Plan which follows has detailed tasks and outcomes.</p>	

<p>e.g. How many and by what date? or What is the change (+ and -ve) at the end of the period?</p> <p>Same question for each sub-section.</p> <p>Who is responsible for delivering these and when and in what format will the actual outcomes be published and shared with Cheshire East residents?</p>		
<p>Page 24</p> <p>Has the 2021- 2025 strategy been implemented (partially or fully)?</p> <p>If partially then what LFE (Learning from Experience) has been found and will it be included within the 2025 - 2028 strategy?</p> <p>If not yet implemented, then why not and what is the point of embarking on a new strategy?</p>	<p>The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021- 2025 is being replaced by a new 2026-2030 Strategy.</p> <p>Some tasks have been completed, some are ongoing, to be carried over to the new Strategy.</p>	
<p>Page 25</p> <p>Suggest that the document is re-formatted to include:</p> <p>Document Control and Content (Authored; Checked; Approved; Consulted; Issue Purpose; Date of Issue; Revision)</p>	<p>Formatting will change and be consistent in the final version (dated and author),</p>	<p>Checked formatting, date and author details, and contact details included at the end.</p>

<p>Scope</p> <p>Definitions (Glossary)</p> <p>References</p>	<p>A glossary will be included at the end of the document.</p>	
<p>Page 26</p> <p>Where are these specific objectives covered:</p> <p>Focusing on delivering Social Rented homes to provide rented accommodation that is genuinely affordable</p> <p>Exploring downsizing schemes to release family accommodation</p>	<p>Cross referenced and links are in the Strategy.</p>	
<p>NC43 – Page 26</p> <p>Delivery of 355 affordable homes - What is the basis of this number and what is the current demand within Cheshire East?</p>	<p>The Council commissioned a Housing Development Study to inform the Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030. The study identified a need for at least 7,100 dwellings/affordable homes over the plan period. This equates to an average of 355 affordable homes per year over the 20-year plan period.</p> <p>The need for affordable housing will be</p>	

	assessed again to inform the new Local Plan that the Council is starting to prepare.	
<p>NC42 – Page 26</p> <p>Annual review with how many affordable houses were delivered?</p> <p>If &lt;355 then will this be added to the next FY?</p>	<p>The delivery of new affordable homes is monitored and published each year in the Council's Authority Monitoring Report.</p> <p>The overall need is for 7,100 dwellings over the plan period. To date, the delivery of affordable homes is keeping track with the level of identified need.</p>	
<p>Page 26</p> <p>Rural areas - Is this included in the 355?</p> <p>If so then how many else when will this, separate quantity be defined and agreed?</p>	<p>The overall need for 7,100 homes applies to the whole of the Borough, including its rural areas.</p>	
<p>Aim: Increase the provision of affordable housing within urban and rural areas by working with key partners:</p>	<p>The overall need is for 7,100 dwellings over the plan period. To date, the delivery of</p>	

<p>What are the specific, measurable objectives?</p> <p>e.g. How many and by what date? or What is the change (+ and -ve) at the end of the period?</p> <p>Who is responsible for delivering these and when and in what format will the actual outcomes be published and shared with Cheshire East residents?</p>	<p>affordable homes is keeping track with the level of identified need.</p> <p>The delivery of new affordable homes is monitored and published each year in the Council's Authority Monitoring Report.</p>	
<p>Continue to progress the procurement of surplus Council land assets through the Housing Development Framework</p>	<p>Surely this is the 'Sale of surplus council land'?</p> <p>Why is it only identified for 2025?</p>	<p>Changed 'procurement' to 'sale' and added up to 2028.</p>
<p>Meeting peoples' specialist housing needs</p>	<p>Is this also accounted for/estimated within the 355 affordable new homes?</p> <p>No - it is separate.</p>	
<p>Page 26</p> <p>Regular meetings - Surprising that this has not already being done.</p>	<p>Text will be changed</p>	<p>Continue regular meetings with developing Registered</p>

		Housing Providers and explore opportunities.
<p>NC47 – Page 27</p> <p>Brownfield and Self Build - Is this also accounted for/estimated within the 355 affordable new homes?</p>	<p>There is no separate target for affordable homes to be delivered on brownfield sites; if affordable units are delivered on brownfield land then they will count towards the 355 target.</p> <p>Self-build units can be affordable and if any affordable self-build units are delivered these will count towards the 355 target. If they are not affordable then market self-build units will not count towards the 355 target.</p>	
<p>Page 27</p> <p>Commission housing support - Surely this should be part of Strategic Priority 3?</p>	<p>Specialist housing and support may be</p>	

Also, as it is currently formatted, it suggests (to me) that all other sub-sections are subordinate to (ie part of) this.	separate to homelessness issues.	
<p>Page 28</p> <p>Aim in Priority 2 specifically uses the term '...multiple disadvantage...' not 'dependency'.</p> <p>I suspect that these 2 terms can also describe/apply to multiple, mutually exclusive instances.</p>	Multiple disadvantages is the preferred phrase and will be changed.	Multiple disadvantages
<p>Page 30</p> <p>A new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is developed which is focused on improved outcomes for the next 3 years</p> <p>Improved outcomes - Improved from what?</p> <p>Presumably specific objectives from the 2021 - 2025 strategy?</p>	Reduced homelessness, improved pathways and throughputs, and quality of life increased - measurable through the new 2026-2030 Homelessness action plan.	Include 'Reduced homelessness, improved pathways and throughputs, and quality of life increased'.
<p>Page 30</p> <p>Strategic Priority 3 states 'No Second Night Out'; change 'Future' to 'Second' else change 'Second' to 'Future' AND clarify max number of nights out.</p>	No Further Night Out	Refer to  No Further Night Out



<p>Page 31</p> <p>Article 4 is not mentioned herein but is within Strategic Priority 4.</p>	<p>There are no specific tasks around Article 4 work, which is on-going on a 'as and when' basis.</p>	
<p>Page 31</p> <p>Strategic Priority 4 states 'vulnerable' householders.</p> <p>Remove inconsistency and amend the appropriate text.</p>	<p>'Vulnerable' is a generic term which means someone finds it difficult to care for and protect themselves, and cope with existing life challenges, due to cost of living/ low income levels, old age, disability, or poor health.</p>	
<p>Page 32</p> <p>NICE Guideline NG6 (2015)</p>	<p>In 2019 NICE said that it had found no new evidence that affects the recommendations.</p>	
<p>Page 32</p> <p>There is no mention of care leavers and the support that they may need.</p> <p>This is defined in Strategic Priority 5.</p>	<p>Insert an action regarding care leavers</p>	<p>Supporting our care leavers to ensure they have the skills to prepare for and sustain their tenancy.</p>

<p>Page 33</p> <p>Include 'sensory' disabilities (as stated in Strategic Priority 5).</p>	<p>This will be included.</p>	<p>'Promote independence for residents with learning and/or autism and physical <b>and/or sensory</b> disabilities</p>
<p><b>ROYAL BRITISH LEGION</b></p>		
<p>We recommend that Cheshire East Council review the implications of the Covenant Duty in drafting this Housing Strategy, and provide evidence that due regard has been paid to the Armed Forces Covenant.</p>	<p>Reference is made to the Armed Forces Covenant.</p>	<p>Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in</p>

		some cases, especially for those who have given the most, such as the injured and the bereaved.
The Homelessness Service should be aware of and linked into other tailored services available to veterans, including health and care support provided by the local Integrated Care System, Op Fortitude and Op Courage, and identified vulnerable veterans should be referred into those services where appropriate.	See the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (HRSS) 2021–2025, page 17	
We wish to highlight the Stoll housing organisation which is a leading provider of supported housing to veterans. Stoll established and continue to run the Veteran's Nomination Scheme (VNS) which helps veterans; generally single people or couples without children, to find affordable housing across the country. Once an applicant has been referred to the VNS, Stoll will match them up with a nearby housing provider and secure accommodation at an affordable rent.	This is noted and will be reflected in the new HRSS 2026-2030	
VNS has supported almost 800 veterans into social housing. Stoll are always looking for new housing associations and local authorities to partner with to find more homes for new housing associations and local authorities to partner with to find more homes for veterans. This scheme can support both the prevention of and relief of homelessness among veterans and their families.	This is noted and will be reflected in the new HRSS 2026-2030	
To use existing units more effectively and to increase access to settled accommodation by working with housing providers, we recommend that Cheshire East Council should consider setting aside housing stock specifically for ex-Service personnel and their families, and explore partnership opportunities with Stoll's Veteran Nomination Scheme.	This is noted and will be considered in the drafting of the new HRSS 2026-2030	

<p>Cheshire East Council should ensure that all residents approaching housing services, and all other statutory services relating to welfare or support, are asked a question that will identify members of the Armed Forces community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Former members of HM Armed Forces, Regular and Reserve.</li> <li>• Spouse or Partner of serving or former members of HM Armed Forces.</li> <li>• Widow(er)s of serving or former members of HM Armed Forces.</li> <li>• Dependent children of serving or former members of HM Armed Forces.</li> <li>• Recently divorced or separated spouses or partners of serving or former members of HM Armed Forces</li> </ul>	<p>Housing Related Support service providers are bringing innovative approaches to the programme of early intervention and prevention described in the HRSS 2021-2025 page 17.</p>	
<p>Cheshire East Council should regularly review staff training processes to ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the housing policies specific to the Armed Forces community.</p>	<p>Training for teams and partners on the local response to homelessness is included in the HRSS 2021-2025 page 31.</p>	
<p>RBL advocates for a holistic approach to the needs of the Armed Forces community and encourages the closer integration of health and housing services to embed a multi-agency approach. The UK Government launched a new housing referral pathway on 3 July 2023, known as Op Fortitude. Op Fortitude is funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund and aims to work with individual veterans at risk of homelessness. Op Courage is an NHS mental health specialist service designed to help serving personnel due to leave the military, reservists, armed forces veterans and their families. Advice and information provided by Cheshire East housing services should familiarise themselves with both important pathways. It is clear from evidence that the experiences of veterans may be distinct from the general population and require services that understand them and their specific needs in the way that some more generic homelessness services cannot.</p>	<p>Housing Related Support provides multi-agency responses to homelessness as seen in the HRSS 2021-2025 page 27.</p>	

Cheshire East Council should engage with national organisations, such as RBL and Op Fortitude. These organisations should be included within pathways of housing support when creating tailored housing plans to meet the needs of members of the Armed Forces community facing multiple or complex problems.	<p>This is noted and will be considered in the drafting of the new HRSS 2026-2030.</p> <p>The current floating support service provides temporary supported accommodation to people experiencing homelessness with complex needs (HRSS 2021-2025 page 27).</p>	
We recommend that Cheshire East Council be participant to carrying out and publishing the results of a mechanism, CHAIN or other, that records the number of ex-Service personnel sleeping rough in the local authority area.	<p>This is noted and will be considered in the drafting of the new HRSS 2026-2030 where one of the strategic themes is to reduce rough sleeping.</p>	
In line with national regulations, Cheshire East Council should ensure that all veterans, being exempted from local connection requirements, are allowed access to homelessness and housing support regardless of the time elapsed since they left Service.	<p>The Cheshire East Allocations Policy underpins the ability to move people who are in housing need to appropriate housing. The Policy strikes a balance between supporting sustainable, settled neighbourhoods whilst giving priority to those</p>	

	people who are in urgent housing need.	
We recommend that the guidance is clear that local connection is exempt for divorced or separated spouses or partners of Service personnel who are separating, regardless of whether they are in Service accommodation or other accommodation.	The Cheshire East Allocations Policy underpins the ability to move people who are in housing need to appropriate housing. The Policy strikes a balance between supporting sustainable, settled neighbourhoods whilst giving priority to those people who are in urgent housing need.	
<p>As a result of campaigning by the RBL, the 2021 Census in England &amp; Wales (and 2022 in Scotland) was the first to ask whether respondents had served in the Armed Forces. It provided a rich data set on the living arrangements of UK Armed Forces veterans and as of Census Day 2021 in England &amp; Wales: 1.88% of the 13,595 residents counted at hostels or temporary shelters for the homeless, (255 people) were veterans<sup>9</sup>. This does not give the full extent of veteran homelessness as it does not include those that may be sofa surfing, living in unsuitable accommodation or rough sleeping but adds more insight into the experiences of homelessness in the Armed Forces community.</p> <p>The National Rough Sleeper Questionnaire completed in 2020 captured that 6% of rough sleepers were veterans</p> <p>veterans are more likely to experience more complex issues than other homeless individuals.</p>	<p>This is noted and will be considered in the drafting of the new HRSS 2026-2030.</p> <p>One of the strategic themes of the HRSS 2026-2030 is to reduce rough sleeping.</p>	
With respect to complex needs, there is considerable evidence to suggest an increased prevalence of mental health issues, alcohol and substance misuse in the Armed Forces. A twelve-year trajectory study of alcohol misuse amongst the UK Armed Forces found that	Temporary supported accommodation is available to people experiencing homelessness with	

<p>severe drinkers were characterised by their single status, lower rank, pre-enlistment vulnerabilities, mental health problems and possibly shorter military careers.</p>	<p>complex needs. Complex needs clients have multiple, interconnecting needs, which affect their ability to access temporary accommodation and / or live independently. (HRSS 2021-2025 page 27).</p>	
<p>There is great importance in drafting effective Personalised Housing Plans which include the specialised support and advice available to members of the Armed Forces community from charities, such as RBL. Charity assistance should be included in these Plans, and whilst charities cannot be responsible for the statutory duties of local authorities, the voluntary sector can work in genuine partnership to support residents. Cheshire East Council should engage with national organisations, such as RBL, Op Fortitude and Veteran's Gateway. These organisations should be included within pathways of housing support when creating tailored housing plans to meet the needs of members of the Armed Forces community facing multiple or complex problems.</p>	<p>Housing pathways are in place or in development with key partners for client groups (HRSS 2021-2025, page 19).</p> <p>This is noted and will be considered in the drafting of the new HRSS 2026-2030.</p>	
<p>We recommend that Cheshire East Council be participant to carrying out and publishing the results of a mechanism, CHAIN or other, that records the number of ex-Service personnel sleeping rough in the local authority area.</p>	<p>This is noted and will be considered in the drafting of the new HRSS 2026-2030.</p>	

In line with national regulations, Cheshire East Council should ensure that all veterans, being exempted from local connection requirements, are allowed access to homelessness and housing support regardless of the time elapsed since they left Service.	The Cheshire East Allocations Policy ensures that people receive the correct priority based on their personal circumstances.	
We recommend that the guidance is clear that local connection is exempt for divorced or separated spouses or partners of Service personnel who are separating, regardless of whether they are in Service accommodation or other accommodation	The Cheshire East Allocations Policy ensures that people receive the correct priority based on their personal circumstances.	
<b>The Danes Moss Trust</b>		
Consider existing local circumstances such as social infrastructure (access to transport networks, accessible green space, health and education provision, community facilities etc), and physical characteristics (land use, habitat extent and quality, drainage/hydrology etc).	<p>The draft says that developments “will require ease of access to community services, GP and health centres, and leisure facilities, for example.”</p> <p>Specific physical characteristics will be addressed by Planning Officers when schemes are submitted for development consideration and in</p>	Include “transport, and accessible green space.”



	discussion with developers.	
The primary focus of the strategy should be about creating, or enhancing, mixed and thriving communities rather than simply regarding numbers and general types of units to be constructed.	The draft is concerned with developing communities and addresses rural housing issues, Gypsies Roma and Travellers, tackling poor housing, empty properties, energy efficiency and fuel poverty, and health and wellbeing.	
Without consideration of the physical and geographical contexts, the key challenges of climate change and land suitability for housing are not addressed. For example, development on floodplains or areas of flood risk will incur direct health and wellbeing impacts as weather conditions become more extreme, while development on peatlands will release greenhouse gases, destroy carbon sinks, and damage or destroy biodiversity. Strategic consideration of these issues will minimise risks of community objection, reduce future adverse impacts, and expedite schemes in the planning system;	CEC has pledged to raise awareness of the importance of taking action to combat climate change across the borough, working with others to consider and tackle their carbon footprint by reducing energy consumption and promoting healthy lifestyles. This is better addressed in the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan which is	Include "accessible green space."

	<p>available at cheshireeast.gov.uk</p> <p>Specific site issues such as flood risk and biodiversity are looked at by Planning Officers at scheme submission stage and will reject the application if the development is considered unsuitable. The new Local Plan will set planning policies, allocates sites for development and is used to make decisions on planning applications. It addresses issues such as the amount and locations of new housing and employment development, protection and improvement of important open areas, provision of new infrastructure, and improvement of town centres and community facilities.</p>	
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<p>Housing has a profound effect on health and well-being and the strategy should consider proximity of accessible, green open space to potential development sites. These are essential to healthy and vibrant communities, the benefits of which are clearly defined in supplementary guidance to the HM Treasury's Green Book - <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/enabling-a-natural-capital-approach-enca-guidance/enabling-a-natural-capital-approach-guidance">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/enabling-a-natural-capital-approach-enca-guidance/enabling-a-natural-capital-approach-guidance</a>.</p>	<p>Access to open space has been included.</p>	
<p>The geographical context should include reference to public transport networks, with no housing development being permitted in areas lacking adequate bus, train, or active travel facilities. This is essential for combatting the impacts of climate chaos, and for people without access to cars, either for economic or health-related reasons.</p>	<p>The Local Transport Plan (LTP) says that transport and travel play a crucial role in our everyday lives. To ensure our continued success and prosperity, we need to plan a transport network that is fit for the future – one that connects people to jobs, education, healthcare, and leisure facilities, while supporting a healthier and more sustainable environment.</p> <p>The LTP is currently out for consultation, and we would encourage you to respond.</p> <p>Housing Strategy will also respond emphasising the</p>	

	importance of public transport around new housing developments.	
The Interim Plan period of 3 years is understandable; however, some actions will need to occur over a longer timeframe. For example, the proposed stock condition survey will require long-term commitments to ensure periodic updates are adequately funded, while cross-reference to preparation of the replacement Local Plan will need longer than the 3-year period of the Interim Plan.	The Housing Strategy post the 2025-2028 document will likely be a 5 year document which will take these issues further forward.	
The first priority should be a commitment to housing development that enhances existing communities, or creates thriving, well-planned new neighbourhoods. This is essential for long-term sustainability of our towns and villages that does not place intolerable stresses on social and physical infrastructure. It cannot be achieved without a wider evidence base.	These issues will be addressed by the new Local Plan.	
The aim of increasing the number of affordable homes by 355/year during the plan period appears to be commendable, however this needs to be set in the context of a target for open market housing numbers to provide a complete picture of the situation in Cheshire East.	The Housing Development Study to inform the Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030. The study shows an objectively-assessed need for affordable housing of a minimum of 7,100 dwellings over the plan period.	

	<p>This equates to 355 dwellings per year.</p> <p>The need for affordable housing will be assessed again to inform the new Local Plan that the Council is starting to prepare</p>	
<p>CEC's current policy (Local Plan Strategy Policy SC5) is to require 30% of all homes on developments of over 15 houses in Crewe, Macclesfield, and Key Service Centres, and 30% of all homes on developments exceeding 11 houses in Local Service Centres, to be affordable. A target of 355 affordable homes per year therefore suggests construction of around 1,100 to 1,800 open market and affordable houses per year (taking smaller windfall and similar developments into account). This appears to be about 650 to 1,350 houses short of the current government's target for Cheshire East. The Interim Strategy should clearly address this discrepancy.</p>	<p>The implications of changes to national planning policy, including the Government's change to local housing need figures, will need to be considered in preparing the Council's next Local Plan. The current update to the Council's Housing Strategy cannot predict or pre-empt decisions that must be made through the statutory Local Plan making process.</p>	
<p>For new developments, a commitment to more rigorous enforcement of the council's 30% affordable homes policy should be included, with binding "viability assessments" being required prior to granting of planning permission;</p>	<p>There is an Affordable Housing Team now which in consultation with Planning Officers will ensure rigorous enforcement of onsite</p>	

	provision of affordable housing.	
A comprehensive, and regularly reviewed, register of empty properties (in both public and private ownership) should be included based on physical identification, stock condition, and policy constraints. Parish councils and community groups could contribute to this process;	The Private Sector Housing Team has a list of all empty properties, and the worst properties see interventions carried out.	
A comprehensive and regularly reviewed infrastructure assessment should be undertaken, possibly in conjunction with baseline studies for the replacement Local Plan Strategy.	This is one of the Local Plan priorities.	
Town & parish councils, plus local community groups must be included in collaborative working proposals (p.27). Local community groups in particular, must be included in regeneration proposals for Crewe and Macclesfield.	The draft says “We will continue to engage with parish councils as we continue to monitor and report on delivery and impact” against rural area challenges.	
<p>SP4:</p> <p>A comprehensive, adequately funded, communications plan is required for energy improvements to private ownership properties, encompassing grant funding, policy context, advice on availability of choice of suppliers and technology, cost savings etc.</p>	The Private Sector Housing Team can point households towards a range of grants for heating repairs, renewable heating, and insulation, for those on low incomes.	

<p>SP4:</p> <p>New-build housing should be constructed to the highest standard based on available technology through planning policies;</p>	<p>Planning conditions attach to new build properties ensuring they are built to all latest building quality.</p>	
<p>We consider that the Interim Strategy should have, as its primary priority, a commitment to creating or enhancing communities. The current draft places too much emphasis on numbers of units and omits any attempt at linking affordable housing targets to private sector intentions.</p>	<p>Sustaining economic successes and regeneration projects through the Borough is a stated aim of the Strategy, and it supports improved access to new homes to ensure a continued positive impact on economic growth.</p>	
<p><b>Holmes Chapel Parish Council</b></p>		
<p>""Holmes Chapel Parish Council disagrees that these five objectives of this Housing Strategy are the only areas to cover. With the changes and increased requirement for housing supply because of the changes in calculation of need, this strategy and its objectives only covers a minority of the requirements under housing supply.</p> <p>The strategy does not present any plans for addressing most of the housing need. The draft states ""The Local Plan and SADPD are the policies which drive forward housing</p>	<p>The Strategy priorities are felt to encompass the main areas needing focus, which include more than housing supply.</p>	

<p>supply to meet the evidenced housing need across the Borough, not only the numbers, but the type of housing which is needed to support the diverse housing needs of the area." But these ONLY provide policies and guidance under which planning applications will be considered. This is reactive not proactive. It is accepted that many sites for development are identified in the SADPD, but where in the Housing Strategy are there specific plans for encouraging this development.</p> <p>The objectives identified in the draft Housing Strategy should be modified to address a priority for encouraging the overall Housing need. We support the 5 identified objectives as far as they go but would want to see more visible management of these as well as some performance measures on their achievement. The annual Housing Monitoring update is at least one year old when published, so does not reflect accurately the housing supply that has been met."</p>	<p>The Strategy will oversee the provision of affordable housing within urban and rural areas by working with key partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Registered Housing Providers</li> <li>- Homes England</li> <li>- Parish Councils</li> <li>- Developers</li> </ul> <p>and will be supporting the development of the new Local Plan strategy to deliver new affordable housing.</p> <p>The Action Plan will be monitored each year with latest housing supply data.</p>	
<p><b>Gawsworth Parish Council</b></p>		
<p>Gawsworth Parish Council believes the policy should be updated to provide that any strategic development sites on the periphery or within rural parishes should give equal priority to residents of the parishes as to those of the town (whose spatial needs the</p>	<p>Local allocation policies state that a local connection is</p>	



development is seen to meet) in order to meet rural housing needs. For example, the developments south of Macclesfield should meet the housing needs of residents of Gawsworth, Henbury, Sutton etc.	required to meet essential eligibility criteria.	
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Other housing issues/challenges which should be prioritised during 2025-2028				
Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions	CEC response	Draft Strategy amended to include
Need supportive infrastructure	Need the infrastructure to keep pace with any additional housing, for example access to schools, medical facilities, the transport network, green spaces. Parking and roads are inadequate for the increase in the volume of traffic. Support people to find good jobs to fund mortgage payments by providing training & office spaces for businesses.	22	The draft says that developments “will require ease of access to community services, GP and health centres, and leisure facilities, for example.”	mention of transport links

Other housing issues/challenges which should be prioritised during 2025-2028				
Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions	CEC response	Draft Strategy amended to include
Don't build on greenfield sites / use brownfield sites	No more building on green field sites, protect key areas of biodiversity such as Danes Moss. These sites are unsuitable and lead to flooding. Use and develop brown field sites, adapt existing buildings - for example turn empty shops and offices into housing / living accommodation.	19	Specific physical characteristics will be addressed by Planning Officers when schemes are submitted for development consideration and in discussion with developers.	
Affordable housing / rent considerations	Ensure that "affordable" housing is affordable, affordable houses should be affordable for the low paid. Insist on more affordable housing, secured for local people. Prevent landlords buying up affordable housing. Property prices are steadily increasing across all types and sizes of properties, making them increasingly unaffordable. There is no focus on young, single people who could possibly make it on to the housing ladder with the provision of flats or maisonettes - no lone person could possibly afford 'affordable' houses. Need to retain the younger demographic, young people's first homes. Private rent charges to be in line with the benefits allowance for single people in houses.	17	Affordability levels are driven by the housing market and are outside the control of CEC. The Council operates affordable housing schemes for low-cost home ownership properties, in respect of new build housing schemes and subsequent re-sale of those homes. The	

Other housing issues/challenges which should be prioritised during 2025-2028				
Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions	CEC response	Draft Strategy amended to include
			schemes are a form of 'intermediate' affordable housing (different to shared ownership schemes, which are run by Housing Associations for those who meet eligibility criteria).	
Need more social housing / housing support	No description of or background on social housing in the plan, no commitment to build and manage more social housing. Need more social housing and a determined effort to reduce private landlords. Find empty private properties and see if they would be willing to sell to the council for social housing. Need more four bed social housing for families, need more one private room but shared kitchen and bathroom style accommodation. Women's refuges, consider those in the armed forces. Prioritise those who have been on the list the longest.	15	The Local Housing Market section covers owner - occupied and private rented.	a section on social housing.
No more houses / general negative comment	Stop building more houses. There is enough housing stock already. General negative comment or statement in relation to a housing situation / the council / council services.	14	There is a shortage of housing in all tenures, and CEC is committed to providing more housing which goes some way to	

Other housing issues/challenges which should be prioritised during 2025-2028				
Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions	CEC response	Draft Strategy amended to include
			meeting the demand.	
Need new / longer term thinking on planning	Doesn't consider community living or the environmental issues associated with housing. There is nothing about requiring new houses to meet improved housing standards, particularly to ensure they are carbon zero. There needs to be an urgent move towards factory built smaller single units – these can be quickly built and can provide the highest EPC rate of A with the use of the right material. Lifetime homes should be encouraged, this will minimise expensive home alterations. To free up housing in the entry level bands there will be a need to provide more housing for people to move upwards.	14	CEC has pledged to raise awareness of the importance of taking action to combat climate change across the borough, working with others to consider and tackle their carbon footprint by reducing energy consumption and promoting healthy lifestyles. This is better addressed in the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan which is available at <a href="https://cheshireeast.gov.uk">cheshireeast.gov.uk</a>	

Other housing issues/challenges which should be prioritised during 2025-2028				
Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions	CEC response	Draft Strategy amended to include
			Specific site issues such as flood risk and biodiversity are looked at by Planning Officers at scheme submission stage and will reject the application if the development is considered unsuitable. The Local Plan sets planning policies, allocates sites for development and is used to make decisions on planning applications.	
Suitable properties to downsize into / for the elderly & disabled	Require developers to include bungalows / smaller properties / ground floor accommodation for people to downsize into. Priority should be made for suitable disabled and elderly accommodation to release larger housing stock. Supported accommodation for disabled adults.	8	The Disabled Facilities Grant is just one part of the local adaptations system, and a priority for this	

Other housing issues/challenges which should be prioritised during 2025-2028				
Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions	CEC response	Draft Strategy amended to include
			Interim Housing Strategy is to embed major adaptations into the wider health and social care landscape, ensuring that the local system is seamless and effective. Adult Social Care have a range of schemes for disabled adults who can't live at home. CEC Housing Options can provide assistance and refer clients.	
Needs to be more detailed / measurable / adequality resourced	All the priorities have good intentions but with no real direction or content, the action plans don't outline how the outcomes of the strategy will be measured. Need adequate resources to meet every aspect of the policy. This strategy must become part of the Local Plan and must be used to strengthen the need for such housing.	7	The Action Plans outline how we will achieve these Strategic Priorities.	Make the Action Plan SMART (dates)

Other housing issues/challenges which should be prioritised during 2025-2028				
Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions	CEC response	Draft Strategy amended to include
Geographic considerations	There needs to be a close correlation between strategy plans and demographic and socio-economic characteristics for settlement areas to strengthen potential for relevant improvement in the individual areas. The physical/geographical location of housing development is critically important. One strategy does not fit the whole Borough, the strategy needs to be area specific, plans based on a percentage of market value will never provide affordable housing in Wilmslow. In Buerton, the current parish plan only includes a restricted small area, the plan should include all areas within the development boundaries. Spread housing developments fairly across the borough.	5	The Strategy is a CE -wide document looking at mainstream issues. The Local Plan addresses issues such as the amount and locations of new housing and employment development, protection and improvement of important open areas, and provision of new infrastructure.	
Reduction in HMO's	Further reduction in the number of HMO's, bring them back into family homes or self-contained accommodation. Reduction of HMOs in Crewe.	3	There is no issue with well-managed and good quality private rented HMOs which are vital in providing accommodation for tenants who are unable to afford to rent a self-contained property,	

Other housing issues/challenges which should be prioritised during 2025-2028				
Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions	CEC response	Draft Strategy amended to include
			or who enjoy the flexibility that renting a room offers them. HMO enforcement is used to address badly managed or poor-quality HMOs.	
Maintenance of homes & properties / antisocial behaviour	Maintenance of homes, damp issues. Tenants not keeping the home or surrounds in good repair. Monitor unneighbourly behaviour in social housing.	3	The Government is applying the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector, providing clear timescales and expectations for property repairs and remediation of hazards. Property upkeep and neighbour issues are between the landlord and tenant. The CEC Anti-Social Behaviour Team staff have a close working relationship with Police Officers and	



Other housing issues/challenges which should be prioritised during 2025-2028				
Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions	CEC response	Draft Strategy amended to include
			other departmental colleagues, investigating incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour that have been reported to us, and work closely with Registered Social Landlords	
Second homes / extended rooms	Make it harder to own second homes / second homes should be vetoed. Charge higher council tax for people who have extended or added habitable rooms upon completion of the works rather than when the property is sold.	3	Property transactions on the open market are a personal matter, and CEC has no say over who can buy a property or who someone can sell a property to.	
Other	Hold developers to account and ensure they deliver what is promised at the time of the planning application. Strategic priority 3 - should be recognised that a few people living rough do not want to be rehoused / generally driven by more fundamental issues, not a lack of housing.	4	More information on rough sleeping may be found in the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. Mention will be made of	

Other housing issues/challenges which should be prioritised during 2025-2028				
Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions	CEC response	Draft Strategy amended to include
			people sleeping rough out of choice.	

Any further comments on the draft housing strategy				
Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions	CEC response	Draft Strategy amended to include
Don't build on greenfield sites / use brownfield sites	Do not build on greenfield sites. There needs to be environmental considerations as all this building on greenbelt or rural land is taking away plants which generate oxygen and absorb rain. Develop within the towns, there are multiple redundant buildings / sites / shops that can be utilised for housing.	16	Specific site characteristics will be addressed by Planning Officers when schemes are	

Any further comments on the draft housing strategy				
Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions	CEC response	Draft Strategy amended to include
			submitted for development consideration and in discussion with developers, when environmental issues will be considered. Redundant commercial buildings are privately owned, and retail units are not suitable for change to housing, with high conversion costs.	

Any further comments on the draft housing strategy				
Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions	CEC response	Draft Strategy amended to include
Need more affordable housing and / or more social housing / support	The strategy doesn't address the real affordability of buying or renting a property. Affordable housing is a vital need. Ensure commercial builders include affordable housing and appropriate/specialist housing - need less affordable housing 'plonked' on estates with no governance or oversight and we need true local authority housing. There is no affordable housing in Buerton this needs to be addressed. Build flats for those who cannot afford to buy. Need much more social housing / provide council housing. The 'right to buy' is reducing social housing stocks. Homelessness prevention should be much higher than current - review the social issues contributing to homelessness.	16	The Affordable Housing Commission (2020) concluded that "many" of AH products "are clearly unaffordable to those on mid to lower incomes." Affordable housing is housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions: •Affordable housing for rent •Discounted market sales housing	

Any further comments on the draft housing strategy				
Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions	CEC response	Draft Strategy amended to include
			<p>An Affordable Rent is set at up to 80% of the market rent, the average rent for local private lettings.</p> <p>CEC works with social landlords to maximise development opportunities; CEC is not a house building authority so can't build any council housing.</p>	
Needs more specific targets / joined up approach / less jargon	<p>Surprised that there are no specific targets for the action plan. Lacks substance and detail - does not address all the housing needs. Please ensure your staffing levels to monitor/ report progress is maintained. Links with businesses / economic development's needed, provide more support and direction for local parish councils when developing or reviewing parish neighbourhood plans. Would be good to illustrate how this strategy sits in the context of Labour Government's drive to increase numbers of housing stock and local plan developments in supporting infrastructure. The document is too wordy and full of jargon, too much background info.</p>	15	<p>The action plans will be consolidated and made SMARTer. A number of things could be pursued, such as rural-specific policies, new models of partnership working, and improved monitoring.</p>	

Any further comments on the draft housing strategy				
Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions	CEC response	Draft Strategy amended to include
			Parish Councils have access to local data, and which assist CEC in formulating priorities.	
Need the supporting infrastructure	There needs to be more infrastructure coordination with the housing strategy. No new houses without new infrastructure. Need shops, schools, medical facilities, childcare facilities, bus services and road improvements etc to support new build developments. Think about disabled & mental health support, support for the aged, safe walking. No strategy should be considered in isolation.	14	The draft says that developments “will require ease of access to community services, GP and health centres, leisure facilities, transport, and accessible green space for example.”	.

Any further comments on the draft housing strategy				
Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions	CEC response	Draft Strategy amended to include
Need new / longer term thinking on planning	The strategy should be about creating places where people can thrive, which means connected communities. Involve occupational therapists when designing/approving housing schemes. More trees native hedging, more communal open space, benches and cycle etc. More consideration needs to be given as to how to prevent young people from moving away. What about future proofing all new housing with electric charging facilities and disabled living standards. Households will need advice and help to make the transition to heat pumps.	12	The CE Bus Service Improvement Plan aims to deliver local bus networks that support our urban and rural economies and contribute to our Environment Strategy. Improving the speed, reliability and quality of public transport will encourage more residents to choose bus, making fewer car journeys and contributing to our carbon reduction challenge. The Strategy is a CE - wide document looking at	

Any further comments on the draft housing strategy				
Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions	CEC response	Draft Strategy amended to include
			mainstream issues. The Local Plans address issues such as the development, protection and improvement of important open areas, and provision of new infrastructure, green space, landscaping, etc.	
Suitable properties to downsize into / for the elderly & disabled	Not sure that the strategy concerning older people's accommodation offers the full range of options. Single storey living for older pensioners is both desirable and healthier with less risk of trips and falls. All new housing developments should have to provide a proportion of affordable for the elderly and/or disabled. Starting a conversation with empty nesters to downsize sooner rather than later is crucial.	8	Many options are highlighted, such as supporting the development of the new Local Plan in the provision of housing choice for older people including Extra Care, and transforming the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants	



Any further comments on the draft housing strategy				
Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions	CEC response	Draft Strategy amended to include
			to improve efficiency and value for money. Downsizing is an option which the Strategy is committed to exploring.	
Effective monitoring of developers	It is vital that effective monitoring takes place to ensure that the required number of houses are being provided and developers held to account should this not occur. Need to address rigorous enforcement of agreements with private developers for affordable housing and actively monitor / enforce environmental mitigation as part of development. Ensure that all developers pay sufficient S106 monies to the local infrastructure.	4	Developers would be held to account in the event that they did not meet the affordable housing requirements, or other infrastructure contributions as part of new developments. However, there is no evidence that there is any systematic abuse of the planning system in this respect across the Borough.	

Any further comments on the draft housing strategy				
Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions	CEC response	Draft Strategy amended to include
Other comment	Planning sign-off is very slow, a significant improvement is needed. Want to be more effective in starting to expand housing. need more development in and around the Knutsford Town area. Have a strict/rapid process where landlords/ individuals are not on compliance. Prioritise housing for those with local connections.	7	The future, long-term strategy for housing provision in Knutsford will be addressed through the next iteration of the council's Local Plan, the preparation of which is at an early stage. Local connection criteria are applied to affordable homes developed through planning policy and also rented homes let through Cheshire Homechoice.	

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**Report produced on 27 February 2025 by the Engagement and Communications Team, Cheshire East Council, Email [RandC@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:RandC@cheshireeast.gov.uk) for further information.**

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**Interim Housing Strategy**  
**2025 – 2028**

	<b>Page</b>
Member's Foreword	2
Introduction	2
Vision	4
Key Achievements and Strategy Review	4
National and Local Context and challenges	6
Local housing market, rural housing, affordability, owner-occupied, social, and private rented sectors. homelessness, housing conditions, energy efficiency and fuel poverty, empty homes, specialist housing needs	6
Strategic Priorities	25
Strategic Priority – 1    Improving access to affordable housing	25
Strategic Priority – 2    Meeting peoples' specialist housing needs	26
Strategic Priority – 3    Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping	26
Strategic Priority – 4    Improving housing standards	26

Strategic Priority - 5	Enabling independent living	27
Action Plan		28
Appendix 1 – Evidence base		36
Appendix 2 - Glossary of terms		37

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**Member's Foreword**

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**INTRODUCTION**

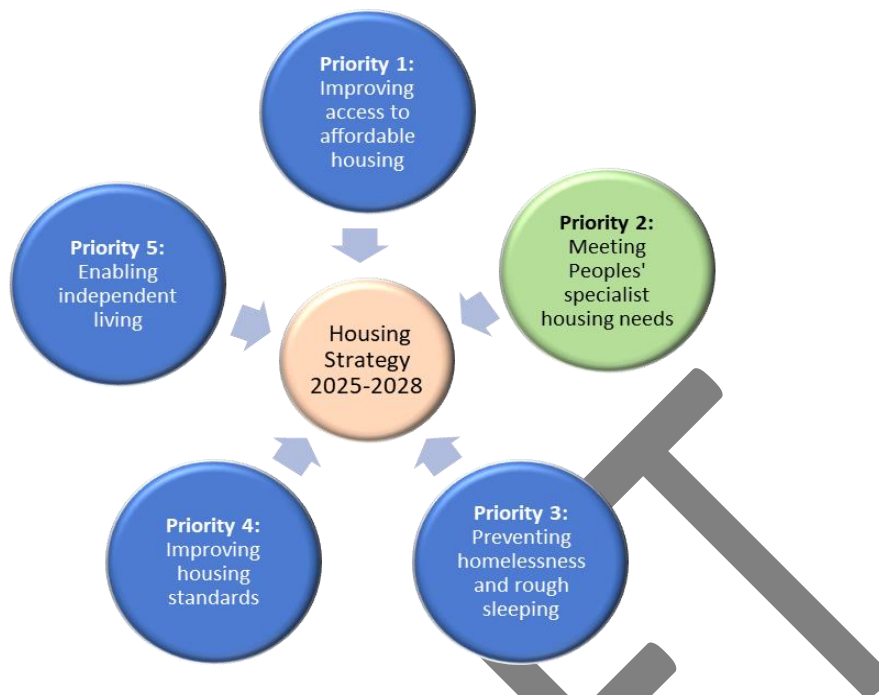
Housing plays a crucial role in peoples' quality of life. Health and wellbeing, access to work, training and educational attainment, leisure activities, access to open space, and participation in their community are all determined by where they live. This Interim Housing Strategy 2025-2028 supports the Council's aims and objectives for housing in the Borough, to improve the choice, quality, and supply of housing for a diverse population, support people to buy or rent their own home, prevent homelessness, improve options for older people, and protect the most vulnerable.

The Interim Housing Strategy has been developed at a time of significant challenge within the housing market, including continuing economic instability. The cost-of-living crisis, which sees about 5 million households nationally on low-income continue to face a very high risk of going without essentials, such as food and heating demonstrating a persistent and embedded hardship in the UK, a reduction in public funding, and the election of a new Government which is setting out its stall at the time this Housing Strategy is being finalised make a longer term picture uncertain.

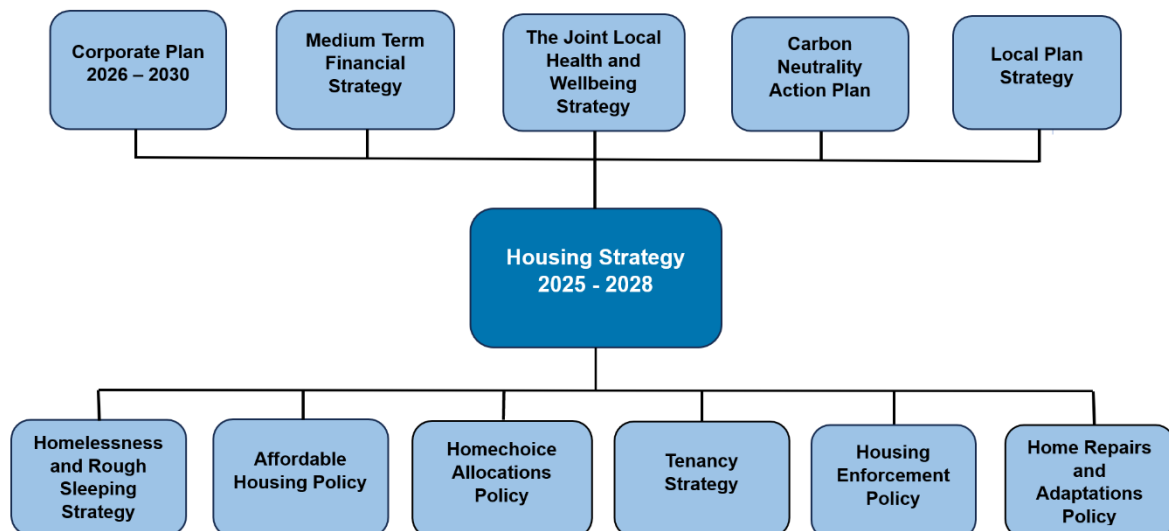
Therefore, this Strategy has been developed as an Interim Housing Strategy and outlines our priorities over a 3-year period instead of the Council's previous 5-year Strategy, recognising that that we will have to respond to change and emerging evidence through the development of the next Local Plan strategy.

Despite the tough economic conditions over the last few years, the Council has been working with a wide range of local partners including Registered Housing Providers, Developers, Private Landlords and other organisations, to identify residents' housing needs, maximise the number of affordable homes built across the Borough, and improve the quality and choice of homes for all residents. This partnership approach is key to the future delivery and development of affordable and market housing and will help improve the Borough's housing offer.

The key priorities over the next 3 years will focus on the following strategic priorities of equal importance:



The Strategy also brings together the housing priorities within the other key Council plans and strategies. The diagram below shows the relationship between the Housing Strategy and the other key Council plans, strategies and policies.



The Strategy contributes towards a number of commitments within the new Corporate Plan including unlocking prosperity for all, and improving health and wellbeing.

Cheshire East adopted its Local Plan in 2017 which set out the vision and overall planning strategy for the Borough over a period to 2030. In December 2022 the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD) was adopted, bringing



forward the second part of the Local Plan, providing further detailed planning policies and site allocations.

The Local Plan and SADPD are the policies which drive forward housing supply to meet the evidenced housing need across the Borough - not only the numbers, but the type of housing which is needed to support the diverse housing needs of the area.

We have started to prepare the Local Plan's replacement because of changes to national planning policy (the National Planning Policy Framework, or NPPF), the requirement to review plans regularly, and the long time it takes to prepare a new Plan.

The development of planning policies will be based on robust evidence, which will be established during the development process, including a Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment, and Housing and Economic Development Policy.

This Interim Housing Strategy outlines the approach the Council will take over the next three years and the Action plan (Appendix 1) shows how we intend to achieve our ambitions, sets targeted, realistic and deliverable objectives, and will help focus efforts and limited resources on the right priorities to address the housing challenges identified within this Strategy, whilst at the same time providing flexibility to re-align our plans as Government policy and economic and social circumstances change.

We will continue to focus on the vision set out within the 2018-23 Housing Strategy,

**Our Vision: 'All residents in Cheshire East are able to access affordable, appropriate, and decent homes'.**

which delivered some key achievements. The table below shows just some examples:

## Key Achievements and Strategy Review

Strategic Priority	What has been achieved

<b>Affordable homes</b>	<p>2,816 new affordable homes provided, through partnership working between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2023, exceeding the Local Plan target by 1,041 homes.</p> <p>The Housing Supplementary Planning document was adopted in 2022, and work is taking place to engage with Parish Councils to look at rural affordable housing opportunities.</p>
<b>Homelessness</b>	<p>7,151 households prevented or relieved from becoming homeless between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2023.</p> <p>Secured £838,857 of external funding for a Rough Sleeper Initiative to provide additional single homelessness interventions until 2025, including specialist homelessness roles to address substance misuse, mental health and social care needs.</p> <p>Established a permanent Rough Sleeper Team within the Housing Options service in 2020, to help provide a responsive outreach and support service to vulnerable rough sleepers in the Borough.</p> <p>Through grant funding, commissioned two services to provide 14 units of self-contained supported accommodation for people with a history of homelessness and multiple disadvantages.</p> <p>Delivered a Multi-Disciplinary Team Pilot, which has been effective in reducing repeat homelessness by overcoming barriers to, and supporting people to sustain accommodation.</p>
<b>Housing quality</b>	<p>2,094 households helped to improve their living conditions between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2023 through things like adaptations and repairs, and help with heating peoples' homes through energy efficiency measures.</p> <p>Secured £7.9 million of funding for a domestic energy efficiency project to provide home insulation and low carbon heating for vulnerable residents.</p> <p>Reduced the level of long-term empty homes (for 6 months or more) to less than 1% of the housing stock.</p>
<b>Private rented sector</b>	<p>Commissioned an Affordable Warmth Advice Service for Cheshire, Warrington and Halton to help improve affordable warmth for vulnerable households.</p> <p>3,599 households helped to achieve affordable warmth between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2023.</p> <p>Revised Housing Enforcement Policy adopted in 2019 to take account of new legislation and ensure private tenants are supported and housing standards are maintained.</p> <p>Work is ongoing to incentivise landlords to provide a supply of affordable private rented sector accommodation through an</p>

	<p>established landlord offer, helping landlords to work with lower income families who may be supported by Cheshire East Emergency Assistance or the Homelessness Prevention Fund.</p> <p>Over the last financial year 106 households facing homelessness secured private rented accommodation.</p> <p>A Housing Related Support service was commissioned in 2020 to support tenants at risk of losing their homes and provide floating support as well as supported accommodation.</p> <p>Winter Homelessness Prevention Grant funding accessed and used to identify tenants with rent arrears who were adversely impacted by the pandemic.</p>
<b>Vulnerable groups</b>	<p>2,316 households helped to live independently by adapting their home between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2023.</p> <p>Vulnerable and Older Persons' Housing Strategy updated and adopted in 2021.</p> <p>Updated and adopted the Home Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Policy to provide vital help for low-income households and people with disabilities.</p> <p>Delivered the Housing Wellbeing service to reduce complex hoarding.</p> <p>The Housing Options and Homelessness Team were awarded Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation in June 2022, for their work with victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse.</p>

## National and local context and challenges

The Council is in a period of significant change, with the current Government introducing several new reforms to ensure that not only are the housing shortages being addressed but also the standard of our current housing stock is maintained or improved within both the private and social rented sectors.

In July 2024, the Government launched the new Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) which is central to:

- mission-driven government
- fixing the foundations of an affordable home
- handing power back to communities, and
- rebuilding local governments

The need for radical action to unlock the supply of new homes, and tackling inflation is a critical part of the Government's plan.

The Government has consulted on proposed changes to the NPPF during 2024, including a new standard method for assessing housing needs. The Council has responded to this major consultation and will implement any new changes, and has adopted a Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in July 2022 which provides guidance on how housing policies in the Local Plan should be applied.

The Renters' Rights Bill, introduced in the King's Speech in July 2024, replaces the Renters' (Reform) Bill that didn't pass through Parliament under the former Government. This new legislation aims to enhance rights and protections for renters, such as abolition of Section 21 notices, or 'no fault eviction', which allows a landlord to serve 2 months' notice for the tenant to move out, without providing a reason why they are seeking possession. The Government is proposing to abolish Section 21 in 2025, along with the introduction of enhanced tenant rights and protections such as the power to challenge unreasonable rent increases and discrimination against household claiming benefits, or those with children, the practice of rental bidding wars will end, and it will be easier for tenants to keep pets, which a landlord cannot unreasonably refuse. In addition, a Decent Homes Standard will be applied to the private rented sector.

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 brought forward change to the regulation of social housing, the investigation of complaints and the introduction of new powers for the Housing Ombudsman.

The former Government's updated Rough Sleeping Strategy was published in September 2022 and showed the significant progress that has been made since the 2018 Rough Sleeping Strategy was published. The strategy has four key themes: Prevention, Intervention, Recovery and a transparent joined up system. It also placed new duties on Local Authorities to prevent and relieve rough sleeping.

The introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 placed new duties on Local Authorities to ensure that all victims of domestic abuse and their children can access the right support in safe accommodation.

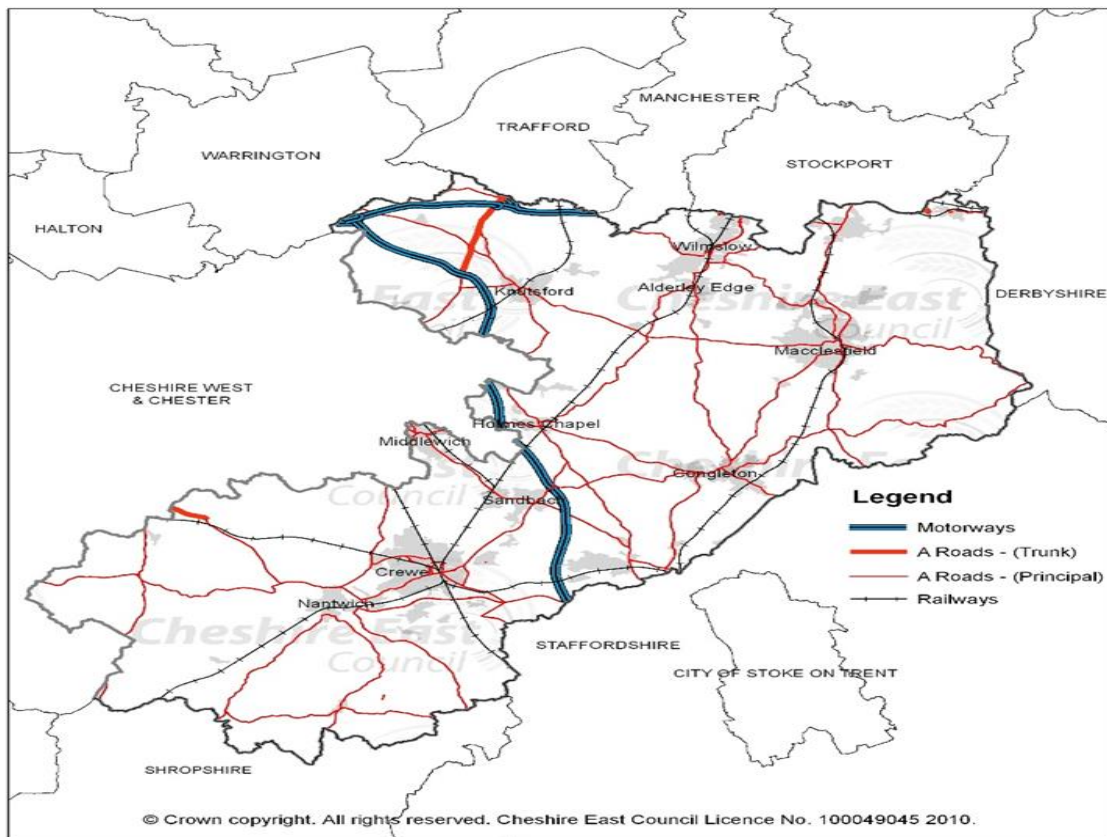
The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 introduces new regulation of supported exempt accommodation (for example, hostels, refuges, sheltered housing, supported living complexes), including the requirements placed on Local Authorities in relation to oversight and enforcement, and a set of National Standards. The Act's consultation was expected to be published in 2024. We will ensure the requirements of the Act are locally implemented.

With the level of change being brought forward, this Interim Housing Strategy focuses on the priorities for 2025 to 2028 which are based on the local context, challenges and opportunities, whilst ensuring the Council is prepared for different responsibilities brought forward through the new Government's reforms.

### **Local context and challenges:**

Cheshire East is a unitary authority with Borough status, located next to Cheshire West and Chester to the West, Warrington and the Greater Manchester conurbation to the

North, Shropshire and the North Staffordshire conurbation of Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme to the south, and the Peak District National Park to the east.



Cheshire East is the third largest Borough in the North West, with many towns, villages, and rural areas, and has over 100 town and Parish Councils. Towns and villages vary greatly in character, and each face differing issues and housing needs for the future. The Borough also has an extensive rural area with a successful rural and agricultural-based economy.

### The Armed Forces Covenant

Cheshire has a long history of Armed Forces being based within the county. Our covenant is a voluntary statement of support between our communities and the armed forces community. The aims of the covenant are to:

- Encourage local communities to support the Armed Forces Community in their areas
- Nurture public understanding and awareness of issues affecting the Armed Forces Community
- Recognise and remember the sacrifices made by the Armed Forces Community
- Encourage activities which help to integrate the Armed Forces Community into local life

Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given the most, such as the injured and the bereaved. Our strategy will continue to support the Armed Forces Community through existing housing support channels.

### **Rural**

The Cheshire East Rural Action Plan 2022-2026 outlines that about two-fifths of residents live in rural locations outside of the main towns. Rural communities are vulnerable to significant levels of inequality and deprivation. Often there are limited transport options. Circumstances in rural areas can make delivering services particularly difficult. Rural housing is characterised by challenges such as high house prices, high fuel prices, low wages, seasonal renting, a high level of second home ownership, and an ageing population.

Central to addressing deprivation in rural areas is making sure rural housing markets work for their resident populations by providing affordable accommodation across a range of tenures and types of homes. We will continue to engage with Parish Councils as we monitor and report on delivery and impact against these challenges.

### **Demographics**

The 2021 Census provides us with accurate estimates of all the people and households in Cheshire East and helps us to plan for future needs.

The population figure for Cheshire East recorded within the 2021 Census was 398,772, consisting of 174,856 households, but recent household projections show a population increase to 406,527, consisting of 186,397 households (source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) – mid (2022) population estimates for the UK and its constituent countries and local authorities)

The population of Cheshire East's rural areas increased by a much larger proportion over the 2011-21 period (up 12.7%) than that of the Borough's urban areas (up 4.8%).

The population is growing and living longer. Recent ONS household projection figures show an ageing population, with the proportion of residents aged 65 and above increasing from 19.4% in 2011 to 22.5% by 2022, whilst the proportion aged 16 to 64 has fallen from 62.8% to 60.0% over that time. The 0 to 15 age group's percentage has barely changed since 2011 and currently stands at 17.5%.

Given the fact that future demographic changes will result in greater demands for housing suitable for older people and those with disabilities, there is a clear need for this to be addressed within the Interim Housing Strategy.

There are also other challenges including areas that have levels of deprivation (factors such as income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and



services, and the living environment.) This puts additional pressure on services and demand for different forms of housing to meet resident's needs.

### The Local Housing Market

Office for National Statistics (ONS) data on dwelling stock shows a total of 188,720 residential properties, broken down by tenure.

**Number of dwellings by tenure**

Registered Housing Provider sector	Other public sector	Private sector	Total
21,786	98	166,836	188,720

### Housing Affordability

There are significant differences in income levels across the Borough. Lower income areas are predominantly found within the settlements of Congleton, Crewe, Macclesfield, and Nantwich, whilst the majority of the higher income areas are the smaller towns and rural areas of the Borough, with the highest average earners located in the north of the Borough.

Higher property prices are to be found in the north, which has implications for affordability. However, affordability is a problem throughout the Borough. As part of the Local Plan review process, we will work with Strategic Planning to review housing affordability.

In 2024, Cheshire East had the third highest average house price in the North West. Owner-occupation across all the settlements is performing well, in what estate agents say is a sellers' market. Property prices are steadily increasing across all types and sizes of properties, making them increasingly unaffordable for those on median incomes or below. Private rented properties are being let quickly, with letting agents reporting a landlord market, with some quick turnarounds and increasing rents.

The Council operates affordable housing schemes for low-cost home ownership properties, in respect of new build housing schemes and subsequent re-sale of those homes. The schemes are a form of 'intermediate' affordable housing (different to shared ownership schemes, which are run by Housing Associations for those who meet eligibility criteria).

### Affordability models

Mortgage lenders' guidance states that up to 3.5 times gross income is the level at which housing is available to buy. Shelter, and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation state that a household spending more than a third (33%) of their income on their mortgage or rent then find other necessities unaffordable. It is important to note that all homes for sale greatly exceed the mortgage to income ratio of 3.5 / 33%.

Housing affordability is a challenge for many households in Cheshire East. According to the ONS, the median house price in Cheshire East is £255,500 which is 8.14 times the median gross earnings of £31,397. The average price of a home in the lower quartile is £175,000 which is 7.35 times the median gross lower quartile earnings of £23,798. Access to housing for those on lower incomes is only likely to be achieved through the provision of affordable housing at below market price levels. The Local Plan has an important role to play in the delivery of affordable housing and ensuring that the benefits of housing delivery go to a wider section of the community.

Required annual household income to purchase lower quartile housing (3.5 x income)	Required monthly income to rent lower quartile housing (third of monthly earnings)
£50,000	£1,894

The next section sets out in more detail the current issues for owner-occupation, and private rented accommodation. Overall, both owner-occupied and private rented sectors are thriving.

It is important to note that figures will change from month-to-month either up or down, but the current trajectory is up.

### Owner – occupied sector

The ratio of median house price to median gross annual workplace-based earnings is 7.93 for Cheshire East. It is slightly below the England ratio (8.26 in 2023), but well above the ratio for the North West region (6.05).

In the year to January 2024, the average price for detached properties and semi-detached properties in Cheshire East rose by 1.7%, while the average price for flats decreased by 1.2%.



The average house price in Cheshire East was £290,000 in January 2024, similar to the revised figure for January 2023. Across the North West, there was also little change in the average house price over the same period.

According to the ONS 2024 housing affordability data, the average price paid by first-time buyers in Cheshire East in January 2024 was £226,000. For all homes bought with a mortgage in Cheshire East, the average house price in January 2024 was £303,000. These prices are similar to the average in January 2023.

#### Owner-occupied average property price (£1,000s)

Year	Lower quartile	Median	Upper quartile
2018-19	154	230	344
2019-20	155	230	345
2020-21	170	257	385
2021-22	170	252	390
% change between 2018-19 and 2021-22	+10%	+10%	+13%

The next 2 tables show the median, and lower quartile, house prices from 2018–2023 linked to median and lower quartile gross annual earnings, also comparing Cheshire East to the North West (considerably higher) and England (comparable).

#### Ratio of median house price to median gross annual residence-based earnings

LA / region / Country name	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cheshire East	7.46	7.42	8.62	7.82	7.56
North West	5.79	5.88	6.68	6.32	6.05
England	7.88	7.87	9.06	8.47	8.26

**Ratio of lower quartile house price to lower quartile gross annual residence-based earnings**

LA / region / Country Name	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Cheshire East	7.23	7.01	7.01	8.19	7.08
North West	5.6	5.6	5.58	6.27	5.76
England	7.34	7.26	7.19	8.16	7.36

Housing plays a major role in delivering regeneration projects and sustaining economic success in Cheshire East. Our strategy supports improved access to new homes, delivering good quality housing in the right places which is key to the economic growth of the borough.

### **Social Housing**

To help address housing demand, there must be an efficient use of social housing, which is more affordable than housing on the open market. We must work to increase the delivery of affordable housing, and continue support provided to vulnerable households. This includes working with households to enable them to make informed decisions about their housing options.

The Cheshire East Allocations Policy underpins the ability to move people who are in housing need to appropriate social housing.

There are almost 22,000 properties of social housing in Cheshire East. With 11,542 applicants live on Homechoice on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, and an average of 1,300 properties available annually, the CEC Allocation Policy strikes a balance between supporting sustainable, settled neighbourhoods, whilst giving priority to those people who are in urgent housing need.

The Council is a non-stock holding authority and delivery of housing, including affordable, is primarily provided via Registered Housing Provider partners, and large-scale house builders.

### **Private Developers**

There is partnership working between the CEC and private housing providers and developers to increase housing provision with through new development, ensuring they contain a mix of family and smaller homes to meet differing demand, for both

urban and rural neighbourhoods, ensuring that national and regional housing space, design, and low emission standards are met.

We also work closely with developers to ensure the correct mix and proportion of affordable housing is provided on new housing developments, including meeting the housing needs of an ageing population and those who require specialist housing.

### The Private Rented Sector

Of those unable to buy on the open housing market, some will hope to be able to meet their housing needs in the private rented sector (PRS). In Cheshire East 14% of all tenure is private rented. Private rents rose to an average of £846 in February 2024, an annual increase of 5.1% from £805 in February 2023. This was lower than the rise in the North West (8.7%) over the year.

Many households are reliant on market intervention such as benefit payments to make rents affordable. Private rented properties typically exceed the new Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Rates.

In Cheshire East, the average rent for semi-detached properties and flats or maisonettes rose by 5.4%, while for detached properties, it increased by 4.8%.

Average rent for one bed properties rose by 5.5%, while the average for four-or-more bed properties increased by 4.4%.

Data<sup>1</sup> from the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) and the ONS shows the following private sector rents for Cheshire East. Mean rents have increased from 2021-2022 by 11.1%, lower quartile by 8.3%, median by 10.1%, and upper quartile by 12.6%.

Year	Rents	Mean	Lower quartile	Median	Upper quartile
19 - 20	3,810	787	550	675	875
20 - 21	3,400	795	550	675	895
21 - 22	3,780	838	575	700	925
22 - 23	4,000	937	625	775	1,050

### Homelessness

<sup>1</sup>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/privaterentalmarketsummarystatisticsinengland>

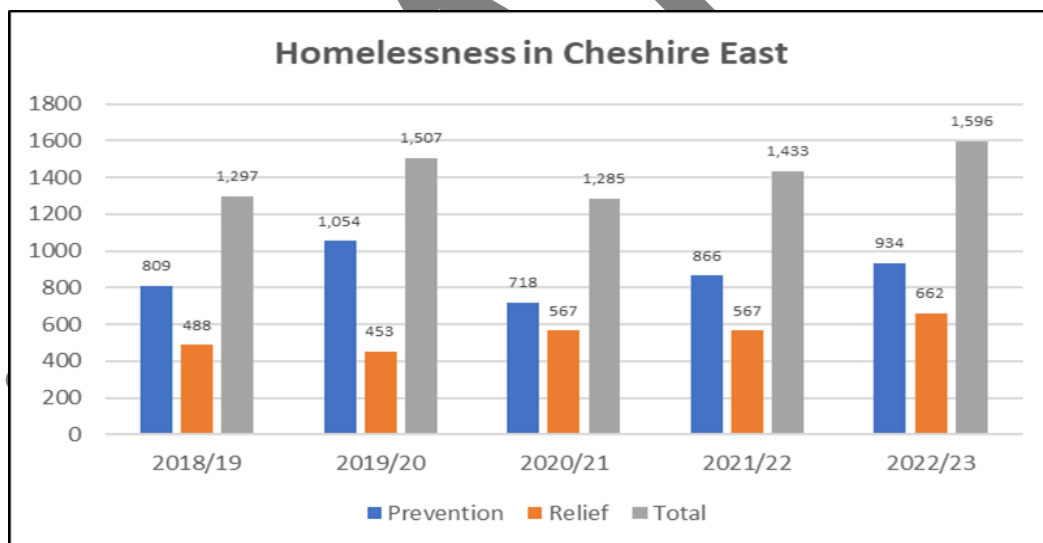
The Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy vision is: *To prevent homelessness, giving residents the ability to access and sustain affordable housing and an improved quality of life.*

Delivering a first-class homelessness service to those requiring assistance is the Council's priority, and any person who is homeless or facing homelessness will receive all the advice and support they need, when they need it. They may be rough sleepers, young people who have fallen out with family members, couples facing relationship breakdown, and victims of domestic abuse.

The charts below show:

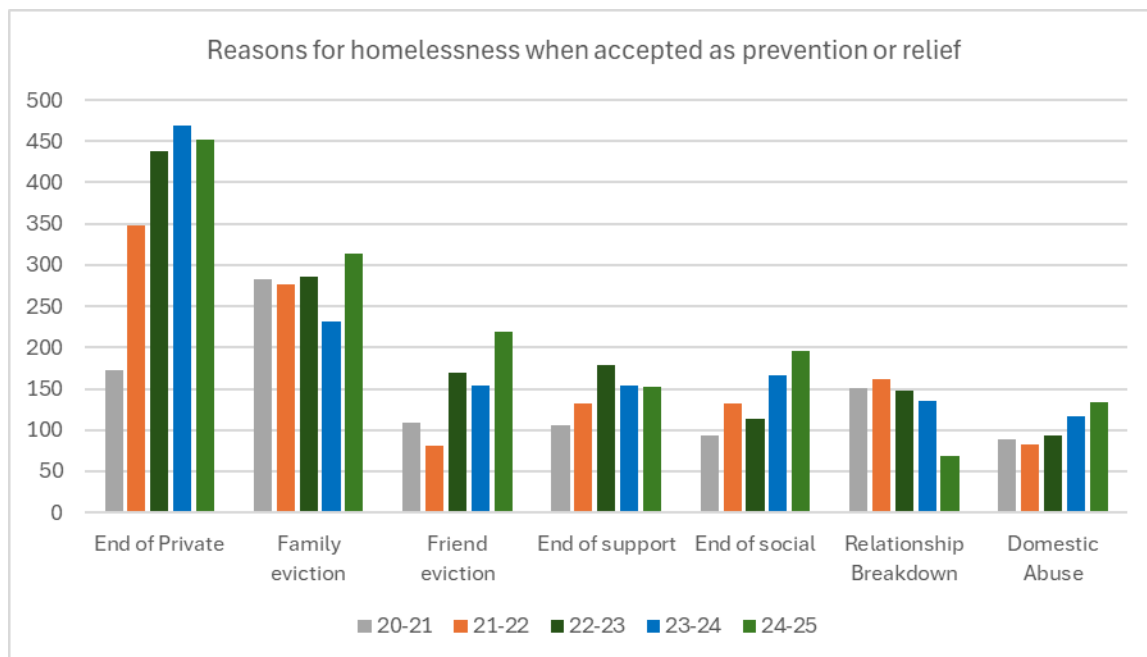
- The homelessness prevention and relief levels for 2018/19 to 2022/23
- Main causes of homelessness for 2018/19 to 2022/23 including early 2024 data

Between 2021/22 and 2022/23 the total number of homeless applications increased by 11.3%, the duties owed because of the assessments resulted in a 7.8% increase in people owed a prevention duty, a 16.7% increase in people owed a relief duty and a 11.3% increase in people owed a full homelessness duty. Homelessness due to private landlords serving a valid Section 21 notice increased by 52.6%. Duty to Refer cases increased as a percentage of all referrals.



The main reasons for people facing homelessness are as seen in the chart below:

- End of Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST)
- Family and friend eviction
- End of housing support
- End of social tenancy
- Relationship breakdown
- Domestic abuse



There has been an average of 9 rough sleepers per year over 2021-2023, with an increase of 200% from 2021-2023 (from 4 to 12).

A new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will be produced by 2025.

### Gypsies Roma and Travellers

The Council assesses the accommodation needs of Gypsy Roma, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople through the commissioning of the Gypsy Roma and Travellers Accommodation Assessment (GRTAA) which was most recently updated in 2018 and outlined the need for:

- 1 5 to 10 transit pitches for Gypsies Roma and Travellers
- 2 32 permanent pitches for Gypsies Roma and Travellers
- 3 5 plots for Travelling Showpeople

The identification of land to assist in meeting Traveller accommodation needs was undertaken through the SADPD process and following a call for sites and a robust assessment, several sites were assessed as being suitable and available for development.

The need for a transit site has now been addressed with the Council developing a new transit site of 10 pitches for short-stay accommodation which provides security to travelling households and aims to reduce the number of unauthorised encampments.

We are now working on the delivery of other suitable sites, allocated within the SADPD in the ownership of the Council.

The revision of the Local Plan will include the reassessment of need for Gypsy Roma and Travellers' accommodation through the commissioning of a new GRTAA, which will inform future policies.

### **Modern Day Slavery**

The Council sits as a member of the Strategic Modern Day Slavery Partnership, working with other local authorities to deliver a pan – Cheshire plan.

Given the seriousness of modern-day slavery, there is a need for joined up working between departments and local agencies, to promote a strategic response and good practice in supporting people in need.

#### **Refugees**

We will continue to support the Refugees Programme in collaboration with other agencies.

### **Housing Conditions**

#### **Tackling poor housing**

#### **Improving the quality of private rented homes**

The PRS is just under 22,000 properties and therefore plays an important role in meeting housing needs. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are a vital component, providing accommodation for tenants who are unable to afford to rent a self-contained property, or who enjoy the flexibility that renting a room offers them. A well-managed and good quality private rented sector leads to sustainable tenancies, security of tenure, good health and wellbeing, and cohesive communities.

The quality of private rented housing is diverse, with the more affordable properties being disproportionately linked to lower quality standards. We have seen a small growth in HMOs and short-term lets, often concentrating in areas which can create wider neighbourhood issues such as parking, waste management, anti-social behaviour, and disrupt community cohesion due to different patterns of occupation, often short term in its nature.

We have been using our powers to intervene in the quality and density of privately rented housing through our housing standards responsibilities, mandatory licensing scheme for HMOs occupied by 5 or more people, and the introduction of Article 4 directions in three wards in Crewe to withdraw permitted development rights in order to introduce controls to the development of HMOs in these wards. Article 4 means that a planning application will have to be submitted for work which normally does not need one.

Most private landlords provide well-managed and maintained properties and take action to improve their properties when issues are highlighted to them. There remain

gaps in landlords' knowledge of their responsibilities, particularly for 'incidental' landlords (such as people who have inherited a family home) and new property investors, and we educate and support landlords. However, there are cases where we need to act through issuing penalty notices, carrying out works and recharging landlords, and seeking prosecutions.

Over the lifetime of the previous Housing Strategy, the Council has intervened to improve living conditions for 1,137 private renting households. 592 enforcement notices have been served where landlords have failed to comply with legal requirements.

#### **Case study: housing enforcement**

Following a tenant complaint about the housing conditions in their privately rented home, a housing standards inspection found several issues including electrical hazards, and served an Improvement Notice and an Electrical Safety Notice. When the landlord didn't comply, the landlord was issued with financial penalties totalling £10,500, and was still responsible for carrying out the repairs.

#### **Case study: HMO enforcement**

Following an anonymous report of a HMO suspected to be operating without a licence, a joint investigation with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service found several breaches of legislation, including fire safety breaches, safety hazards and confirmation that the property required a licence. The property owner was served with enforcement notices and a financial penalty of £12,000. The property was brought up to the standards required for letting as a HMO, after which a licence could be granted.

The Government has proposed a Renters' Rights Bill, building on the Renters' Reform Bill proposed by the previous Government, to transform the experience of private renting. Proposals include:

- Applying the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector, providing clear timescales and expectations for property repairs and remediation of hazards
- Creating a digital private rented sector database to bring together key information for landlords, tenants and local authorities in one place, and for landlords to demonstrate compliance with their obligations
- Creating a PRS Landlord's Redress Scheme to manage complaints from residents
- Strengthening local councils' enforcement powers including new investigatory powers

#### **Empty homes**



Empty homes are recognised as a wasted resource, depriving people of much needed accommodation, and contribute to the need for new housing. Properties do become empty at some point as part of the normal operation of the housing market, during the rental or buying process, or when a person's estate is being finalised. There will naturally always be some empty properties to allow household flows in a healthy housing market; vacancy rates of more than 2.5% may be indicative of low demand issues in the market.

It is only when properties stay empty for longer than six months without any obvious signs of renovation or rental that they become 'true' empty homes. When left empty, they have the potential to cause blight to local communities, prevent investment and regeneration, devalue surrounding properties, and attract anti-social behaviour.

During the lifetime of the previous Housing Strategy, we have been successful in reducing the level of long-term empty homes to less than 1% (1,672) of the housing stock, through Council Tax premiums, advice and guidance, direct intervention and enforcement.

Our approach over the next three years will be to continue to provide owners with advice, support and encourage voluntary action to bring their homes back into use and provide homes for local people. Where co-operation fails, we will determine the extent to which the empty home affects its neighbours and consider the use of our enforcement powers when the property is having a significant impact on the community.

#### **Case study: Empty Homes enforcement**

We investigated a complaint about water leaking through the wall from a neglected empty property into an occupied home. We were able to trace the owner, secure the empty property against unauthorised access, and serve notices requiring the owner to stop the water leak and improve the external appearance of the property. When the owner failed to carry out the work, we were able to carry out the internal work on their behalf and recover all our costs, and successfully prosecute the owner for failing to tidy the external appearance of the property.

### **Energy efficiency and fuel poverty**

The new Government has committed to achieve net-zero by 2050 for the entire country. We have set an ambitious target to do everything we can to help the Borough of Cheshire East to be carbon neutral by 2045. The UK Government has mandated that all social housing achieve a minimum of EPC C by 2035, and the Climate Change Commission (CCC) recommends that EPC is achieved for all domestic property by this date. There is consultation underway to change the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards for private rented accommodation from a rating of E to C by 2030.



Domestic emissions account for 18% of total carbon emissions across the Cheshire and Warrington sub-region, and tackling this is a priority to not only reduce carbon emissions but also to reduce fuel poverty and improve residents' quality of life.

We have delivered a range of Government-funded schemes to improve domestic energy efficiency over the lifetime of the previous Strategy, as well as there being significant uptake of Energy Company Obligation (ECO) grants over a 10-year period, resulting in the installation of thousands of retrofit measures in homes across Cheshire East.

However, despite this, there are a range of challenges to us carrying out systematic retrofit across the entire housing stock. The 180,000-strong housing stock is all privately owned by individuals or Registered Housing Providers in Cheshire East, meaning that the Council only has an influencing role rather than direct control of energy improvements. The average EPC score is 62.58 – or a letter ranking of D.

To reach net-zero, decarbonised heating systems such as Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) are required. Given the typical lower operating temperatures of ASHPs versus traditional gas boilers, and the greater unit cost of electricity than gas, these are only affordable to operate in properties with a minimum EPC score of C, or ideally with an EPC score of B or higher. This could be achieved by

- greater insulation, meaning that more heat is retained and less lost
- by installation of solar panels with battery storage to decrease the unit cost of electricity; or by
- a combination of both.

Only 31% of Cheshire East households meet the minimum EPC score of C, compared to 47% for England as a whole.

Making a home more energy efficient can save the resident money on their fuel bills and it can also improve their health by making the home warmer too. 11.2% of households in Cheshire East cannot meet their energy needs at an affordable cost.

The main challenges for householders in making energy efficiency improvements are affordability; navigating the limited funding streams that are available; knowledge and access to trustworthy information and advice; and in the case of tenants, the reliance on a third party (their landlord) to action the improvements. A Green Doctor scheme commissioned to support owner occupied and private rented households from 2019-2022 provided energy efficiency and income maximisation advice and signposting to grant schemes for home improvements. There are a range of grants for heating repairs, renewable heating, and insulation, for those on low incomes. Over the lifetime of the previous strategy, we have secured funding from various Government and private sector schemes and provided practical help to arrange heating and insulation in vulnerable people's homes:

- 86 new central heating systems through the Warm Homes Fund project funded by National Grid

- 151 socially rented homes receiving external wall insulation, heat pumps, solar panels, underfloor insulation, and loft insulation through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund
- 496 homes improved through the Green Homes Grant programmes
- 41 off-gas homes retrofitted through the first round of the Home Upgrade Grant scheme
- Delivered urgent heating repairs to 932 households through packages of Affordable Warmth grants, Gas Safe Charity funding and the Household Support Fund

## **Health and Wellbeing**

The vision of the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 - 2028 is to enable people to live a healthier, longer life; with good mental and physical wellbeing; living independently and enjoying the place where they live.

The Strategy sets out the following aspirations:

- Reduce inequalities, narrowing the gap between those who are enjoying good health and wellbeing and those who are not
- Improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of all of our residents.
- Help people to have a good quality of life, to be healthy and happy

There have been many studies carried out on the effects of poor-quality housing conditions and negative health impacts, many of which indicate a link between the two.

The Interim Housing Strategy will help to achieve these health and wellbeing goals through improved properties and housing choices. Strategic Priorities 4 (Improving Housing Standards) and 5 (Enabling Independent Living) are focused on health and wellbeing improvements.

## **Meeting peoples' specialist housing needs**

### **Supported Housing**

The former Government passed an Act to make provision about the regulation of supported exempt accommodation, through local authority oversight of, and enforcement powers relating to, the provision of supported exempt accommodation. The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act aims to:

- Introduce national supported housing standards, which will provide minimum standards for both the property and the care or support provided in supported accommodation
- Require local authorities to create local supported accommodation licensing schemes

- Introduce a strategic planning duty for local authorities, which will include collecting data on the supply of homes, a forecast of future need, and a delivery plan contained in a bespoke strategy
- Create a national expert advisory panel to monitor the sector and to steer services, which will report to the Secretary of State

We await consultation on the implementation of the Act and will provide a response to Government in due course. The Council must, under the Act, outline local need and supply of accommodation, carry out a review of the supported exempt accommodation in the district, and in the light of that review, publish a strategy for the provision of supported exempt accommodation in Cheshire East.

### **Adults with Learning Disabilities**

In August 2024 the Cheshire and Merseyside Housing Strategy: People with learning disabilities and/or Autism was published with a vision *“to achieve the best quality life we can for people with learning disabilities and /or Autism to live independently, with personalised support and care”*.

To achieve this vision the strategy sets out the ways in which this will be achieved:

- Securing the provision of good quality housing and supported housing where people with learning disabilities and/or Autism with care and support needs can live well and thrive
- Developing a range of housing and supported housing over the next 5 years and beyond, that is tailored to reflect the identified needs within our local communities
- Ensuring that support and care services, delivered to people within supported housing and those living in general needs housing, are effective in promoting people's wellbeing and independence

The aim of the strategy is to facilitate and commission a wide range of housing and supported housing that enables people to live independently in their communities including:

- General needs housing for individuals with personalised care and support
- Supported housing that is suited to people who need their own self-contained housing or shared housing within local communities, with a mix of personalised and shared care and support
- Housing and supported housing that is adapted in a variety of ways to meet the needs of people who need an accessible home and/or a home that is adapted to meet their support needs

The Strategy outlines the evidence of need and the approach to delivery, which will be taken forward by each Council. In order to influence future commissioning decisions, the Council's Adult Commissioning Team are undertaking a strategic review of their existing accommodation offer to determine the type and location of new provision. Once established the Housing team will work closely with them to identify opportunities to bring this forward.

## **Mental Health**

For people with heightened or enduring mental health issues who are unable to be housed safely within the community, or those with a pre-existing housing need (for example, clients with acute depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, or latter stage dementia) the right mix of specialist and supported accommodation is critical. These people have more specific and acute care needs and can often fall victim to social isolation unless properly accommodated. This can entail sheltered accommodation or institutional schemes; however, the Council aims to reduce reliance on residential care as a long-term solution and aspires to maximise use of supported accommodation to enable individuals to live independently.

The Housing team works closely with Mental Health Services to identify individuals who can live independently within general needs provision with support, and through the allocations process work with Registered Housing Providers to identify suitable accommodation.

## **Care Leavers**

Appropriate accommodation shapes the variety and experience of placements available to young people, which can be varied depending on the flexibility of the accommodation menu and associated support services in the area.

The Council recognises the need to deliver a range of housing and support options appropriate to the needs and preferences of young people. Whilst children in care have a range of provision especially for them (in the form of residential homes and foster placements), there is substantial cross-over between young people in need and care leavers, who routinely access mainstream housing, generic floating support services, hostels and supported lodgings, as well as settled supported accommodation.

Giving young people in need the same opportunities and quality of life as their peers is a key outcome. Throughout the entire range of accommodation options available to young people, the Council aims to support young people to develop the tenancy management and independent living skills required to live on their own in the long-term and avoid future loss of accommodation.

This entails providing a stepped menu of accommodation that allows planned moves for young people out of care or supported accommodation, and into independent living. To achieve this, a multi-disciplinary approach will continue to be utilised in determining and addressing the broader needs of young people that may act as barriers to them achieving settled accommodation or independent living.

A 2024 Ofsted report says that since the last inspection of the Council in 2019, when services for children were judged as “requiring improvement to be good”, improvements have been made in some areas of practice. However, the quality of practice and the experience and progress of children and young people are too variable, and for care leavers they are inadequate. The issues concerning young

persons and homelessness which were flagged in the report will be addressed by this Strategy and the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

## **Disability**

Many of us are living longer, in better homes, with good social networks and in supportive communities. Nevertheless, one in five people have lived experience of a disability or long-term health condition and we are experiencing increasing fragility and vulnerability in older age. A suitable home can help disabled people of all ages to build and sustain their independence and maintain connections in their community. Many homes are however poorly designed for older age or changes in care and support needs. Our ambition is to give more people the choice to live independently in their own homes for longer. Adaptations can reduce the amount of formal care and support a person may need, as well as enabling them to remain living in the home of their choice.

There is a focus on raising accessibility standards of new homes, recognising the importance of suitable homes for disabled people. The provision of appropriate housing for disabled people makes an important contribution to a safe and independent life. The Strategy consultation sought views on options to raise the accessibility of new homes which included mandating a higher accessibility standard.

Disabled Facilities Grant funding is paid to local authorities through the Better Care Fund in recognition of the importance of ensuring adaptations are part of an integrated approach to housing, health and social care locally. Over the lifetime of the previous Strategy, we have facilitated over £12 million of adaptations for over 2,000 people, delivering walk-in showers, stairlifts, ramps, ground floor living and many other types of adaptations to enable independence, dignity and safety at home. The Disabled Facilities Grant is just one part of the local adaptations system, and a priority for this Interim Housing Strategy is to embed major adaptations into the wider health and social care landscape, ensuring that the local system is seamless and effective.

Registered Housing Providers are proactive in working with tenants with disabilities, working collaboratively with social care and Cheshire Homechoice to find suitable accommodation where it is an option as an alternative to adapting homes. There are 1,034 households registered with Cheshire Homechoice who are waiting for an adapted property, of which 308 are waiting for a wheelchair accessible home. 68 applicants with disabilities have been allocated properties through Homechoice. More needs to be done to match tenants to suitable properties to reduce the number of requests for adaptations at the start of new tenancies. Housing providers also provide a significant contribution to funding adaptations, delivering minor adaptations to their tenants as well as contributing nearly £2million for major adaptations.

## **Older People**

Cheshire East, much like the rest of the UK, has an ageing demographic. Estimates up to 2035 show an increase of 34%, for those aged 65 and above, raising the total to

118,500. We have an above average proportion of residents within each of the five-year age bands over the age of 40. There is a relatively low proportion of people of working age and a relatively high proportion of older people. This has implications for the housing and support needs of the population, which are likely to rise as household numbers containing an ageing population increase. This includes:

- Supporting residents to make appropriate housing choices earlier in life
- Encouraging a mix of housing options which cater for older peoples' requirements

The main aim is to provide housing options for older people to enable them to retain their independence, ideally in their own home through adaptations, and floating support. When this is not possible alternative accommodation such as retirement living, sheltered housing, extra care housing, care homes, and nursing homes will be required for ageing households. Adult Social Care is currently reviewing options regarding Extra Care housing, and the Housing team will work with them to identify and bring forward opportunities.

Each of these will require ease of access to community services, GP and health centres, leisure facilities, transport, and accessible green space. An ageing population will see the numbers of disabled people continuing to increase, and it is important we plan early to meet their needs through policy change.

The evidence and need for specialist accommodation will be collated into one Accommodation Strategy, which will inform our commissioning decisions moving forward for the future.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The

Strategic priorities are now set out along with a detailed action plan which shows how the priorities will be delivered. The five Strategic Priorities show how residents in Cheshire East will be able to access affordable, appropriate, and decent homes. To achieve our vision to deliver an excellent housing offer, we will focus on the following priorities:

1. Improving access to affordable housing
2. Meeting specialist housing needs
3. Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping
4. Improving housing standards
5. Enabling independent living

This Strategy outlines a series of interventions which will address housing need in Cheshire East. The priorities require a range of co-ordinated activity. It sets the framework for activities to deliver the priorities, and will both support, and be supported, by strategic documents such as the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, and the Tenancy Strategy.



Tying together the strategic priorities for improving services to communities, this Strategy went through consultation with partners in 2024/2025 to establish that the strategic priorities are still relevant, with the opportunity to identify any key tasks required to deliver the priorities of the new Strategy.

The priorities are outlined below and sit alongside the detailed Action Plan.

### **Strategic Priority 1: Improving access to affordable housing**

**Aim:** *Increasing the provision of affordable housing within urban and rural areas by working with key partners:*

- Registered Housing Providers
  - Homes England
  - Parish Councils
  - Developers
- Supporting the development of the new Local Plan strategy to deliver new affordable housing
  - Using Section 106 money to bring forward additional affordable housing
  - Balancing the housing market by providing a range of affordable opportunities for those that cannot access the open market
  - Exploring alternative opportunities to deliver new affordable housing in Cheshire East
  - Focusing on delivering Social Rented homes to provide rented accommodation that is genuinely affordable
  - Exploring downsizing schemes to release family accommodation

### **Strategic Priority 2: Meeting specialist housing needs**

**Aim:** *Continue to effectively commission and manage a programme of Housing Related Support projects across the Borough.*

- Providing direct provision of Key Support Workers to assist individuals at risk of becoming homeless after being discharged from hospital
- Working with Registered Housing Providers in shaping permanent move-on accommodation, with continued measured support to ensure sustainable outcomes
- To work with Adult Social Care to establish good quality intelligence data for people with complex needs to influence commissioning decisions
- Responding locally to the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act to implement the new regulations to tackle any poor-quality supported housing and protect residents
- Continue to deliver specialist support for people with complex hoarding problems in collaboration with Adults Social Care
- Continuing to develop partnerships with Registered Housing Providers to enable us to address identified specialist housing needs

- Addressing the identified housing needs of Gypsy Roma and Traveller households
- Continuing to support the Refugees programme in collaboration with other agencies
- Supporting the development of the new Local Plan to identify and address specialist housing needs

### **Strategic Priority 3: Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping**

**Aim:** *Implement the Action Plan in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2026 - 2030.*

- Develop new Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2026-2030
- Working with our partners to help improve the health and wellbeing of homeless people and identify those who are at risk of becoming homeless
- Continuing work with partner agencies to deliver our successful No Further Night Out initiative

### **Strategic Priority 4: Improving Housing Standards**

**Aim:** *Drive up the standards in privately owned housing by engaging with landlords, taking a strong line against poor property standards and management where it is most needed, and deliver the wider Borough Carbon Action Plan 2024-2029.*

- Responding to legislative changes and responsibilities introduced through the Renters' Rights Bill
- Keeping the existing Article 4 Directions under review, and monitor the need for further controls in other areas
- Improving landlords' knowledge of their responsibilities to provide well maintained homes
- Supporting the private rented sector to improve energy efficiency
- To improve and update our evidence base on housing stock condition
- Enabling and advising vulnerable households to improve their homes' energy efficiency

### **Strategic Priority 5: Enabling Independent Living**

**Aim:** *Promote a housing offer which provides a mix of property types, affordability, tenure and size for vulnerable and older households.*

- Supporting the development of the new Local Plan in the provision of housing choice for older people including Extra Care
- Transforming the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants to improve efficiency and value for money
- Maximising the best use of accessible social rented housing stock
- Supporting our care leavers to ensure they have the skills to prepare for and sustain their tenancy



- Promoting independence for care leavers through the Ignition Panel scheme
- Work in partnership with Adult Social Care to provide accommodation which promotes independence for residents with learning disabilities/ autism and physical and sensory disabilities

**Appendices:**

- Action Plan
- Evidence base
- Glossary of terms

DRAFT

ACTION PLAN 2025-2028			
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: IMPROVING ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING			
TASK	OUTCOME	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME
INCREASE THE PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS			
Enable the delivery of 355 affordable homes per year through partnership working	Ensure the right mix of small and family sized homes are available to meet housing needs	Hold quarterly review meetings with Registered Housing providers.	2025 – 2028
		Investigate funding opportunities through Homes England and other agencies.	2025 - 2028
		Explore the most effective use of Section 106 (commuted sums) funding.	2025 - 2028
Enable the delivery of affordable housing in rural areas with identified need.	Increase the number of affordable homes in rural areas	Proactively working with the Rural Housing Enabler, Parish Councils who have identified a need for affordable housing and bring forward opportunities.	2025 - 2028
Reduce the number of Empty homes in the borough	Bring empty homes back into use through encouragement, advice and assistance.	Provide advice, guidance and direct intervention where necessary to reduce the number of empty homes.	2025 - 2028
REVITALISE THE HOUSING MARKET			
Continue to progress the sale of surplus Council land assets through the Housing Development Framework	Increase in the number of affordable homes brought forward.	Sites identified for disposal through the Framework are progressed via the mini competition route	2025 -2028
TASK	OUTCOME	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME

Maintain strategic links with Registered providers to support them to develop within the Cheshire East area	Active number of Registered Housing Providers developing in the Cheshire East area	Continue regular meetings with developing Registered Housing Providers and explore opportunities.	2025 -2028
Explore collaborative working to bring forward housing opportunities	Support aims and objectives of the Local Plan	Work with Sub Regional Councils, Local Enterprise Partnership, Homes England and Regeneration to bring forward opportunities for housing growth.	2025 - 2028
Explore downsizing	Develop schemes to release larger family accommodation for households in need	Develop schemes with Registered Providers	2025-2028
Work with partners on regeneration programmes within the Borough	Increase residential opportunities on brownfields sites and within town centres	Work with the Council's Regeneration team to create residential opportunities, as part of the Town centre regeneration projects in Crewe and Macclesfield.	2025 -2028
Self-build and custom build	Increase self-build and custom build opportunities.	Maintain self-build register.  Work with Strategic Planning to identify suitable sites within the revision of the Local Plan.	2025 -2028  2026-2028
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: MEETING PEOPLES' SPECIALIST HOUSING NEEDS</b>			
<b>COMMISSION HOUSING SUPPORT FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE WITH MULTIPLE DISADVANTAGES:</b>			
Continue to effectively commission and manage programme of Housing Related Support across the Borough.	Reduce number of instances of repeat homelessness.	Monitoring of data on people who are in sustainable accommodation, 6 months after leaving supported accommodation.	2025 - 2028
<b>TASK</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>

Develop robust and clear pathways to assist individuals at risk of becoming homeless after being discharged from hospital.	Work with the Clinical Commissioning Group and Public Health to increase positive move-on from all commissioned pathways.	Decrease delays in hospital discharge through discharge planning.	2025 - 2028
Establish good quality intelligence and useful data for people with multiple disadvantages.	Contracts are procured and tailored to meet the changing needs of our customers.	There are a range of housing options available to people and we have less refusals/ rejections from support providers.	2025-2028
Work with housing providers in shaping permanent move-on accommodation, with continued measured support to ensure sustainable outcomes.	A reduction in unplanned outcomes from supported accommodation, with more people moving successfully into appropriate long-term placements. Consequently, reducing the health and wellbeing inequalities experienced by those with complex needs.	The percentage of unplanned ends to support are monitored and the ratio of planned move on outcomes increase.	2025 - 2028
Work with Adult Social Care to establish good quality intelligence to inform housing development opportunities.	Contracts are procured and tailored to meet the changing needs of our customers.	There are a range of housing options available to people.	2025-2028
Implement the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act	Use of new regulations to tackle any poor-quality supported housing and protection of residents.  Minimum standards delivered for both the properties and the care or support provided in supported accommodation.  Creation of a local supported accommodation licensing scheme.	As part of the remit of the Specialist Housing Group, a workstream will be established to progress the preparation of a Supported Accommodation Strategy, in partnership with Adult Social Care and Children's services.	2025-2026
TASK	OUTCOME	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME

Continue to deliver specialist support for people with complex hoarding problems in collaboration with Adult Social Care	People can manage their health and care at home and can sustain their tenancy	Explore and develop innovative approaches to support residents through use of use Housing Led Provision and Floating Support service.	2025-2028
Enhance partnerships with housing providers across all tenures, including the private rented sector.	Increase access to permanent safe accommodation for homeless applicants.	Record homelessness preventions and relief on a quarterly basis and analyse data for trends to help address any areas of concern.	2025 - 2028
Continue to support the Refugees Programme in collaboration with other agencies.	Deliver housing outcomes and provision for refugees.	Increased prevention outcomes for refugees are evidenced.	2025 - 2028
Support the development of a Care Leavers' Accommodation Pathway to independence.	Reduce care leaver homelessness and increase prevention outcomes for our young people.	The Housing Options team are integral in the development and delivery of the pathway and incidents of care leaver homelessness are reduced.	2025 - 2028
Support with the delivery and re-procurement of a pathway for domestic abuse survivors.	Deliver housing outcomes and support for survivors of domestic abuse	Increased positive prevention and relief outcomes for domestic abuse survivors and their families.	2025- 2028
To work to address the accommodation needs of our Gypsy Roma and Traveller, and Showpeople communities	To bring forward the sites within Cheshire East ownership, allocated within the SADPD for permanent residential sites.	Increase the number of pitches in Cheshire East.	2025 - 2026
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: PREVENT HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING</b>			
<b>ANY PERSON WHO IS HOMELESS OR FACING HOMELESSNESS WILL RECEIVE ALL THE ADVICE AND SUPPORT THEY NEED</b>			
<b>TASK</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>

Develop new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and associated action plan for 2026 - 2030.	A new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is developed which is focused on improved outcomes for the next 5 years showing reduced homelessness, improved pathways and throughputs, and quality of life increased.	Consult Housing Options officers, Steering Group members, partners to ensure priorities are robust by Action Plan reviews bi-annually by the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group.	2025
Work with our partners to help improve the health and wellbeing of homeless people and identify those who are at risk of becoming homelessness.	Personalised pathways are in place to enable access to tailored support and settled accommodation to break the link between homelessness and ill health.	Reduced numbers of repeat homelessness and reduced rejections from support providers.	2025-2028
Integrate our multi-disciplinary support without rough sleeping outreach service.	Reduce rough sleeping through a range of interventions and provide temporary and longer-term housing solutions, so that people do not need to sleep rough.	Reduce numbers of rough sleepers, particularly those with multiple disadvantages	2025 - 2028
Evaluate and develop our in-house temporary accommodation provision to reduce the number of nights households spending in hotel or bed and breakfast accommodation.	The temporary accommodation we provide directly, meets the needs of homeless people in appropriate locations with effective turnover and minimal cost.	Increase the capacity to support people with multiple disadvantages in temporary accommodation.	2025 - 2028
Enhance the No Further Night Out provision by working with support and accommodation providers to prevent evictions and develop a step-down offer.	Unplanned ends to accommodation are reduced and mitigated through alternative offers and creative work.	Decreased unplanned end to accommodation.	2025-2028
TASK	OUTCOME	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME
Develop relationships with non-commissioned support providers and private landlords to deliver	The needs of people at risk of homelessness are met through a variety of housing solutions, mitigating the	Develop upstream prevention for non-priority single homeless applicants.	2025-2028

housing options for those people with low support needs	issues of supply and demand in social housing.		
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: IMPROVE HOUSING STANDARDS</b>			
<b>CHALLENGE POOR QUALITY HOUSING</b>			
Improve landlords' knowledge of their responsibilities to provide well maintained homes	A well maintained private rented sector reduces the need for housing enforcement activity, and improves health and wellbeing of occupants	Develop information resources for landlords about responsibilities, common hazards and property maintenance.	2025-2028
Respond to legislative changes and responsibilities introduced through the Renters' Rights Bill	Improved controls in the private rented sector	Develop an action plan to utilise all available powers to improve the private rented sector.	2025-2028
Update and improve our evidence base on housing conditions	Improved knowledge of housing conditions will lead to early intervention preventing low demand and poor housing conditions	Engage with Research and Consultation to collate and review all available datasets, and review whether a stock condition survey is required.	2025-2026
Support the private rented sector to improve energy efficiency	Improved living conditions and improved health and wellbeing	Embed energy efficiency information and guidance into housing disrepair and enforcement processes.	2025-2028
TASK	OUTCOME	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME
Enable homeowners to improve their homes' energy efficiency	Improved living conditions and improved health and wellbeing	Provide guidance and advice to households to publicise the availability of government / industry funding for	2025-2028

		retrofitting and energy efficiency measures.	
		Explore funding opportunities for the retrofit of low energy efficiency homes for vulnerable households.	2025-2028
		Develop and deliver an action plan based on the National Institute For Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance to prevent excess winter deaths and illness associated with cold homes.	2025-2026
Progress the Towns Fund Warm and Healthy Homes initiative.	Improved living conditions and improved health and wellbeing	Project to be completed by March 2026.	2026
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5: ENABLING INDEPENDENT LIVING</b>			
<b>PROMOTE INDEPENDENT LIVING</b>			
Support the development of the Local Plan in order to increase the provision of housing for older people.	Housing offer is of appropriate specification and age positive.	Work with Strategic Planning to develop appropriate policies.	2025-2028
Support care leavers to ensure they have the skills to prepare for and sustain their tenancy.	Housing Options Team to review learning modules for tenancy training.	Less young people facing tenancy failure and resulting homelessness	2025-2028
TASK	OUTCOME	TIMEFRAME	TIMEFRAME
Explore the potential of a scheme to provide the right size housing offer for an ageing population who are under-occupying their homes and are interested in moving to a smaller	Release of homes for families that need more space, and ensure the efficient use of the existing social housing	Explore downsizing housing opportunities with Registered providers and Developers.	2025 - 2028



home that better fits their needs and are more manageable

Transform the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants to improve efficiency and value for money.

People can remain living at home as long as possible

Develop an action plan to reduce waiting times and maximise spending power on Disabled Facilities Grants.

2025-2028

Explore opportunities to embed major adaptations in wider health and social care systems.

Preparing clients as tenancy ready and/or to maintain a tenancy.

People are less likely to be admitted to lose their home.

Reduction in early tenancy termination.

2025 - 2028

Maximise the best use of accessible housing stock

Help people to live independently in their own homes

Establish protocols with Housing Providers.

2025-2028

Explore options to promote independence for residents with learning and/or autism and physical and/or sensory disabilities through the development of new housing models.

Support people to live independently in their own home.

Reduction of residents placed in inappropriate housing.

2025 - 2028

## Appendices

### Evidence base

Sources:

Long term plan for Housing - <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/long-term-plan-for-housing-secretary-of-states-speech>

Levelling-up and Regeneration Act - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-laws-to-speed-up-planning-build-homes-and-level-up>

National Planning Framework 2023 –

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF\\_December\\_2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF_December_2023.pdf)

Homes England Strategic Plan 2023-2028

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/646f58f6ab40bf000c196a74/Homes-England-strategic-plan-2023-to-2028.pdf>

Private Rented Sector: “A fairer private rented sector” -

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62ab00c3d3bf7f04a0a491c6/A\\_fairer\\_private\\_rented\\_sector\\_web\\_accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62ab00c3d3bf7f04a0a491c6/A_fairer_private_rented_sector_web_accessible.pdf)

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/landmark-social-housing-act-receives-royal-assent-to-become-law>

Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022 –

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/631229d7e90e075882ea2566/20220903\\_Ending\\_rough\\_sleeping\\_for\\_good.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/631229d7e90e075882ea2566/20220903_Ending_rough_sleeping_for_good.pdf)

Domestic Abuse Act 2021 – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-overarching-factsheet>

Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 –

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/26>

Illegal Migration Act 2023 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/illegal-migration-bill>

Population - <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/E06000049/>

Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy - <https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/council-and-democracy/health-and-wellbeing-board/joint-health-wellbeing.pdf>

ONS House price to workplace-based earnings ration (22 March 2023 release)

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>

## Glossary of Terms

### Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers)

### Armed Forces Covenant

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise that together we acknowledge and understand that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, including the bereaved, should be treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy, and society they serve with their lives.

### Local Plan

The local plan sets planning policies, allocates sites for development and is used to make decisions on planning applications. It addresses issues such as the amount and locations of new housing and employment development, protection and improvement of important open areas, provision of new infrastructure, and improvement of town centres and community facilities.

### No Further Night Out

Rough sleeping is the worst form of homelessness, and harms those involved in it, including rough sleepers themselves, their friends and family, and wider communities. The aim of no further night out is to get rough sleepers off the streets quickly so they don't fall into a dangerous rough sleeping lifestyle.

### Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

The MHCLG is a ministerial department of the Government of the United Kingdom. It is responsible for housing, communities, and local government in England.

### National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework was revised in response to the Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the Planning system consultation on 12 December 2024 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

### Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD)

The SADPD is the second part of the Council's Local Plan, providing further detailed planning policies and site allocations to support the strategic policies and sites contained in the Local Plan Strategy (LPS).

### Contact details

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## **Economy and Growth Committee**

**3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025**

### **Home Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Policy – 2025-2028**

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**Report of: Phil Cresswell – Executive Director - Place**

**Report Reference No: EG/08/25-26**

**Ward(s) Affected: All Wards**

**For Decision or Scrutiny: Decision**

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 On 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024 the Economy and Growth Committee approved consultation on the Home Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Policy.
- 2 Consultation took place for a period of 6 weeks ending on 22 January 2025. This report provides a summary of the responses and presents the findings.
- 3 The Policy contributes towards the commitments within the new Corporate Plan (2025-2029) to unlock prosperity for all and improve health and wellbeing.

#### **Executive Summary**

- 4 In November 2024 the Economy and Growth Committee were advised that due to the high demand for Disabled Facilities Grants and the unprecedented financial challenges that the Council faced, that it was necessary to revise the discretionary financial assistance that is given through the Home Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Policy. The Council proposed several changes to focus its financial resources on statutory services, and on the most vulnerable residents.
- 5 The Committee gave approval to officers to consult on the proposed changes. The Home Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People

Policy went out for a period of public consultation between 9 December 2024 and 22 January 2025.

- 6 At the close of the consultation 80 responses had been received, a summary of which is outlined in Appendix One. Amendments have been made to the policy as a result of the consultation and these have been incorporated into the final version in Appendix Two.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Economy and Growth Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the consultation responses and amendments made to the Home Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Policy
2. To approve and adopt the final version of the Home Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Policy 2025-2028

## Background

- 7 A safe, good quality, secure, and affordable home is fundamental to living a healthy and fulfilled life. Good housing benefits people's mental and physical wellbeing; enables informal carers to provide care; and underpins people's ability to live independently, safely and as part of the wider community.
- 8 The Council is committed to investing in early intervention and prevention services to help residents live well and for longer. Investment through the Home Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Policy empowers and motivates people to manage their own care and wellbeing at home in accessible and safe home environments and reduce the need for paid care, whilst supporting the Council's ambition to help the borough be carbon neutral by 2045.
- 9 The Council has adopted and published home repair and adaptation policies to meet local need since 2009, focusing on the most vulnerable residents and to meet the challenges faced by disabled people in securing accessible housing. The most recent iteration of the policy was published in 2022 in response to the unique circumstances brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 10 An updated policy is now needed to reflect the financial pressures faced by the Council and the need to focus the use of our financial resources on statutory services and the most vulnerable residents.

- 11 The Home Repair and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Policy was publicly consulted on for a 6-week period and a summary of the consultation responses can be found in Appendix two. Several changes have been made to the policy following consultation and these are outlined in the Consultation and Engagement section below.

## **Consultation and Engagement**

- 12 Following approval for consultation, the Home Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Policy was the subject of a 6-week consultation, which ran from 9 December 2024 to 22 January 2025.
- 13 The consultation was widely promoted including via the Council's consultation portal, the Digital Influence Panel, media releases, social media, existing service users, face to face presentations and via email to local interest groups, the voluntary and community sector, and internal Council teams. Consultation packs were also placed in libraries to allow responses by people without internet access.
- 14 The responses to the consultation were collated by the Research and Intelligence Team and the results provided to enable the further development of the final policy.
- 15 In total, there were 80 responses received via the online questionnaire/survey, and these have been collated into a Summary, outlined in Appendix One. There was general support for the changes to the policy, with a recognition of the financial challenges that the Council faces, but there were several concerns raised about protecting our most vulnerable residents.
- 16 The Council proposed to remove discretionary funding from the Disabled Facilities Grant within the policy, thereby limiting grants awarded to individuals to the maximum amount detailed in legislation (currently £30,000). Concerns were expressed by respondents about the impact that this policy would have on disabled people in the most need when there is a shortage of suitable accessible housing. As a result, an amendment has been made to the policy to allow discretionary use of the Disabled Facilities Grant where the disabled person is a child or young person to whom the Council has a Corporate Parenting responsibility, or where a child safety protection plan is in place and adaptations form part of that plan.
- 17 Respondents expressed concern about the proposals to restrict access to the Affordable Warmth Grant solely to people in receipt of means tested benefits, acknowledging the cost-of-living crisis faced by residents, the low take-up of pension credit, and the impact of cold homes on older people. As a result, the policy has been amended to widen the eligibility

criteria to include people in receipt of a state retirement pension as their only source of income with savings of less than £8,000 per person.

### Reasons for Recommendations

- 18 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002 contains wide-ranging powers to provide financial help with housing renewal, including adapting, improving or repairing living accommodation. The Order also states that before the powers contained within it can be used, the Council must publish a policy on how it intends to use them.
- 19 There is a strong policy drive for integrated approaches across housing, health and social care to prevent hospital admissions and expedite hospital discharge. Housing's role in supporting health is becoming more prominent, with research demonstrating the causal link between poor housing conditions and ill health.

### Other Options Considered

20

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	The current policy continues to be delivered in its current format, and households continue to receive the same level of support with home repairs and adaptations	Unaffordable, and presents a financial risk to the Council
Remove all discretionary assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of Disabled Facilities Grant programme only</li> <li>• No support available for the lowest income households to access essential heating repairs</li> <li>• Disabled people won't be supported to move to more appropriate accommodation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased GP attendances and hospital admissions for cold-related ill health and falls</li> <li>• Increased expenditure on care packages</li> </ul>



## Implications and Comments

### *Monitoring Officer/Legal*

- 21 The report refers to the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002 and the provisions contained within it. It should be noted that the powers contained within the legislation are merely powers and that the Council does have a discretion if it wishes to enact them or not, they are not mandatory in that the Council must do it.
- 22 The Care Act 2014('the Act') imposes a general duty on a local authority to promote an individual's well-being (section 1 of the Act ) 'Well-being' is a broad concept but particular reference is made to control by the individual over day-to day life (including over care and support and the way in which it is provided), domestic, family and personal relationships and also the suitability of living accommodation (section 1(2)(d), (g) & (h)of the Act). Although the wellbeing principle applies specifically when the local authority performs an activity or task, or makes a decision, in relation to a person, the principle should also be considered by the local authority when it undertakes broader, strategic functions and should be seen as the common theme around which care and support is built (paragraph 1.13). The Care and Support Statutory Guidance also states that supporting people to live as independently as possible, for as long as possible, is a guiding principle of the Act.
- 23 Local authorities are also required to have regard to several other key principles and standards when carrying out its functions in addition to the general principle of promoting well-being.
- 24 A local authority is also required to make information and advice available for all people and put in place universal services which are aimed at preventing, reducing or delaying care and support needs in the context of community wellbeing and social inclusion. Preventative approaches foster a holistic approach that includes accessing universal services, early intervention, promoting choice and control, and the development of social capital.
- 25 Paragraph 10.27 of the Care and support statutory guidance updated 1 June 2023 issued by the Department of Health and Social Care provides as follows-
- 26 In determining how to meet needs, the local authority may also take into reasonable consideration its own finances and budgetary position and must comply with its related public law duties. This includes the importance of ensuring that the funding available to the local authority is

sufficient to meet the needs of the entire local population. The local authority may reasonably consider how to balance that requirement with the duty to meet the eligible needs of an individual in determining how an individual's needs should be met (but not whether those needs are met). However, the local authority should not set arbitrary upper limits on the costs it is willing to pay to meet needs through certain routes – doing so would not deliver an approach that is person-centred or compatible with public law principles. The authority may take decisions on a case-by-case basis which weigh up the total costs of different potential options for meeting needs and include the cost as a relevant factor in deciding between suitable alternative options for meeting needs. This does not mean choosing the cheapest option; but the one which delivers the outcomes desired for the best value.

27. Proposals to make significant changes to policy required consultation with the public and those directly affected, including service users and relevant stakeholders.
28. The Gunning principles set out the common law principles to be observed when undertaking consultation. *R v London Borough of Brent ex parte Gunning [1985] 84 LGR 168* established these principles, which set out that a consultation is only lawful when these four principles are met:
  1. Proposals are still at a formative stage - A final decision has not yet been made, or predetermined, by the decision makers.
  2. There is sufficient information to give 'intelligent consideration' - The information provided must relate to the consultation and must be available, accessible, and easily interpretable for consultees to provide an informed response.
  3. There is adequate time for consideration and response- There must be sufficient opportunity for consultees to participate in the consultation. In the absence of a prescribed statutory period, there is no set timeframe for consultation, though it is widely accepted that twelve-week consultation period is sufficient. The adequacy of the length of time given for consultees to respond can vary depending on the subject and extent of impact of the consultation.
  4. 'Conscientious consideration' must be given to the consultation responses before a decision is made. Decision-makers should be able to provide evidence that they took consultation responses into account.
29. Following the consultation members will now need to take care to take account of the views expressed in the Appendix 1 before arriving at their decision. Members must give clear and conscientious consideration to

the responses received to the consultation which ran for a 6-week period between December and January 2025.

- 30 In addition, any final decisions must also take into account the rights of service users and their carers as set out in the Human Rights Act 1998 Article 8 'right to respect for family and private life'.
- 31 The committee's remit set out in the Constitution includes 'determination of policies and making of decisions in relation to housing management and delivery.' Approval of the housing strategy is therefore within its remit.

#### *Section 151 Officer/Finance*

- 32 The Council receives a capital grant paid through the Better Care Fund for Disabled Facilities Grants. Local housing authorities are encouraged to use the additional funding in an agile and responsive way to supplement the core delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants. In 2025-26 the Council will receive £2,906,342. However, it should be noted that the future allocation of Government capital grant is not guaranteed.
- 33 Delivery of the Policy is funded by two rolling capital programmes in the Council's budget: Disabled Facilities Grant and Home Repairs for Vulnerable People. Unspent funds from previous years are carried forward to subsequent years where the funds are committed but works are incomplete at the end of the financial year.
- 34 The number of people that can be assisted through the Home Repairs for Vulnerable People programme is limited by the budget that is available. The Council cannot limit the number of people that receive a Disabled Facilities Grant as it is a mandatory grant under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and refusal to pay a grant would place the Council at risk of a judicial review, emphasising the importance of reducing discretionary expenditure through the Policy to protect our ability to deliver our statutory duty.

#### *Policy*

- 35 The Cheshire East Plan 2025-29 sets out our commitments to unlock prosperity for all and improve health and wellbeing. The Home Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Policy enables us to deliver outcomes to improve independence, health and wellbeing through early intervention and prevention and support children and young people to thrive and reach their potential with targeted support. The Policy also contributes to our priority to influence carbon reduction across the borough by 2045.

#### *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*

- 36 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been carried out. The EqIA identified two main groups of people with protected characteristics that would be impacted by the proposed policy changes: older people and people with disabilities. These are not distinct groups; there is a significant prevalence of disability in older age, although it should be noted that the EqIA initially identified the removal of the discretionary top-up to the Disabled Facilities Grant would impact most significantly on children with disabilities. The policy has been amended in light of consultation feedback and the EqIA.
- 37 There are several potential mitigations to the impact of the Policy changes, including providing additional care and support to assist with activities of daily living; providing support to apply for alternative housing; providing lower cost adaptations to reduce risks; making referrals to national and local energy efficiency schemes, and provide information and advice to residents about employing contractors.

#### *Human Resources*

- 38 The policy will be administered by Housing officers within existing resources.

#### *Risk Management*

- 39 The Council must publish a housing renewal policy to be able to administer grants. Publication of the revised Policy and assessment of applications against the Policy will ensure that the Council is compliant with this requirement.

#### *Rural Communities*

- 40 Residents in all areas of Cheshire East will benefit from the Policy, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria.

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

- 41 The Policy will provide children and young people with disabilities with the opportunity to live in suitably adapted housing which supports their development and participation in family life.

*Public Health*

- 42 Cold and damp homes increase the risk of cardiovascular, respiratory and rheumatoid diseases, as well as hypothermia and poor mental wellbeing. Young children, older people and people with an illness or disability are more likely to suffer the effects of cold and damp housing.
- 43 The exact relationship between poor housing and ill health is complex. 45% of accidents occur in the home, and accidents are amongst the top ten causes of death for all ages. Local data suggests that around 3,500 to 4,500 older people present as emergencies at our local hospitals each year because of a fall.
- 44 The Policy enables the Council to continue to provide housing services which have a positive impact on public health, albeit in a more limited capacity. Housing improvements will benefit vulnerable residents' physical and mental wellbeing and reduce demand on health and social care services.

*Climate Change*

- 45 Energy use in homes accounts for 28% of carbon emissions in Cheshire East. The Council has committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and to encourage all businesses, residents and organisations in Cheshire East to reduce their carbon footprint. The Council made a further pledge to make Cheshire East a carbon neutral borough by 2045. Continuing to provide support to low-income households through funding, referrals to other schemes and providing advice and support for employing contractors supports this commitment.
- 46 Energy efficient fossil fuel boilers will be provided in limited urgent situations, limiting any adverse effect on the Council's commitment to becoming a carbon neutral borough by 2045.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Karen Whitehead  Karen.whitehead@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix One – Consultation Report  Appendix Two – Home Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Policy 2025-2028
Background Papers:	Draft Home Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Policy for consultation  Equality Impact Assessment

A summary of responses to Cheshire East Council's

# Home Repairs and Adaptations Policy Consultation 2025



# Executive Summary

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## Introduction

Cheshire East Council consulted on several proposed changes to its Home Repairs and Adaptations Policy between 9 December 2024 and 22 January 2025.

The council proposed these changes to focus its financial resources on statutory services, and on the most vulnerable residents. These proposed changes formed the council's preferred option for the future of the policy, with the following 3 options for changes to the policy considered during the consultation:

1. Do nothing
2. Remove all discretionary funding
3. Remove some discretionary funding

Option 3 was put forward as the council's preferred option as it strikes a balance between making the required savings, while continuing to provide grants and loans for some of the most vulnerable in the borough.

In total 80 survey completions were received as part of consultation feedback.

## Affordable Warmth Grant – Proposal feedback

There was general support for the proposed changes to the Affordable Warmth Grant:

- 77% supported proposed changes to the works eligible for the grant, 14% opposed them
- 64% supported proposed changes to applicant eligibility for the grant, 27% opposed them

Although there was general support for the proposed changes to the Affordable Warmth Grant, for some this support was reluctantly given.

Concern about these proposed changes included:

- Opposition to the requirement that people must now be in receipt of a means tested benefit to qualify for the grant, as this would negatively impact some who are struggling to keep their homes warm
- Some felt the grant should be available to all pensioners
- Opposition to the removal of building insulation from the list of eligible works, as this does not support the council's vision for carbon neutrality



## Disabled Facilities Grant – Proposal feedback

63% of survey respondents supported the proposed changes to the Disabled Facilities Grant, 29% opposed them.

Those in support of these proposed changes felt that £30,000 still seemed like a reasonable level of grant that would still allow minor adaptations to be made.

Concern about these proposed changes included that:

- Many adaptations cost in excess of the statutory £30,000, and a 40% cut in funding is significant
- It means people will not be able to afford the adaptations they need
- There are not enough suitable alternative properties available within Cheshire East for those affected to relocate within their local area

Others suggested:

- The tender process for completing the works should be made more robust – it is felt that contractors overcharge Local Authorities for these types of building works
- Applicants should be assessed on a case-by-case basis, or that the grant should be means tested

## Healthy Homes & Empty Homes Loans – Proposal feedback

65% of survey respondents supported the proposed changes to the Healthy Homes and Empty Homes Loans, 18% opposed them.

Comments on these proposed changes included that:

- Clarity needs to be provided at the start of a financial year if funding for these loans will be available or not
- This is a short-sighted strategy given current housing shortages in Cheshire East, and will have a negative impact on the quantity of homes available
- The Healthy Homes Loans may cause people to live in unsuitable and unhealthy conditions

## Independent Living Loan – Proposal feedback

There was general support for the proposed changes to the Independent Living Loan:

- 76% supported the proposed changes to the loan amounts, 15% opposed them
- 74% supported the proposed changes to the loan conditions, 18% opposed them

Those in support of these proposed changes were so given the council finds itself in the midst of a financial crisis, and felt the upper loan amount increase of £15,000 to £25,000 was positive.

Concern about these proposed changes included:

- Opposition to the lower loan amount increase from £1,000 to £5,000
- That loan eligibility should be means tested on the applicant's ability to repay
- That the Independent Living Loan is very time consuming to administer for council Care & Repair and Legal Teams, compared to the £50,000 Disabled Facilities Grant system

## General themes arising during feedback

A number of general themes arose within survey feedback, including:

- Concern proposals would disproportionately impact the most vulnerable and disabled residents
- Withdrawal of this financial support is short-sighted
- Concern proposals would increase pressure on council and NHS social care services, and would have negative long-term impacts
- Some support for option 3 (removal of some discretionary funding – the council's preferred option) as it seems to be reasonable

Finally, a number of professional council officers commented on the proposed changes:

**Council Occupational Therapist views:** OTs were opposed to the proposals as they felt they would not be able to meet the need of their most vulnerable clients as a result of them – they implored the council to have further discussions with them and Care & Repair Services before any decisions are made. They suggested that if the council truly wishes to reduce costs, then instead of cutting discretionary funding it should employ more Occupational Therapists who are trained in ensuring recommended adaptations are proportionate and necessary.

**Council Housing Officers:** It was commented throughout feedback that there is a lack of suitable alternative properties in Cheshire East for those with disabilities. Officers felt there should be changes to Section 106 (Affordable Housing Clearing Service) obligations, so that “affordable housing” is not built in a one size fits all

model, but that it incorporates more accessible properties including properties with the ability for adaptations to be carried out if required.

## Conclusions

It is positive to see overall support for each of the proposals put forward in this consultation, and some support for option 3 (the council's preferred option).

This suggests an acceptance among respondents for the need to make savings, while at the same time attempting to protect the most vulnerable in society. Many felt the proposals seemed reasonable.

That said there were a number of legitimate concerns raised about each of the proposals which should be looked at closely to see if any mitigations can be put in place, these are listed in detail throughout this report. There was concern that these proposals would affect some of the most vulnerable in society and would therefore have negative impacts on social care services in future.

The views from council Occupational Therapists and Housing Officers are particularly interesting and should be explored further with these professionals – it is clear some professionals think there are other, more effective ways of making savings than those that have been proposed.

# Contents

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Executive Summary .....	2
Contents.....	6
Introduction .....	7
Affordable Warmth Grant .....	9
Disabled Facilities Grant .....	12
Healthy Homes & Empty Homes Loans .....	15
Independent Living Loan .....	17
Final comments.....	20
Conclusions.....	23

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# Introduction

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## Purpose of the consultation

In response to the severe financial pressures it faced, Cheshire East Council consulted on several proposed changes to its Home Repairs and Adaptations Policy. The council proposed these changes to focus its financial resources on statutory services, and on the most vulnerable residents.

The Home Repairs and Adaptations Policy was first produced in 2009, and sets out how the council helps disabled and vulnerable residents to manage their own care and wellbeing at home, by funding repairs and adaptations to their homes so that people can continue living in accessible and safe environments.

The consultation was conducted between 9 December 2024 and 22 January 2025.

## The options considered during the consultation

3 options for changes to the current policy were considered during the consultation:

**1) Do nothing** – The current policy would continue to be delivered in its current format, with households continuing to receive the same level of support with home repairs and adaptations.

**2) Remove all discretionary funding** – This would include the removal of all discretionary (non-statutory) funding from the policy, leaving only the statutory part of the Disabled Facilities Grant. This would mean the removal of the Disability Relocation Grant, the Targeted Regeneration Grant, the Urgent Adaptations Grant, the Affordable Warmth Grant, the Healthy Homes & Empty Homes Loans, and the Independent Living Loan.

**3) Remove some discretionary funding** – This would mean that the Disability Relocation Grant, Targeted Regeneration Grant, and the Urgent Adaptations Grant would be retained within the policy as they are, with changes being proposed for the Affordable Warmth Grant, Disabled Facilities Grant, Healthy Homes & Empty Homes Loans and the Independent Living Loan.

Option 3 was put forward as the council's preferred option as it strikes a balance between making the required savings, while continuing to provide grants and loans for some of the most vulnerable in the borough.

## Consultation methodology and response

The consultation was widely promoted, including via [the council's consultation portal](#), through [media releases](#) and via social media.

Existing service users were also invited to take part in the consultation via email, and council teams with an interest in the consultation were invited to take part through face-to-face presentations.

Finally, the consultation was also promoted through the following groups and council teams via email:

Age UK, Alsager Community Support, Alzheimers Society, Cheshire Autism, Cheshire Buddies, Citizens Advice, Crossroads, David Lewis Centre, Deafness Support Network, Disability Information Bureau, Disability Positive, East Cheshire Eye Society, Edge Inclusion Partners, Health Watch Cheshire, Muir Group, Onward Housing, Parkinsons UK, Peaks & Plains Housing Trust, Plus Dane Housing, Regenda Homes, Riverside, Rossendale Trust, Rubys Fund, Space 4 Autism, Speaking Up Speaking Out, Stroke Association, The Guinness Partnership, Young Stroke Society, Energy Projects Plus, Cheshire East Council Adult Social Care Team, Cheshire East Council Occupational Therapists, and the Cheshire East Council Housing Standards & Adaptations Team.

## Consultation response

In total 80 survey completions were received as part of consultation feedback.

The following report summarises these survey responses.

## Affordable Warmth Grant

The Affordable Warmth Grant is available to eligible applicants to ensure their home has suitable heating, and this includes the provision of boiler replacements and hot water system repairs.

### Changes to applicant eligibility

#### The proposed changes

The following changes were proposed to applicant eligibility for the Affordable Warmth Grant, to determine who can apply for the grant:

- Removal of the current household income and savings criteria
- Removal of the Covid-19 criteria
- Addition of a criteria that applicants must be in receipt of a means tested benefit

#### Level of support and opposition to these proposed changes

64% of survey respondents supported these proposed changes to applicant eligibility for the Affordable Warmth Grant, while 27% opposed them.

Generally speaking, how strongly do you support or oppose...

...these proposed changes to applicant eligibility for the Affordable Warmth Grant?



Number of responses = 73

#### Comments made about these proposed changes

Survey respondent comments about these proposed changes to applicant eligibility for the Affordable Warmth Grant have been categorised and summarised in the tables below.

<b>Support for the proposals</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Reluctant support for the proposed changes to applicant eligibility.</b> Difficult times require difficult decisions and in the current situation any available funding needs to be targeted.	7
<b>Supports removing assistance to Covid 19 vulnerable people.</b>	1
<b>Opposition to the proposals</b>	<b>14</b>

<b>Opposition to the proposal that applicants must be in receipt of a means tested benefit to qualify for the grant</b> – Lots of people are not on means tested benefits who are struggling to keep their homes warm without help. The requirement for a means tested benefit would just create a further burden on this group of people who are just above the eligibility criteria. Cutting this back would put more pressure on other services, including social care and the NHS, and will potentially lead to bed blocking at hospitals etc.	9
<b>General opposition</b> to reductions in resident eligibility. Not all people will be prepared to fund necessary work and will choose to ignore potential risks to their health.	3
<b>Opposed to removing assistance to Covid 19 vulnerable people.</b> These people are categorised as such by medical provision and therefore this aspect should be retained.	1
<b>Alternative savings idea:</b> Expenses for Councillors and council employees should be closely examined to see if savings can be made there.	1

<b>General comments</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>The Affordable Warmth Grant should be available to all pensioners.</b> Pensioners have already been targeted by the government through the removal of the heating allowance.	4
<b>Not everybody who is entitled to benefits claims them.</b> Take-up of means tested benefits is much lower than expected, particularly pension credit.	2
<b>More information is needed,</b> it is unclear as to what is being proposed.	2
<b>The amended policy should be much easier to understand.</b> You've written it in the language of official channels, it should be written for the people it is aimed at. The population at large should be able to negotiate any policy without having been to college first.	1
<b>The council does not listen to consultation results.</b>	1
<b>Challenge supplier/contractor costs.</b>	1
Managing long established publicly funded support expectations will be hard.	1
Opposed to people on benefits getting this support.	1

## Changes to the works eligible for the grant

### The proposed changes

The proposal was to remove the following types of work from being eligible for assistance:

- All types of building insulation
- Low carbon heating and hot water solutions

### Level of support and opposition to these proposed changes

77% of survey respondents supported these proposed changes to the works eligible for the Affordable Warmth Grant, while 14% opposed them.



Generally speaking, how strongly do you support or oppose...

...these proposed changes to the works eligible for the Affordable Warmth Grant?



Number of responses = 73

## Comments made about these proposed changes

Survey respondent comments about these proposed changes to the works eligible for the Affordable Warmth Grant have been categorised and summarised in the tables below.

Support for the proposals		9
<b>General support:</b> If there are other grants available, hopefully people can get the support required to make the necessary changes to their home. Not sure people on benefits can afford to pay to run low carbon heating anyway.		6
<b>The Warm Homes Grant</b> – This should really be the only way to fund this, doing it from existing funds is a drain on council resources.		3
Opposition to the proposals		7
<b>Removing insulation and low carbon solutions works does not support the council's vision for carbon neutrality.</b> Central Government should be supporting local government to do this as part of the UK's green agenda.		4
<b>Opposed to the removal of building insulation from the list of eligible works</b> – Insulation is one of the easiest and most effective ways to retain heat and therefore, lower energy use and bills, as well as lowering the carbon footprint for houses (and therefore for the council).		2
<b>There are many people who don't qualify for means-tested benefits who are struggling financially</b> and already have issues with heating their homes. Cutting this back would put more pressure on other services, including social care and the NHS.		1
General comments		4
Stop all grants. Opposed to grants for full new central heating systems.		2
Not enough information to understand the impact on the most vulnerable people to comment with any real meaning.		1
The council does not listen to consultation results.		1

# Disabled Facilities Grant

## The proposed changes

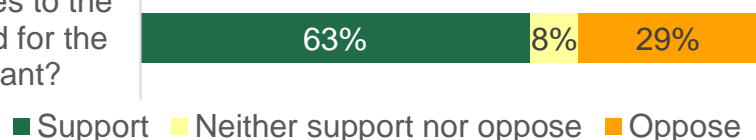
The proposal was to reduce the maximum amount of Disabled Facilities Grant allowed to the statutory minimum amount of £30,000, down from £50,000. This would remove the additional discretionary amount of £20,000 per grant.

## Level of support and opposition to these proposed changes

63% of survey respondents supported these proposed changes to the amounts of grant allowed for the Disabled Facilities grant, while 29% opposed them.

Generally speaking, how strongly do you support or oppose...

...these proposed changes to the amounts of grant allowed for the Disabled Facilities Grant?



Number of responses = 76

## Comments made about these proposed changes

Survey respondent comments about these proposed changes to the amounts of grant allowed for the Disabled Facilities grant have been categorised and summarised in the tables below.

Support for the proposals	5
<b>General support.</b>	2
<b>£30,000 still seems like a reasonable level of grant.</b>	1
Removal of the extra £20,000 available on Disabled Facilities Grant <b>would still allow for minor adaptations to be made.</b>	1
The discretionary supplement appears to <b>only benefit the few rather than the many.</b>	1

Opposition to the proposals	43
<b>Many adaptations cost in excess of the statutory £30,000</b> – a 40% cut in this grant is massive. This will have a huge impact on the ability to provide necessary extensions and major adaptations to those that most need it. £30,000 will not cover extensions / major property alterations. DFG adaptations cannot always be made within the footprint of the house, and sometimes the only option for highly vulnerable people to be able to remain at home is to have an extension. Clients will have to pick and choose which adaptations they have.	14
<b>This disproportionately impacts on disabled people</b> , who are already struggling because of government policy. This will cause families to struggle	8

in a climate where they are already struggling. There are other steps we could take before we just take money off people who obviously need it.	
<b>There are not enough suitable properties available</b> for those affected to relocate to within their local area/close to support networks. In particular there is a shortage of suitable housing stock for families requiring more than 3 bedrooms and space for a disabled family member in Cheshire East. There is not enough social housing (especially adapted social housing) to be able to advise people to move to a more suitable home and so DFG and discretionary funding is vital in ensuring that these vulnerable people are safe and can be cared for in their own home.	7
<b>This is very likely to place greater pressure on council and NHS support services</b> , and is a shortsighted saving. This could impact on local councils nursing and care home costs, on children's social care, and on respite care services.	7
<b>Council Occupational Therapist views – Opposition to the proposals.</b> We are aware of how much the DFG can significantly improve the quality of life for clients through the provision of adaptations, that enable a person-centred approach which includes supporting the client to remain in their current property. This has a significant impact on their identity and overall wellbeing.	3
<b>If the council wants to reduce the costing of DFGs then it needs to employ more Occupational Therapists.</b> It is the role of OTs to look at a client's health conditions and their functional ability and assess if any adaptation is necessary. If the council truly wishes to reduce overall DFG costings, then instead of cutting discretionary funding, employ more Occupational Therapists who are trained in ensuring recommended adaptations are proportionate and necessary, and have the skills and experience to look at alternative out of the box ideas to help maintain people's independence.	2
<b>There are no suitable alternative funding solutions</b> for these vulnerable people if the discretionary funding is removed – There is no funding from other sources to make up the shortfall.	1
<b>This is a very ill thought through policy.</b>	1

<b>General comments</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>How robust is the tender process for completing the works?</b> It is well known that contractors and suppliers tend to add to the bottom line knowing that local authorities and public services overpay. Rather than reduce the value of the grant, we should ensure that we are getting the best deal from the contractors being used to complete the works instead.	
The council should look to seek a fixed pricing scheme and renegotiate current contracts with build teams which reflects the market and actual costings, rather than paying inflated pricing. The current scheme for contract procurement is likely to satisfy the contractor rather than the taxpayers purse, creating a monopoly and reducing competitive pricing.	5
Previously necessary work was carried out by a council labour force (Direct Works) when costs could be controlled. Private contractors, although	

tendering under a competitive tender basis, are chosen from a limited pool and through high overheads and “cartel arrangements” their base tender thresholds will be lifted. What's more variations in the works will be charged at high day work rates.	
<b>All applicants should be assessed on a case-by-case basis</b> , not on a "one size fits all" approach. The grant should be means tested and those who can pay a little towards these proposals should do so.	2
<b>Changes should be made to planning requirements to ensure more accessible properties are made available in Cheshire East.</b> This should include changes to Section 106 (Affordable Housing Clearing Service) obligations – Not just to build “affordable housing” in a one size fits all model, but to incorporate more accessible properties including properties with the ability for adaptations to be carried out if required e.g. modular builds which can be altered at little expense to install track hoists etc.	1
<b>Finding suitable alternative properties is an extremely difficult process with a lot of red tape.</b>  For owner occupiers if they have spare equity on their property it isn't an easy process through the council legal team – forwarding cases to the council legal team for a charge to be added can take 6 to 12 months, as legal don't have enough capacity to work on the loans. Quotes then go out of date.  It's also time consuming for caseworkers in Care and Repair, obtaining permissions from mortgage providers, checking enough equity is in the property, getting valuations on the property, before referring cases to the legal team.  It's a stressful experience for the client, especially if mortgage providers don't agree to a second charge, as well as for staff within Care and Repair, stopping them working on other adaptations which are on a waiting list.	1
The council does not listen to consultation results.	1
Not enough information has been provided to be able understand the impact of proposals on the most vulnerable people.	1

# Healthy Homes & Empty Homes Loans

## The proposed changes

The proposal was that both loans would be retained within the policy, but would only be awarded if funding became available.

## Level of support and opposition to these proposed changes

65% of survey respondents supported these proposed changes to the Healthy Homes and Empty Homes Loans, while 18% opposed them.

Generally speaking, how strongly do you support or oppose...

...these proposed changes to the Healthy Homes & Empty Homes Loans?



Number of responses = 74

## Comments made about these proposed changes

Survey respondent comments about these proposed changes to the Healthy Homes and Empty Homes Loans have been categorised and summarised in the tables below.

General comments	15
<b>This is a short-sighted strategy given the current housing shortage issue.</b> This proposal is bound to have a negative impact on the quantity of decent homes available for people to rent. Given the ever-increasing number of empty homes in Cheshire East and the demand for affordable housing, Cheshire East should set aside funding for a project to return empty homes to use; either by purchasing, renovating and selling, or to rent or lease for the private rented sector where affordable rented housing is most in demand.	6
<b>General support for this whole proposal.</b>	3
<b>Clarity needs to be provided at the start of a financial year if this support for these loans will be available or not.</b> The council has ongoing debts and can't meet current demands so the discretionary element to revisit this again in the future if funding is available is highly unlikely to happen.	2
<b>This proposal will add to the pressure on social care services,</b> shelters, hostels and hospitals.	2
Previous experience suggests that the council disregards any inputs to these surveys, and is paying lip service to council taxpayers.	1
Ensure quality standards are imposed on contractors doing the work.	1
<b>Comments on the Healthy Homes Loan</b>	<b>9</b>

<b>This is a risky policy</b> – Not offering support will cause many people to live in unsuitable and unhealthy conditions. It is not acceptable to have people living in squalor, we are supposed to be a modern caring society.	3
<b>General opposition to the proposal around the HHL</b> – Removal of this loan will just create pressures for wider social care services.	2
<b>General support for the proposal around the HHL</b> – This loan is difficult to administer and is expensive for the council to fund. Homeowners can be guided towards equity release or other loans secured against the property instead.	2
<b>What happens to these families of uninhabitable homes?</b> Does the council pay for hotel accommodation and find them alternative housing? If a home is not habitable then where do the occupants go, and who pays the bill for that?	2

<b>Comments on the Empty Homes Loan</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>This loan should only go to anyone on a very low income</b> who perhaps have inherited an old property, and not to developers or landlords.	2
<b>The council must ensure any funding to repurpose empty homes should be used for that purpose</b> , or be used to assist local Registered Social Landlords to buy the properties via Compulsory Purchase Orders rather than the soft EHL approach where only the property owner benefits and not the wider housing market. People should only get funding if it helps to increase the number of available rental properties.	2
<b>General support for removal of this loan.</b>	1
<b>General opposition to the removal of this loan.</b> Not offering support will cause a lot of houses to go into disrepair.	1
<b>If funding is available, then there should be a requirement to make these homes disability friendly</b> when having works completed to get them up to standard. That will hugely impact not only the relocation housing situation but reduce the number of DFGs required in the future.	1

# Independent Living Loan

## Changes to the loan conditions

### The proposed changes

The proposal was to remove the equity share loan option leaving interest-free repayment loans as the only funding option.

### Level of support and opposition to these proposed changes

74% of survey respondents supported these proposed changes to the loan conditions for the Independent Living Loan, while 18% opposed them.

Generally speaking, how strongly do you support or oppose...

...this proposed change to the loan conditions?



Number of responses = 73

### Comments made about these proposed changes

Survey respondent comments about these proposed changes to the loan conditions for the Independent Living Loan have been categorised and summarised in the tables below.

Support for the proposal		3
<b>Supportive given the council finds itself in the midst of a financial crisis</b>		
through years of poor financial management, it seems prudent to move to a repayment loan, at least in the short term.	1	
Interest free loans seem very fair.	1	
This must be on an immediate loan repayment basis, just as it is with external loan funding, thereby income back into the council may be quantified under these loans, and figures are available immediately and therefore are accurately projected. The time taken at present to gain the funds / costs of these loans is too long.	1	
Opposition to the proposal		12
<b>Loan eligibility should be means tested on the applicant's ability to repay</b>		
– You can't get blood out of a stone so if they can't repay the loan they won't have the works done, or they would struggle to repay the loan. What happens if they cannot repay the loan?	4	

<b>Think about the longer-term impacts</b> and how the proposal may cost the council more via other social service costs, mental wellbeing of residents and through the overall state of properties in the area. This could lead to properties becoming uninhabitable and a danger to health.	4
<b>This proposal would put more pressure on already vulnerable people.</b> These changes just seem to have the aim of making life more difficult for people who already have a difficult life.	2
The equity share option meant that people could have assistance when they needed it.	1
Where a disabled person dies their spouse (carer) could be forced into repaying a large loan just to continue living in what they consider to be their home. This seems highly undesirable and potentially an unfair risk.	1

<b>General comments</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Queries:</b> Who guarantees the loans? What will happen if the borrower defaults? Would this support children who require adaptations to a property owned by parents, when the cost of such adaptations is in excess of the statutory DFG funding?	3
<b>Opposed to the loans at all</b> , the money spent and returned is cyclical and is likely to cost lots to administer.	2
<b>The Independent Living Loan is so time consuming</b> for the staff member of the Care and Repair team and the legal team, compared to the system at the present time with grants of £50,000. Quite often you can go through the whole process and then the mortgage provider doesn't agree to an additional loan, or the process can take so long that quotes go out of date. The wait for disabled clients, especially waiting for hospital discharge, can then result in bed blocking.	1
The onus should be on the council to support society not deferring to the individual.	1
There isn't enough information to understand the impact on the most vulnerable people to comment with any real meaning.	1
Previous experience suggests the council totally disregards any consultation feedback and is paying lip service only to council taxpayers.	1

## Changes to the loan amounts

### The proposed changes

The proposal was that the maximum loan amount that would be considered would be increased from £15,000 to £25,000, and the minimum loan amount that would be considered would be increased from £1,000 to £5,000.

### Level of support and opposition to these proposed changes

76% of survey respondents supported these proposed changes to the loan amounts for the Independent Living Loan, while 15% opposed them.



Generally speaking, how strongly do you support or oppose...

...these proposed changes to the loan amounts for the Independent Living Loan?



Number of responses = 75

## Comments made about these proposed changes

Survey respondent comments about these proposed changes to the loan amounts for the Independent Living Loan have been categorised and summarised in the tables below.

Comments	19
<b>Support for the upper loan amount increase from £15,000 to £25,000.</b> This should be increased to £30,000. Escalating costs in the construction industry, plus the inclusion of VAT on most building elements of an extension, mean that most single storey extensions to provide ground floor bedroom and bathroom cost over £55,000, particularly once extra items such as ramping or wash-dry toilets are included.	7
<b>Opposition to the upper loan amount increase from £15,000 to £25,000.</b> There are many other alternative funding options. Most people only take this option because money is being loaned interest free.	1
<b>Opposition to the lower loan amount increase from £1,000 to £5,000.</b> The minimum loan amount of £1,000 could mean the difference between a client having their adaptations provided and not, why not leave this at £1,000? £1,000 may not seem a lot but when manging on disability benefits (as I do) it may as well be £1,000,000. What is the benefit to the council for increasing the minimum loan amount?	4
<b>Support for the lower loan amount increase from £1,000 to £5,000.</b>	1
<b>Opposition to the loans at all.</b> Council costs for providing these services require recoupling wherever possible, there are a lot of man hours from several departments that go into the set-up of these interest free loans.	3
<b>General support for the proposal</b> , as it counters the reduction of the DFG discretionary funding.	1
The extra £20,000 discretionary top up funding for DFG's is essential in maintaining the health, safety, independence and wellbeing of client's who need DFG funding.	1
Previous experience suggests the council totally disregards any consultation feedback and is paying lip service only to council taxpayers.	1

## Final comments

The final question of the survey asked respondents if they had any final comments to make in relation to this consultation. Responses have been categorised and summarised in the tables below.

Opposition to the proposals	24
<p><b>General opposition to proposals because of the impact on social services and social care.</b> Proposals will have a negative impact on residents and on social care services, and so will not save money in the long term.</p> <p>The financial return of money spent on adaptations elsewhere in the welfare system (be it NHS, or local authority) is well known and well proven. Removing this support is a very short-term solution which will cost CEC more in the long term.</p> <p>This is already known and acknowledged but likely ignored as the priority of the authority is no longer its residents but its own survival.</p> <p>The fear is the resulting reputational damage will further negatively impact the council, and make the jobs of those who deliver the services even more challenging as they're expected to "perform miracles with no money to do it".</p>	8
<p><b>General opposition to the proposals as the withdrawal of this financial support to the most vulnerable residents is harsh, damaging and short-sighted.</b> Although the council is responding to its financial pressures, it is worrying that it will simply be pushing those issues on to vulnerable people, who most probably already have their own financial pressures.</p>	5
<p><b>Other general opposition to the proposals</b> Look for other ways to raise funds rather than cost cuts. The DFG grant of £30,000 is not enough.</p>	4
<p><b>Council Occupational Therapist views – OTs will not be able to meet the needs of our most vulnerable clients as a result of these proposals.</b></p> <p>We implore the council to have further discussions with the Occupational Therapy and Care &amp; Repair Services before any decisions are made.</p> <p>By removing urgent grants, moving home grants and the discretionary £20,000 top up funding for Disabled Facilities Grants, the council Occupational Therapy service will be hugely impacted as it will not be able to meet the needs of our most vulnerable clients who require either multiple adaptations or an extension in order to live independently at home.</p> <p>There is research to show that those who have adaptations remain in their own home for longer which reduces costings and pressure on residential / care homes and the NHS.</p> <p>If the council removes the discretionary funding OTs will be highlighting severe risks about vulnerable people and will have no way of providing the adaptations to remove those risks. Charitable funding options help currently</p>	3

with equipment costing, but do not cover adaptations therefore there is just no other options out there for these vulnerable people.	
In my role as part of the OT Service, my job is to support clients to feel empowered, to be able to live as independently as possible, or to support informal carers to provide the highest level of care possible, and to improve quality of life for both clients, their carers, and their families.	
Without the necessary funding options available to offer clients to be able to provide the adaptations they need, we would be doing a disservice to them, impacting their health and wellbeing and not being able to meet their needs to provide enhanced occupational performance through participation in the occupations and activities of daily living they need to do to live a meaningful and fulfilled life.	
<b>There is a lack of suitable properties in Cheshire East for those with disabilities.</b> A large number of houses have been built recently and more are going up – Make it a stipulation that the builders have to build a number of houses for social housing and these must be handed to the council, and that a percentage of these should also be disabled friendly.	2
<b>Support for option 1 – Do nothing.</b> I am ashamed to be a resident in Cheshire East when it is targeting the most vulnerable members of our society. Cheshire East needs to look in- house and stop wasting taxpayers money on hairbrained schemes.	2

<b>General support for the proposals</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Support for option 3 – Remove some discretionary funding (the council's preferred option).</b> Support for option 3 is given reluctantly but the changes seem to fit the description as "reasonable". It is important to manage council costs whilst ensuring that those genuinely in need of assistance get it. The suggestions seem sensible where funding is restricted & demand is increasing.	7
When my wife needed a substantial ramp to access our front door in her wheelchair the council provided a quality one at no cost to us and was well within the proposed cost limitations proposed.	
<b>General support</b> – Proposals sounds sensible and well-considered in the circumstances.	3

<b>General comments</b>	<b>10</b>
This should be dealt with through central government policy, with sufficient funds made available to local government, and ring fenced for its intended purpose.	1
Stop wasting Council Tax on this, or make it an optional part of Council Tax that people can opt out of.	1
The UK cannot afford to support poor and disadvantaged people without more coming from the rich.	1
Be open and honest about your plans – something governments shy away from.	1

More information needed - It would be good to know the number of applications for DFG, Urgent grants, loans etc as I only use the DFG/Urgent grant and unaware how many people access the other loans mentioned.	1
Previous experience suggests the council totally disregards any consultation feedback and is paying lip service only to council taxpayers.	1
Orbitas Handyman service – Costs increased when this service moved to Orbitas. Can there not be a service where residents pay for the Handyman and this service can make money to help fund this service for service users coming from social care?	1
With regards to the Council, make the language you use easier. Get "real" people to read and follow the processes you put in place – are they able to understand what it is they are entitled to and how they get that assistance.	1
I believe where there is requirement for adaptations above £30K, those in a tenant position must allow consultation between the council and the relevant Housing Association to find alternative accommodation. It might be suggested that the council would utilise the Disabled Facilities Grant maximum amount to 'assist' the Housing Association to purchase an appropriate home 'from the open market' to allow that person's needs to be met. This allows the council's obligation to be met and the Housing Association have another property to add to their rentable property portfolio.	1
People using these services often receive a large amount of support from informal carers who also need to be supported through provision of adaptations that make life easier for them to be able to provide support, which also significantly impacts pressures on services and the long term costs of formal carer support.	1

## Conclusions

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It is positive to see overall support for each of the proposals put forward in this consultation, and some support for option 3 (the council's preferred option).

This suggests an acceptance among respondents for the need to make savings, while at the same time attempting to protect the most vulnerable in society. Many felt the proposals seemed reasonable.

That said there were a number of legitimate concerns raised about each of the proposals which should be looked at closely to see if any mitigations can be put in place, these are listed in detail throughout this report. There was concern that these proposals would affect some of the most vulnerable in society and would therefore have negative impacts on social care services in future.

The views from council Occupational Therapists and Housing Officers are particularly interesting and should be explored further with these professionals – it is clear some professionals think there are other, more effective ways of making savings than those that have been proposed.





# **Home Repairs and Adaptations: Financial Assistance Policy**

1 July 2025 – 31 March 2028

# Contents

	<b>PAGE</b>
Purpose of the Policy	3
The help we will provide:	
Disabled Facilities Grant	4
Urgent Adaptations Grant	8
Independent Living Loan	10
Disability Relocation Grant	13
Affordable Warmth Grant	15
Healthy Homes Loan	17
Empty Homes Loan	20
Targeted Regeneration Grant	23
Applications for Assistance falling outside of this Policy	25
Transitional Arrangements	25
<b><u>Appendices</u></b>	
A – Interest Free Repayment Loans	26
C – Disabled Facilities Grant Preliminary and Ancillary Services and Charges	27
D - Carrying out and Completion of Works	28
Contact details	29



## Purpose of the Policy

A safe, good quality, secure, and affordable home is fundamental to living a healthy and fulfilled life. Good housing benefits people's mental and physical wellbeing; enables informal carers to provide care; and underpins people's ability to live independently, safely and as part of the wider community.

The primary responsibility for maintaining and improving housing rests with the owner, however there are occasions where it is necessary to intervene, including where vulnerable people are unable to afford to carry out urgent repairs that are affecting their health and safety, and to support disabled people to overcome functional difficulties created by an unsuitable home environment.

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002 removed most of the prescriptive housing grant legislation in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 whilst retaining the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant and introduced a wide ranging discretionary power for local housing authorities to develop different forms of financial assistance to meet local needs.

To provide discretionary financial help for housing repairs and improvements, the Council must first adopt and publish a policy setting out how it intends to use this general power to award assistance. This Policy sets out the grants and loans that the Council will make available to residents, subject to resources, and builds on our experience of delivering previous schemes for home repairs and adaptations that secure positive outcomes for vulnerable residents.

This Policy details the ways in which the Council will assist people to repair or adapt their homes **when funding is available**. This may be a grant, which is only repaid if any of the grant repayment conditions are triggered, or an interest-free loan, which is repaid over a period of no more than ten years.

The Policy also details how the Council will act as a responsible lender and have regard to the applicant's ability to make repayments before we offer them a loan. As any loans are secured on the property, applicants are strongly advised to seek independent legal and financial advice, and the costs of professional advice can be included in their loan. We have developed two loan repayment options to maximise choice for applicants and to tailor our loan offer to their circumstances.

The Policy will be in operation from 1 July 2025 to 31 March 2028, subject to funding being available. The Council will publish on the website at [www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/housing/help-with-adaptations-and-repairs/help-with-adaptations-and-repairs.aspx](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/housing/help-with-adaptations-and-repairs/help-with-adaptations-and-repairs.aspx) which grants and loans have funding available.

# ‘Disabled Facilities’ Grant

The primary legislation for Disabled Facilities Grants is the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (as amended).

## 1. Eligible Applicants

- 1.1 Any person with a qualifying owner's, tenant's or occupier's interest in the property who is over the age of 18.

## 2. Eligible Properties

- 2.1 Dwellings, qualifying houseboats and caravans are eligible for assistance.
- 2.2 The property must be situated in Cheshire East.
- 2.3 The property must be the only or main residence of the disabled person for whom the adaptation is intended.

## 3. Eligible Works

- 3.1 The works must be necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled person.
- 3.2 It must be reasonable and practicable to carry out the works, having regard to the age and condition of the property.
- 3.3 The works must be for at least one of the following purposes:
  - a) Facilitating access by the disabled person to and from the dwelling, qualifying houseboat or caravan, or the building in which the dwelling is situated;
  - b) Making the dwelling, qualifying houseboat or caravan, or the building in which the dwelling is situated, safe for the disabled person and other persons residing with them;
  - c) Facilitating access by the disabled person to a room used or usable as the principal family room;
  - d) Facilitating access by the disabled person to, or providing for them, a room used or usable for sleeping;
  - e) Facilitating access by the disabled person to, or providing for them, a room in which there is a lavatory, or facilitating for the disabled person the use of a lavatory;
  - f) Facilitating access by the disabled person to, or providing for them, a room in which there is a bath or shower (or both), or facilitating for the disabled person the use of a bath or shower;
  - g) Facilitating access by the disabled person to, or providing for them, a room in which there is a wash hand basin, or facilitating for the disabled person the use of a wash hand basin;
  - h) Facilitating the preparation and cooking of food by the disabled person
  - i) Providing or improving any heating system in the dwelling to meet the needs of the disabled person
  - j) Facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of a source of power, light or heat by altering the controls or the position of the controls, or providing additional controls

- k) Facilitating access around the dwelling, qualifying houseboat or caravan for the disabled person to enable them to provide care for another person who is normally resident there
- l) Facilitating access to and from the garden for the disabled person
- m) Making access to and from the garden safe for the disabled person
- n) Such other purposes as may be specified by order of the Secretary of State.

3.4 Grants cannot be approved retrospectively; any works that have been started or completed prior to a valid grant application will not be considered.

3.5 Eligible works will be determined by the Council's Strategic Housing service.

3.6 When determining eligible works, regard will be had to value for money and establishing the most cost-effective method of overcoming the disabling environment. The Council will always consider making adaptations within the existing footprint of the property first, and where this is not possible, only then will it consider extending the footprint of the living accommodation, apart from in exceptional circumstances where extending the footprint is the most cost-effective option.

3.7 It is recognised that applicants may wish to carry out adaptations which are not the most cost-effective approach. The Disabled Facilities Grant can be used flexibly to provide the applicant's preferred adaptations where the proposals will meet the needs identified by the Council-appointed Occupational Therapist. In these circumstances, the maximum grant awarded will be restricted to the value of the most cost-effective adaptations and any eligible fees, to the value of the maximum mandatory grant, less any assessed financial contribution.

#### 4. **Amounts**

4.1 The maximum amount will be determined by the legislation in place at the time of the grant application. At the time of publication of this policy (1 July 2025) the maximum amount which the authority may pay in respect of an application is £30,000 as determined in The Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008.

4.2 The maximum amount of grant will include the cost of eligible works, VAT and eligible fees. Eligible fees are detailed at Appendix B.

4.3 Applicants will be subject to a Test of Resources in accordance with the Grant Regulations in force at the time of the grant application. At the time of publication of this Policy the Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996 (as amended) are in force.

4.4 Where applicants are assessed as having to make a financial contribution following a Test of Resources, the amount of grant to be awarded for eligible works will be reduced by an amount equivalent to the assessed contribution.

4.5 The maximum amount of grant may only be exceeded where there are no other sources of funding available in the following circumstances:

- a) The disabled person is a child or young person for whom the Council has a Corporate Parenting responsibility, or

- b) The disabled person is a child or young person for whom a child protection safety plan is in place, and the eligible works are detailed as part of the child protection safety plan.

## 5. **Application Process**

- 5.1 Applicants must submit a valid application, consisting of:
  - i. a completed application, together with evidence of any welfare benefit entitlement, income, savings, shares and capital
  - ii. details of the works to be carried out,
  - iii. two written quotations for each type of work from contractors, unless otherwise directed by the Council,
  - iv. owner's, tenant's, and/or occupier's certificate,
  - v. details of any eligible fees, and
  - vi. proof of ownership and /or written consent of all owners.
- 5.2 The Council will approve or refuse a grant application in writing not later than six months from the date of a valid application. Where a grant application is refused, the Council will provide a written statement of the reasons for refusal, and details of any appeals procedure.

## 6. **Carrying Out and Completion of the Works**

- 6.1 Details can be found at Appendix C.

## 7. **Grant Conditions**

- 7.1 The grant conditions that will be applied will be determined by the legislation in force at the time of the grant application. At the time of publication of this policy (1 July 2025) the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996: Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of grant) General Consent 2008 is in force, which states:
  - 7.1.1 If the applicant disposes of the property within 10 years of the certified date of completion, and the applicant has a qualifying owner's interest in the property, any grant more than £5,000 will become repayable, subject to a maximum amount repayable of £10,000.
  - 7.1.2 The Council may, at its discretion, waive any demand for repayment of assistance once it has considered:
    - i. the extent to which the grant recipient would suffer financial hardship were they to be required to repay all or any of the grant; or
    - ii. whether the disposal of the premises is to enable the grant recipient to take up employment, or to change the location of their employment; or
    - iii. whether the disposal is made for reasons connected with the physical or mental health or wellbeing of the grant recipient or of a disabled occupant of the premises; or
    - iv. whether the disposal is made to enable the grant recipient to live with, or near, any person who is disabled or infirm and in need of care, which the grant recipient is intending to provide, or who is intending to provide care of which the grant recipient is in need by reason of disability or infirmity.
- 7.2 Requests for exemptions to repayment must be made in writing.

- 7.3 The Council reserves the right to remove equipment, such as lifts, when it is no longer required by the disabled person. Where the equipment cannot be reused due to its age or condition the Council may waive its right to recover such equipment.
- 7.4 Where an applicant has provided false or misleading information in their grant application or in their request for payment, the grant approval will be withdrawn, and a demand made for repayment of any monies already paid.

# ‘Urgent Adaptations’ Grant

## 1. Eligible Applicants

- 1.1 Any person with a qualifying owner’s, tenant’s or occupier’s interest in the property who is over the age of 18, AND
  - 1.1.1 Needs urgent adaptations due to a rapid deterioration of function because of a life limiting illness where their life expectancy is 12 months or less, OR
  - 1.1.2 Needs a ceiling track hoist for safer moving and handling, OR
  - 1.1.3 Is unable to return home from hospital or a care placement until urgent adaptations are completed.
- 1.2 Applicants will not be subject to any financial assessment.

## 2. Eligible Properties

- 2.1 Dwellings, qualifying houseboats and caravans are eligible for assistance.
- 2.2 The property must be situated in Cheshire East.
- 2.3 The property must be the only or main residence of the disabled person for whom the adaptation is planned.

## 3. Eligible Works

- 3.1 The works must be consistent with the purposes for which Disabled Facilities Grants must be given and must be for home adaptations that can be completed quickly to be able to meet an urgent need. Examples of adaptations that can be made quickly include, but are not limited to, stair lifts, wash dry toilets, ceiling track hoists and temporary ramps.
- 3.2 Grants will not be approved retrospectively; any works that have been started or completed prior to a valid grant application will not be considered.
- 3.3 Eligible works will be determined by the Strategic Housing service in consultation with a Council-appointed Occupational Therapist or hospital discharge service.
- 3.4 When determining eligible works, regard will be had to value for money and establishing the most cost-effective method of overcoming the disabling environment. Due to the urgent nature of works defined by the eligibility criteria, adaptations will be limited to the existing footprint of the property; works to extend living accommodation or make significant structural changes are ineligible for this grant. The Disabled Facilities Grant is available for more extensive works, subject to eligibility.

4. **Amounts**

- 4.1 The maximum amount of grant allowed is £10,000. Any adaptation(s) that cost more than £10,000 are ineligible for this grant. The Disabled Facilities Grant is available for more extensive works, subject to eligibility. This grant and the Disabled Facilities Grant cannot be used in conjunction with each other for the same work.
- 4.2 The maximum amount of grant will include the cost of eligible works, VAT and eligible fees. Eligible fees are detailed at Appendix B.

5. **Application Process**

- 5.1 Applications must be made on the Council's official application form and accompanied by
- i. an Occupational Therapy / hospital referral
  - ii. one quote provided by a Council-appointed contractor or at least two written quotations on contractors' letter headed paper provided by the applicant
  - iii. proof of identity
  - iv. proof of ownership and/or written consent of all owners.
- 5.2 The Council will approve or refuse a grant application in writing as soon as reasonably practicable. Where a grant application is refused, the Council will provide a written statement of the reasons for refusal, and details of any appeals procedure.

6. **Carrying Out and Completion of the Works**

- 6.1 Details can be found at Appendix C.

7. **Grant Conditions**

- 7.1 The Council reserves the right to remove equipment, such as lifts, when it is no longer required by the disabled person. Where the equipment cannot be reused due to its age or condition the Council may waive its right to recover such equipment.
- 7.2 Where an applicant has provided false or misleading information in their grant application or in their request for payment, the grant approval will be withdrawn, and a demand made for repayment of any monies already paid.

# **‘Independent Living’ Loan**

## **1. Eligible Applicants**

- 1.1 Any individual(s) who has a qualifying owner's interest in the property, and is over the age of 18, and is disabled, or a member of their household is disabled, and has been assessed by a Council-appointed Occupational Therapist as needing adaptations to their home.

## **2. Eligible Properties**

- 2.1 The property must be situated in Cheshire East and be registered at the Land Registry.

## **3. Eligible Works**

- 3.1 Adaptations that meet the purposes specified in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (refer to ‘Eligible Works’ under Disabled Facilities Grants) are eligible, where the total cost of the work exceeds the maximum mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant, or the applicant is unable to afford their assessed contribution.
- 3.2 Loans will not be approved retrospectively; any works that have been started or completed prior to a valid loan application will not be considered.
- 3.3 Eligible works will be determined by the Strategic Housing service.

## **4. Amount of Loan**

- 4.1 The maximum loan amount that will be considered is £25,000, and the minimum loan amount that will be considered is £5,000. All other potential sources of funding must be exhausted first; these thresholds may only be waived at the Council's absolute discretion where no other suitable sources of funding can be identified, and the Council considers that financial hardship has been demonstrated using its standardised evaluation.
- 4.2 Eligible fees that may be included as part of the application for assistance are:
- i. Legal fees and disbursements incurred because of setting up the loan
  - ii. Financial advice
  - iii. Lenders' fees for registering a second charge

## **5. Application Process**

- 5.1 Applications must be made on the Council's official application form and accompanied by:
- i. evidence supporting financial eligibility
  - ii. at least two written quotations on contractors' letter headed paper
  - iii. proof of owner's interest
  - iv. permission of all people who have an interest in the property
  - v. a valuation of the property for money lending purposes carried out by a RICS qualified surveyor
  - vi. proof of identity



- vii. any other documents reasonably required by the Council to process the application.
- 5.2 Before approving a loan application, the Council will have regard to the applicant's ability to repay the loan. The Council will take account of any charges already secured on the property, and any information obtained during its checks which reveal financial difficulties within the last six months. The Council will not normally award a loan where the existing charges registered on the property combined with the loan amount would reduce the available equity in the property to 10% or less of the property value.
- 5.3 Before a loan application is approved, the applicant and the Council must enter into a loan agreement and a legal charge must be registered at the Land Registry in favour of the Council.
- 6. **Carrying out and Completion of Works**
- 6.1 Details are set out at Appendix C.
- 7. **Loan Conditions**
- 7.1 The loan must be secured by way of a legal charge registered at the Land Registry.
- 7.2 The loan must be repaid as an Interest-free repayment loan, as set out at Appendix A.
- 7.3 The applicant must live in the property as their only residence.
- 7.4 A valid policy for buildings insurance enough to reinstate the building must remain in force until the assistance is repaid, with the Council's interest in the property noted on the policy.
- 7.5 Where an applicant has provided false or misleading information in their loan application or in their request for payment, the approved loan will be withdrawn, and a demand made for repayment of any monies already paid. The Council's interest in the property will not be removed from the Land Registry until all monies have been repaid. The Council reserves the right to apply interest at the Bank of England base rate plus 0.5% which will be charged daily from the 29<sup>th</sup> day after the demand for repayment is made until the loan is discharged in full.
- 7.6 The Council may by written notice require the applicant to provide a statement within 21 days showing how the loan conditions are being fulfilled. If the loan conditions are breached, the Council reserves the right to make a demand for repayment of any outstanding monies, and interest at the Bank of England base rate plus 0.5% will be charged daily from the 29<sup>th</sup> day after the demand for repayment is made until the loan is discharged in full.
- 7.7 Further applications for financial assistance for repairs to the same property will not be considered under this Policy and subsequent versions of this Policy, for a period of ten years from the certified date of completion, or until the loan is discharged, whichever is the earlier.

- 7.8 If the applicant seeks to remortgage the property or to secure further charges on the property, the Council will at its absolute discretion consider written requests to allow its charge to be postponed, considering all relevant information and consideration of the risks to the Council's interest.
- 7.9 The loan is not portable to another property.

# ‘Disability Relocation’ Grant

## 1. Eligible Applicants

- 1.1 Any individual(s) who is over the age of 18, and is disabled, or a member of their household is disabled, and has been assessed by a Council-appointed Occupational Therapist as needing adaptations to their home, **and**
- 1.2 Is assessed as being unable to afford the full cost of the eligible relocation expenses. The Test of Resources set out in the Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996 (as amended) will be used to assess whether the applicant is able to afford the full cost of the eligible relocation expenses.

## 2. Eligible Properties

- 2.1 The current property (that is, the property that the disabled person is moving from) must be situated in Cheshire East, **and**
  - 2.2.1 It must not be reasonable or practicable to adapt the current property, **or**
  - 2.2.2 The landlord has refused to give permission to adapt the property, **or**
  - 2.2.3 The property that the disabled person intends to move to offers a better suited solution for the disabled person, and the solution offers better value for money for the Council.
- 2.3 The new property must, in the reasonable opinion of the Strategic Housing service in conjunction with a Council-appointed Occupational Therapist, be appropriate to the needs of the disabled person, and any necessary adaptations to the new property must be reasonable and practicable.
- 2.4 The new property must be intended to be the only or main residence of the disabled person. There are no restrictions on the tenure or location of the new property.

## 3. Eligible Expenses

- 3.1 Assistance will be given towards reasonable removal costs associated with moving home, including:
  - i. Professional removal costs
  - ii. Disconnection and reconnection of household appliances
  - iii. Removal and reinstallation of disability equipment
- 3.2 Expenses that have been incurred prior to the application for assistance will not be considered.
- 3.3 Eligible expenses will be determined by the Strategic Housing service.

## 4. Amounts

- 4.1 The maximum grant amount will normally be £2,000. All other potential sources of funding must be exhausted first; the grant may only exceed £2,000 where no

other sources of funding can be identified, and the applicant demonstrates financial hardship.

5. **Application Process**

- 5.1 Applications must be made on the Council's official application form and accompanied by
- i. an Occupational Therapy referral
  - ii. proof of identity
  - iii. a minimum of one written quotation on contractors' letter headed paper
- 5.2 The Council will approve or refuse a grant application in writing as soon as reasonably practicable. Where a grant application is refused, the Council will provide a written statement of the reasons for refusal, and details of any appeals procedure.

6. **Carrying out and Completion of Works**

- 6.1 Details can be found at Appendix C.

7. **Grant Conditions**

- 7.1 Where an applicant has provided false or misleading information in their grant application or in their request for payment, the approved grant will be withdrawn, and a demand made for repayment of any monies already paid.
- 7.2 Further applications for a disability relocation grant will not be considered from the same applicant under this Policy and subsequent versions of this Policy, except where there has been a change in the disabled person's or their carer's needs and the property cannot be adapted to meet those needs, or the needs of another disabled person residing at the property cannot be met within the property.

# **‘Affordable Warmth’ Grant**

Subject to funding being available

## **1. Eligible Applicants**

- 1.1 Any individual(s) who has a qualifying owner’s interest in the property, and is over the age of 18, and:
- 1.2 Is living in the property to be improved as their only residence, and
  - 1.2.1 Is in receipt of a means tested income related benefit, OR
  - 1.2.2 Is in receipt of state retirement pension as their only source of income and has household savings less than £8,000 per person; OR
  - 1.2.3 Inadequate heating (either by absence or a working system, or a defective system) is preventing a person who is normally resident in the home from returning home from hospital.

## **2. Eligible Properties**

- 2.1 The property must be situated in Cheshire East.

## **3. Eligible Works**

- 3.1 The following types of work are eligible for assistance:
  - i. Heating and/or hot water repairs
  - ii. Boiler replacements
  - iii. Installation of an appropriate heating system or appliance in an inadequately heated room(s), for example additional radiator, first time central heating system, storage heater or gas fire.
- 3.2 Grants will not be approved retrospectively; any works that have been started or completed prior to a valid grant application will not be considered.
- 3.3 Eligible works will be determined by the Strategic Housing service.

## **4. Amount of the Grant**

- 4.1 The maximum grant amount will be 75% of the cost of the works, up to a maximum of £2,000. All other potential sources of funding must be exhausted first. The maximum grant amount may only be exceeded where the works are necessary to enable a person to return home from hospital.
- 4.2 The maximum grant amount will include the cost of eligible works and any VAT.

## **5. Application Process**

- 5.1 Applications must be made on the Council’s official application form and accompanied by
  - i. evidence supporting financial eligibility, where applicable
  - ii. proof of identity

- iii. one quote provided by a Council-appointed contractor or at least two written quotations on contractors' letter headed paper provided by the applicant
- iv. proof of owner's interest
- v. and any other documents reasonably required by the Council to process the application.

6. **Carrying out and Completion of the Works**

- 6.1 Details are set out at Appendix C.

7. **Conditions of Assistance**

- 7.1 Where an applicant has provided false or misleading information in their grant application or in their request for payment, the approved grant will be withdrawn, and a demand made for repayment of any monies already paid.

# 'Healthy Homes' Loan

Subject to funding being available

## 1. Eligible Applicants

Any individual(s) who has a qualifying owner's interest in the property and is over the age of 18, and has lived in the property for at least 12 consecutive months at the date of application, **and:**

- 1.1 Has insufficient savings to be able to afford to carry out the repairs, **AND**
- 1.2.1 Is in receipt of an income related welfare benefit provided by the Government, **OR**
- 1.2.2 Has reached state retirement pension age.

## 2. Eligible Properties

- 2.1 The property must be situated in Cheshire East and must be registered at the Land Registry.
- 2.2 The loan will not normally be available where repairs have previously been completed and financed by a loan from the Council under this or previous Policies where the condition relating to future applications has not yet expired.

## 3. Eligible Works

- 3.1 The following types of works are eligible for assistance:
  - i. Repairs that will make the main structure of the property weather tight. For example, typical repairs that could be considered, based on the severity of the disrepair, include roofing, windows, doors, and preventing damp penetration.
  - ii. Repairs that will eliminate a significant hazard within the living accommodation. Typical repairs that could be considered, based on the severity of the disrepair, include electrics, gas, fire prevention and falls prevention.
  - iii. Measures to reduce the consequences of flooding in areas designated by the Council as at risk of flooding.

- 3.2 The following areas of the home are excluded from being eligible for assistance with repairs: gardens, yards, annexes, garages, sheds, porches and conservatories, except where they form a fundamental part of the living accommodation and are creating a significant hazard to the health and safety of the occupants.

Assistance will not be provided for kitchen or bathroom upgrades, or for decorative or cosmetic works that are not as a result of the assisted repairs.

- 3.3 A loan will not be given where there are other suitable forms of financial assistance available, for example but not limited to energy supplier schemes, or household insurance.
- 3.4 Loans will not be approved retrospectively; any works that have been started or completed prior to a valid loan application will not be considered.

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- 3.5 Eligible works will be determined by the Housing service.

4. **Amounts**

- 4.1 The maximum loan amount that will be considered is £15,000, and a loan will not normally be considered for less than £1,000. These thresholds may only be waived at the Council's absolute discretion where no other suitable sources of funding can be identified, and the Council considers that financial hardship has been demonstrated.

- 4.2 Eligible costs that can be included in an application for assistance are:

- i. Reasonable cost of eligible works and VAT
- ii. Eligible fees as set out at Appendix B

5. **Application Process**

- 5.1 Applications must be made on the Council's official application form and accompanied by:

- i. evidence supporting financial eligibility
- ii. at least two written quotations on contractors' letter headed paper
- iii. proof of owner's interest
- iv. permission of all people who have an interest in the property
- v. a valuation of the property for money lending purposes carried out by a RICS qualified surveyor
- vi. proof of identity
- vii. any other documents reasonably required by the Council to process the application.

- 5.2 Before approving a loan application, the Council will have regard to the applicant's ability to repay the loan. The Council will take account of any charges already secured on the property, and any information obtained during its checks which reveal financial difficulties within the last six months. The Council will not normally award a loan where the existing charges registered on the property combined with the loan amount would reduce the available equity in the property to 10% or less of the property value.

- 5.3 Before a loan application is approved, the applicant and the Council must enter into a loan agreement and a legal charge must be registered at the Land Registry in favour of the Council. The owners must be party to the agreement.

6. **Carrying out and Completion of the Works**

- 6.1 Details are set out at Appendix C.

7. **Loan Conditions**

- 7.1 The loan must be secured by way of a legal charge registered at the Land Registry.

- 7.2 The loan must be repaid by one of the following methods:

- i. Interest-free repayment loan, as set out at Appendix A, or
- ii. Equity share loan, as set out at Appendix B.



- 7.3 The applicant must live in the property as their only residence.
- 7.4 A valid policy for buildings insurance enough to reinstate the building must remain in force until the assistance is repaid, with the Council's interest in the property noted on the policy.
- 7.5 Where an applicant has provided false or misleading information in their loan application or in their request for payment, the approved loan will be withdrawn, and a demand made for repayment of any monies already paid. The Council's interest in the property will not be removed from the Land Registry until all monies have been repaid. The Council reserves the right to apply interest at the Bank of England base rate plus 0.5% which will be charged daily from the 29<sup>th</sup> day after the demand for repayment is made until the loan is discharged in full.
- 7.6 The Council may by written notice require the applicant to provide a statement within 21 days showing how the loan conditions are being fulfilled. If the loan conditions are breached, the Council reserves the right to make a demand for repayment of any outstanding monies, and interest at the Bank of England base rate plus 0.5% will be charged daily from the 29<sup>th</sup> day after the demand for repayment is made until the loan is discharged in full.
- 7.7 Further applications for financial assistance for repairs to the same property will not be considered under this Policy and subsequent versions of this Policy, for a period of ten years from the certified date of completion, or until the loan is discharged, whichever is the earlier.
- 7.8 If the applicant seeks to remortgage the property or to secure further charges on the property, the Council will at its absolute discretion consider written requests to allow its charge to be postponed, taking into account all relevant information and consideration of the risks to the Council's interest.
- 7.9 The loan is not portable to another property.

# 'Empty Homes' Loan

Subject to funding being available

## 1. **Eligible Applicants**

- 1.1 Any individual(s) who has a qualifying owner's interest in the property and is over the age of 18.
- 1.2 The purposes for which an Empty Homes Loan may be given are:
  - i. For an owner of an empty home who intends to let the property on a tenancy that lasts for a minimum period of twelve months
  - ii. For an owner of an empty home who has entered, or intends to enter, into a lease agreement that lasts for at least the term of the loan agreement with a property management company or Registered Provider of social housing
  - iii. For an owner of empty home who intends to reoccupy the property as their main home

## 2. **Eligible Properties**

- 2.1 The property must be situated in Cheshire East and must be registered at the Land Registry.
- 2.2 The loan will not be available where repairs have previously been completed and financed by a loan from the Council under this or previous Policies where the condition relating to future applications has not yet expired.
- 2.3 The property must have been unoccupied for at least twelve consecutive months prior to the date of application.

## 3. **Eligible Works**

- 3.1 Works that will bring the property up to an acceptable living standard ready for occupancy are eligible.
- 3.2 The following areas of the home are excluded from being eligible for assistance with repairs: gardens, yards, annexes, garages, sheds, porches and conservatories, except where they form a fundamental part of the living accommodation.
- 3.3 A loan will not be given where there are other suitable forms of financial assistance available, for example but not limited to energy supplier schemes, or household insurance.
- 3.4 Loans will not be approved retrospectively; any works that have been started or completed prior to a valid loan application will not be considered.
- 3.5 Eligible works will be determined by the Housing service.

#### 4. **Amounts**

- 4.1 The maximum loan amount that will be considered is £20,000, and a loan will not normally be considered for less than £1,000. All other potential sources of funding must be exhausted first; these thresholds may only be waived at the Council's absolute discretion where no other suitable sources of funding can be identified, and the Council considers that financial hardship has been demonstrated using its standardised evaluation.
- 4.2 Eligible costs that can be included in an application for assistance are:
- i. Reasonable cost of eligible works and VAT
  - ii. Eligible fees, as detailed at Appendix B

#### 5. **Application Process**

- 5.1 Applications must be made on the Council's official application form and accompanied by:
- i. at least two written quotations on contractors' letter headed paper
  - ii. proof of owner's interest
  - iii. permission of all people who have an interest in the property
  - iv. a valuation of the property for money lending purposes carried out by a RICS qualified surveyor
  - v. proof of identity
  - vi. any other documents reasonably required by the Council to process the application.
- 5.2 Before approving a loan application, the Council will have regard to the applicant's ability to repay the loan. The Council will take account of any charges already secured on the property, and any information obtained during its checks which reveal financial difficulties within the last six months. The Council will not normally award a loan where the existing charges registered on the property combined with the loan amount would reduce the available equity in the property to 10% or less of the property value.
- 5.3 Before a loan application is approved, the applicant and the Council must enter into a loan agreement and a legal charge must be registered at the Land Registry in favour of the Council.

#### 6. **Carrying out and Completion of the Works**

- 6.1 Details can be found at Appendix C.

#### 7. **Loan Conditions:**

- 7.1 The loan must be secured by way of a legal charge recorded at the Land Registry.
- 7.2 The loan will be provided as an interest-free repayment loan over a maximum term of five years as set out at Appendix A.
- 7.3 The property must be occupied by a tenant and remain available to let to tenants throughout the term of the loan. There must not be any restrictions that prevents a person in receipt of welfare benefits occupying the property.

- 7.4 A valid policy for buildings insurance sufficient to reinstate the building must remain in force until the assistance is repaid, with the Council's interest in the property noted on the policy.
- 7.5 Where an applicant has provided false or misleading information in their application for assistance or in their request for payment, the approval of assistance will be withdrawn, and a demand made for repayment of any monies already paid. The Council reserves the right to apply interest at the Bank of England base rate plus 0.5% which will be charged daily from the 29<sup>th</sup> day after the demand for repayment is made until the loan is discharged in full.
- 7.6 The Council may by written notice require the applicant to provide a statement within 21 days showing how the loan conditions are being fulfilled. If the loan conditions are breached, the Council reserves the right to make a demand for repayment of any outstanding monies, and interest at the Bank of England base rate plus 0.5% will be charged daily from the 29<sup>th</sup> day after the demand for repayment is made until the loan is discharged in full. The Council's interest in the property will not be removed from the Land Registry until all monies have been repaid.
- 7.7 Further applications for financial assistance for repairs to the same property will not be considered under this Policy and subsequent versions of this Policy, for a period of ten years from the certified date of completion.
- 7.8 The Council will normally only approve a maximum of three applications for Empty Homes Assistance from an applicant in any calendar year. This may only be waived where the applicant can demonstrate that no other suitable funding sources are available.
- 7.9 In the event that the applicant seeks to remortgage the property or to secure further charges on the property, the Council will at its absolute discretion consider written requests to allow its charge to be postponed, taking into account all relevant information and consideration of the risks to the Council's interest.

# **‘Targeted Regeneration’ Grant**

## **1. Eligible Applicants**

Any individual(s) who has a qualifying owner’s interest in a property and is over the age of 18, who is:

- 1.1 An owner-occupier; **OR**
- 1.2 A private landlord; OR
- 1.3 An owner of a property that has been unoccupied for at least six months.

## **2. Eligible Properties**

- 2.1 From time to time the Council may secure or allocate funding and designate a geographic area within Cheshire East that is eligible for a scheme of housing improvement or regeneration works. Residential properties within a designated area will be eligible for assistance.

## **3. Eligible Works**

- 3.1 The following types of works are eligible for assistance:
  - i. Repairs that will make the main structure of the property weather tight. For example, typical repairs that could be considered, based on the severity of the disrepair, include roofing, windows, doors, and preventing damp penetration.
  - ii. Repairs that will improve the external appearance of the property. For example, fascias, gutters, downspouts, boundary walls or landscaping improvements that are sympathetic to the local heritage and street scene
  - iii. Measures that will improve the energy efficiency of the property. For example, loft insulation, cavity wall insulation, room in roof insulation, solid wall insulation, low carbon heating systems
- 3.2 Grants will not be approved retrospectively; any works that have been started or completed prior to a valid grant application will not be considered.
- 3.3 Eligible works will be determined by the Housing service.

## **4. Amounts**

- 4.1 The grant amount will be determined and published in accordance with the individual regeneration scheme rules, terms and conditions that are in force at the time.
- 4.3 Eligible costs that can be included in an application for assistance are:
  - iii. Reasonable cost of eligible works and VAT
  - iv. Eligible fees as set out at Appendix B

## **5. Application Process**

- 5.1 Applications must be made on the Council’s official application form and accompanied by:

- i. at least one form of identification
- ii. evidence supporting financial eligibility
- iii. at least two written quotations on contractors' letter headed paper
- iv. proof of owner's interest
- v. permission of all people who also have an owner's interest
- vi. any other documents reasonably required by the Council to process the application.

6. **Carrying out and Completion of the Works**

- 6.1 Details are set out at Appendix C.

7. **Grant Conditions**

- 7.1 The applicant must enter into a written Agreement with the Council that sets out the terms and conditions of the grant.
- 7.2 If the applicant disposes of the property within 5 years of the certified date of completion, the full grant will become repayable.
- 7.3 Where an applicant has provided false or misleading information in their grant application or in their request for payment, the approved grant will be withdrawn, and a demand made for repayment of any monies already paid. The Council reserves the right to apply interest at the Bank of England base rate plus 0.5% which will be charged daily from the 29<sup>th</sup> day after the demand for repayment is made until the loan is discharged in full.
- 7.4 Further applications for financial assistance for repairs to the same property will not be considered under this Policy and subsequent versions of this Policy, for a period of ten years from the certified date of completion.

## **Applications for assistance falling outside of this Policy**

All grant and loan applications will be considered against the published criteria. If the application does not meet the criteria, the Council will inform the applicant in writing of the reason why their application is being refused.

Where an applicant is refused assistance and they wish to appeal against the decision, they should appeal in writing to the Council within 28 days of the date of refusal.

It is recognised that there may be situations where the refusal of assistance would disproportionately disadvantage the applicant. In these circumstances, the Council may waive or alter some or all of the eligibility criteria, minimum or maximum amounts, or conditions of assistance based on the individual circumstances, and approve the application for assistance.

## **Transitional Arrangements**

From 1 July 2025, all new applications for assistance will be considered against the criteria set out within this Policy.

All applications for assistance approved under the Home Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People: Financial Assistance Policy 2017 and Version 1 or Version 2 of the 2021-2026 Policy will continue to be valid in accordance with the specific conditions of assistance contained within that Policy.

All valid referrals and applications received on or before 1 July 2025 under the Home Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People: Financial Assistance Policy 2021-2026 will be processed in accordance with that Policy, except where the applicant requests that their application is assessed in accordance with this revised Policy.

## Appendix A

### Interest Free Repayment Loans

1. Loans are offered as secured loans. The loan is secured by way of a legal charge registered at the Land Registry, until such time that the loan is repaid in full.
2. All joint owners and, where applicable, anyone with a legal interest in the property must give their consent to the works to be carried out and the registration of a legal charge.
3. The Council may request a written valuation of the property, carried out by a RICS qualified surveyor, to determine whether there is enough equity for its interest in the property to be secure.
4. The applicant must make monthly repayments of the loan in accordance with an agreed schedule. We will calculate the monthly payment so that the loan is repaid to us by the end of the term of the loan. The term of the loan will not exceed ten years (five years in the case of an Empty Homes loan).
5. Applicants can repay the loan early at any time without penalty.
6. We may withdraw the offer at any time before we make the loan for any of the following reasons:
  - a. The discovery of a defect in the title to the property
  - b. The deterioration of the applicant's financial position
  - c. The supply of false information in connection with the applicant's loan application
7. If the applicant experiences financial difficulty and has problems maintaining the repayments schedule at any time, the Council will, having regard to the applicant's financial circumstances, consider alternative payment options including:
  - a. Recalculating monthly payments to include any arrears
  - b. Extending the period of the loan beyond the maximum loan term of ten years
  - c. Terminating the interest free repayment loan and offering the outstanding balance as an equity share loan
8. The loan will become immediately repayable in the following circumstances:
  - a. Upon sale or transfer of the property
  - b. If the property is no longer the main residence of the applicant
  - c. In the event of a successful insurance claim related to the eligible works
  - d. Upon death of the applicant (or where there is more than one applicant, the death of the last surviving applicant).
  - e. In the event of a breach of a loan condition.

#### Illustration (example only)

Amount borrowed:	24 monthly repayments	60 monthly repayments	84 monthly repayments	120 monthly repayments	Total repaid:
<b>£5,000</b>	<b>£208.33</b>	<b>£83.33</b>	<b>£59.52</b>	<b>£41.67</b>	<b>£5,000</b>
<b>£10,000</b>	<b>£416.67</b>	<b>£166.67</b>	<b>£119.05</b>	<b>£83.33</b>	<b>£10,000</b>
<b>£15,000</b>	<b>£625.00</b>	<b>£250.00</b>	<b>£178.57</b>	<b>£125.00</b>	<b>£15,000</b>
<b>£20,000</b>	<b>£833.33</b>	<b>£333.33</b>	<b>£238.10</b>	<b>£166.67</b>	<b>£20,000</b>
<b>£25,000</b>	<b>£1,041.67</b>	<b>£416.67</b>	<b>£297.62</b>	<b>£208.33</b>	<b>£25,000</b>



## Appendix B

### Preliminary and Ancillary services and charges

#### **Disabled Facilities Grants**

- Confirmation that an applicant has an owner's interest in the property
- Specialist, technical and/or structural surveys
- Design and preparation of plans and drawings
- Preparation of schedules of the relevant works
- Assistance in completing forms
- Advice on financing the cost of the relevant works which are not met by the Council's assistance
- Applications for building regulations approval or planning permission (including the application fee and the preparation of related documents)
- Obtaining estimates for the relevant works
- Advice on contracts
- Consideration of tenders
- Supervision of the relevant works
- Disconnection and reconnection of electricity, gas, water or drainage utilities where this is made necessary by the relevant works (but not charges arising from non-payment of bills)
- Payment of contractors
- Services and charges of an occupational therapist in relation to the relevant works

#### **Healthy Homes, Independent Living and Empty Homes Loans**

- i. Specialist, technical and/or structural reports that are required by the Council
- ii. Building Control fees for eligible works
- iii. Legal fees and disbursements incurred as a result of setting up the loan
- iv. Valuation fees
- v. Financial advice
- vi. Lenders' fees for registering a second charge
- vii. A fee in accordance with the Council's Fees and Charges schedule will be included as part of the loan, for technical and professional services provided by the Council to facilitate the application process.

#### **Affordable Warmth, Urgent Adaptations and Targeted Regeneration Grants**

- i. Specialist, technical and/or structural reports that are required by the Council
- ii. Building Control fees for eligible works

## Appendix C

### Carrying out and Completion of Works

- 1 Works must be carried out by a contractor whose quotation was accepted as part of the grant or loan application. Any request to change the contractor must be made in writing. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld by the Council.
- 2 The timescales for the different grants and loans are set out below:

Grant/Loan	Work must be started by no later than -	Works must be completed by no later than -
Healthy Homes Loan	3 months from the date of approval	6 months from the date of approval
Affordable Warmth Grant	1 month from the date of approval	2 months from the date of approval
Disabled Facilities Grant	12 months from the date of approval	15 months from the date of approval
Urgent Adaptations Grant	1 month from the date of approval	2 months from the date of approval
Independent Living Loan	12 months from the date of approval	12 months from the date of approval
Disability Relocation Grant	1 month from the date of approval	1 month from the date of approval
Empty Homes Loan	3 months from the date of approval	6 months from the date of approval
Targeted Regeneration Grant	3 months from the date of approval	6 months from the date of approval

Requests for additional time to start or complete the works must be made in writing before the end of the relevant period. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld by the Council. If the timescales are not adhered to, the Council reserves the right to cancel the grant or loan approval.

- 3 In the event of unforeseen work or an increase in costs arising during the works the amount of the grant or loan may be increased at the discretion of the Council. The minimum amount of additional loan that will be considered is £200. The Council will only approve the request where the combined sum of the approved grant or loan with the additional request do not exceed the relevant maximum permitted grant or loan. Where the approved assistance is a loan, the applicant and the Council must enter into a revised loan agreement. Additional fees will be incurred for the registration of an amended legal charge.
- 4 Payment of assistance will be only be made where:
  - i. The eligible works have been completed in accordance with any statutory requirements and/or the Council's specification, and to the reasonable satisfaction of an appointed Strategic Housing officer, and
  - ii. The Council's standard payment request form has been completed, and
  - iii. The Council has received a valid invoice or receipt for the works. An invoice or receipt will not be considered valid where it is issued by a

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company that the applicant or a member of their family is a proprietor of.

- 5 Requests for interim payments will be considered. The value of interim payments will not exceed the value of the works completed and will not exceed 90% of the total value of eligible works that have been approved.
- 6 Requests for advance payments to make deposits for materials will not normally be considered and will only be allowed where the applicant demonstrates financial hardship.
- 7 Where requests are received for an increase to the grant or loan for unforeseen works, the Council will only approve the request where the combined sum of the approved grant or loan with the additional request do not exceed the relevant maximum permitted grant or loan. Where the approved assistance is a loan, the applicant and the Council must enter into a revised loan agreement.
- 8 In the event of a dispute between the applicant and the contractor about the satisfactory completion of works, the Council reserves the right to pay the grant or loan to the applicant or contractor if the works have been carried out to the satisfaction of a Strategic Housing officer.

## Contact details

This Policy is operated by the Housing Standards and Adaptations team, part of the Strategic Housing service:

By telephone: 0300 123 5017 Option 4

By email: [careandrepair@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:careandrepair@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

By post: Floor 2 Delamere House, Delamere Street, Crewe, CW1 2LL

Or visit our website: [www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/homerepairs](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/homerepairs)

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**OPEN****Economy and Growth Committee****3 June 2024****Final Outturn 2024/25**

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

**Report Reference No: CF/01/25-26**

**Ward(s) Affected: Not applicable**

**For Decision or Scrutiny: Both**

**Purpose of Report**

- 1 This report provides members with an overview of the Cheshire East Council final outturn for the financial year 2024/25. Members are being asked to consider the financial performance of the Council. The report also proposes treatment of year end balances that reflects risks identified in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy which was approved by Council on 26 February 2025.
- 2 To highlight financial performance across all Departments, and within Central Budgets shows how the Council is achieving its financial strategies and managing financial control and accountability.
- 3 Reporting the financial outturn at this stage, and in this format supports the Council's vision to be an effective and enabling Council as set out in the Cheshire East Plan 2025 to 2029.

**Executive Summary**

- 4 This report outlines how the Council managed its resources through sound financial planning, monitoring, and reporting to achieve outcomes and value for money.

- 5 The Outturn is reported as part of the Statutory Accounts and is therefore subject to audit. The audited Accounts will be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on 4 December 2025.
- 6 The Council set its 2024/25 annual budget in February 2024. The budget was balanced, as required by statute, with planned use of reserves of £22m, plus £30m of savings to achieve in year, and included important assumptions about spending in the year. The budget is part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024 to 2028.
- 7 The Third Financial Review (FR3) forecast revenue outturn was an adverse variance of £18.3m (prior to the application of any Exceptional Financial Support), an improvement of £1.8m from FR2.
- 8 Prior to the application of Exceptional Financial Support and a proposed £7.4m transfer to reserves (see para 68 below), the 2024/25 service outturn position is an adverse variance of £9.8m, reflecting an underlying improvement since FR3 of £8.5m, as detailed below in Table 1 (Total Service Expenditure plus Central Budgets).

<b>Table 1</b> <b>Outturn 2024/25</b>	<b>Revised Budget (NET)</b>	<b>Outturn</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Forecast Variance FR3</b>	<b>Movement from FR3 to Outturn</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
<b>Service Committee</b>					
Adults and Health	137.1	154.7	17.6	20.0	(2.4)
Children and Families	92.6	96.1	3.5	5.4	(1.9)
Corporate Policy	44.2	41.9	(2.2)	2.5	(4.7)
Economy and Growth	27.9	22.7	(5.3)	(3.8)	(1.5)
Environment and Communities	47.8	46.3	(1.5)	(0.6)	(0.9)
Highways and Transport	16.2	14.4	(1.8)	(0.5)	(1.3)
<b>TOTAL SERVICE EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>365.8</b>	<b>376.0</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>(12.7)</b>
<b>Finance Sub:</b>					
Central Budgets	25.0	32.4	7.4	(4.6)	12.0
Funding	(390.8)	(390.8)	(0.0)	-	(0.0)
<b>TOTAL FINANCE SUB</b>	<b>(0.0)</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>18.3</b>	<b>(0.7)</b>
<b>Exceptional Financial Support</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(17.6)</b>	<b>(17.6)</b>	<b>(17.6)</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>(0.0)</b>	<b>(0.0)</b>	<b>(0.0)</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>(0.7)</b>

- 9 Whilst an improvement on the Third Financial Review position of £8.5m, the service overspend of £9.8m remains a significant financial challenge for the Council. Cost pressures in Adults and Children's services remain a key issue. Details of in year pressures, ongoing impacts into 2025/26 and improvements against FR3 by Committee are reported in paragraphs 30 to 63 below.
- 10 The out-turn position, net of proposed transfers to useable reserves of £7.6m, is an overspend of £17.6m. This includes the setting up of a reserve to set aside sufficient one-off resources to be able to respond to the steps that will be necessary to support the delivery of our transformation, change and improvement activity especially in light of the recent publication of the non-statutory Best Value notice. This will be able to pump prime activities to ensure that change is made at pace to support our longer-term financial sustainability. Any use of this reserve will need to be recommended by the Chief Executive and Executive Director of Resources and any virements will then need to follow the usual approval processes.
- 11 As reported at FR3, in order to address the risk to services from the Council's budgetary pressures, there was an urgent report to Council on the 11 December 2024 on Exceptional Financial Support (EFS). The report sought the authority for the Chief Executive to request that the in-principle EFS of up to £17.6m by way of a capitalisation direction for 2023/24 and 2024/25 be able to be applied only in 2024/25, from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in order to address the Council's budgetary pressures during the financial year 2024/25. The costs of accepting the EFS support will impact over the medium term and these have been built into the 2025/26-2028/29 MTFS approved in February 2025.
- 12 As indicated in Table 2 below and recognising the request in the urgent report to Council on 11 December 2024, it is proposed that the full £17.6m conditional EFS is utilised for 2024/25 to cover the following:
- Overall Council overspend in 2024/25 - **£9.8m**
  - Creation of a further earmarked reserve to cover the one off costs of change and improvement activity in 2025/26 and 2026/27 - **£5.3m**
  - Transfer to General Fund Reserves - **£2.5m** to increase financial resilience into 2025/26 and future years.
- 13 The reserves position, after agreed movements budgeted for in the MTFS and new additional requests noted below, are £29.6m, being £6.3m General Fund and £23.3m Earmarked.

Table 2: Exceptional Financial Support and Reserves - Outturn

£m

2024/25 overspend – outturn (including Service EMRs)	10.2
Improvement on central budgets - Surplus levy grant	(0.4)
Tfr to Cost of Change and Improvement Reserve	5.3
Tfr to General Fund	2.5
<b>2024/25 Revised Out-turn</b>	<b>17.6</b>
<b>Exceptional Financial Support</b>	<b>(17.6)</b>
<b>Outturn 2024/25</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Reserves</b>	
General Fund	6.3
Earmarked Reserve	23.3
<b>Total Reserves at 31 March 2025 – Outturn Final</b>	<b>29.6</b>

- 14 The outturn expenditure level for capital spending for 2024/25 was £88.4m against the original MTFS budget set in February 2024 of £215.8m (FR3 £144.7m). The underspend of £56.3m (Out-turn compared to FR3) will be slipped into 2025/26 and future years. This level of slippage at 39% is a higher variance than 2023/24 (18%)

- 15 **Table 3** sets out the capital programme profiling changes from FR3:

Table 3	2024/25 Outturn £000	2025/26 Estimate £000	2026/27 Estimate £000	2027/28 Estimate £000	2024-28 Total £000
<b>Capital Programme FR3</b>	<b>144,670</b>	<b>157,134</b>	<b>104,400</b>	<b>243,852</b>	<b>650,056</b>
<b>Funded by:</b>					
<b>Capital Programme Outturn</b>	<b>88,322</b>	<b>208,490</b>	<b>100,570</b>	<b>252,694</b>	<b>650,076</b>
<b>Funded by:</b>					
<b>Movement from FR3</b>	<b>-56,348</b>	<b>+51,356</b>	<b>-3,830</b>	<b>+8,842</b>	<b>+20</b>

- 16 **Table 4** sets out the capital programme summary at the Outturn position by Committee:

Table 4	2024/25 Outturn £000	2025/26 Estimate £000	2026/27 Estimate £000	2027/28 Estimate £000	2024-28 Total £000
Adults and Health	280	468	0	0	748
Children and Families	9,722	56,131	21,604	20,749	108,206
Corporate Policy	5,465	10,125	1,173	0	16,763
Economy and Growth	25,723	56,534	32,905	81,762	196,924
Environment and Communities	5,915	18,606	2,184	15,301	42,006
Highways and Transport	41,217	66,626	42,704	134,882	285,429
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>88,322</b>	<b>208,490</b>	<b>100,570</b>	<b>252,694</b>	<b>650,076</b>
<b>Funding:</b>					
Grants and Other Contributions	53,793	149,212	88,370	187,853	479,228
Capital Receipts and Reserves	901	2,500	1324	33,381	38,106
Borrowing	33,628	56,778	10,876	31,460	132,742
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>88,322</b>	<b>208,490</b>	<b>100,570</b>	<b>252,694</b>	<b>650,076</b>



- 17 During 2024/25 a capital review was carried out with a view to reducing and re-profiling the amount of capital spend funded by borrowing which has led to significant slippage. Continued scrutiny of the capital programme will be required to minimise and delay spend funded from borrowing to reduce the ongoing revenue in future years. The authority should aim to repay more historical borrowing than any new borrowing incurred in year to ensure that the total capital financing requirement begins to decrease and the long term position becomes more sustainable.
- 18 Capital receipts in year amounted to £2.2m against a forecast of £2m, of this £1.2 will be used to fund transformational costs with the remaining £1m supporting the capital financing budget as planned.
- 19 During 2024/25, we undertook a Balance Sheet review through our Treasury Advisors, Arlingclose Ltd. As part of that review, they considered the revenue impact of the current Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) policy currently in place and we asked them to assess our alignment with current Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) guidance. Changes to the Accounting Policy for MRP were set out in the 2025/26 – 2028/29 MTFS - in summary the out-turn impact for 2024/25 is an improvement of £3.1m against the Capital Financing Budget.
- 20 The annex and appendix attached to this report set out details of the Council's financial performance:
- 21 Annex 1: Outturn 2024/25 – Sets out detailed information for each of the following areas as at 31 March 2025 (per Committee area):
  - **Section 1** 2024/25 Financial Outturn position
  - **Section 2** 2024/25 Approved Budget Change Items
  - **Section 3** Revenue Grants for approval and Grant Register
  - **Section 4** Capital
  - **Section 5** Reserves
  - **Section 6** Treasury Management
  - **Section 7** Investment Strategy

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Economy and Growth Committee is recommended to:

1. Consider the overall financial performance of the Council in the 2024/25 financial year, as contained within the report, as follows:
  - a) A Net Revenue Overspend of £17.6m against a revised budget of £365.8m (4.8% variance) funded by conditional Exceptional Financial Support (Capitalisation Direction) via borrowing.
  - b) General Reserves closing balance of £6.3m.
  - c) Capital Spending of £88.4m against an approved programme of £215.8m (59% variance).

2. Consider the contents of Annex 1.
3. Approve the Supplementary Capital Estimates (SCE) and Capital Virements between £500,000 and £1,000,000 in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules for the following Committee's as detailed in **Annex 1, Section 4, Table 4**
4. Approve the new Reserves in the Reserves Section (**Annex 1, Section 5, Table 1**) which includes proposed movements to reserves.

## Background

- 22 This single view of the financial picture of the Council provides the overall financial context.
- 23 The financial outturn for Cheshire East Council is an overspend of £17.6m. This is net of appropriate allocations to useable reserves. Further detail is provided in **Table 1** and **Annex 1**.
- 24 On 1 April 2024 total Council reserves were £37.8m. The closing balance on 31 March 2025 is £29.6m, this represents an improvement vs forecast of £12.4m. This is partly due to lower drawdowns for services than previously forecast, plus the creation of new reserves as mentioned in paragraph 12 above.
- 25 Capital - The original budget set in February 2024 was £215.8m. During 2024/25 a review was carried out the aim of reducing and reprofiling the amount of capital spend funded by borrowing. At FR3 the forecast spend had reduced to £144.7m. Actual spend for 2024/25 outturn was £88.4m.
- 26 Capital receipts in year amounted to £2.2m against a forecast of £2m, of this £1.2m will be used to fund transformational costs with the remaining £1m supporting the capital financing budget as planned.
- 27 Capital Financing Budget – The impact of funding EFS via Capitalisation Directive/Borrowing over the term of the MTFS are shown in the table below (extract from MTFS Report Feb 2025).

<b>Table 5: Capital Financing Budget - elements</b>	<b>2025/26 £m</b>	<b>2026/27 £m</b>	<b>2027/28 £m</b>	<b>2028/29 £m</b>
Interest Payable – DSG Deficit	5.6	6.4	7.4	7.4
Interest Payable – EFS*	1.0	1.7	1.6	1.6
Interest Payable – Capital Borrowing	13.5	12.8	13.3	13.3
Interest receivable	(2.3)	(2.1)	(2.1)	(2.1)
<b>Total Net Interest</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>20.2</b>	<b>20.2</b>
MRP – EFS*	0.5	1.3	2.1	2.2
MRP – Capital Borrowing	16.7	18.7	19.6	20.8
<b>Total MRP</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>23.0</b>

Total CFB requirement	35.0	38.8	41.9	43.2
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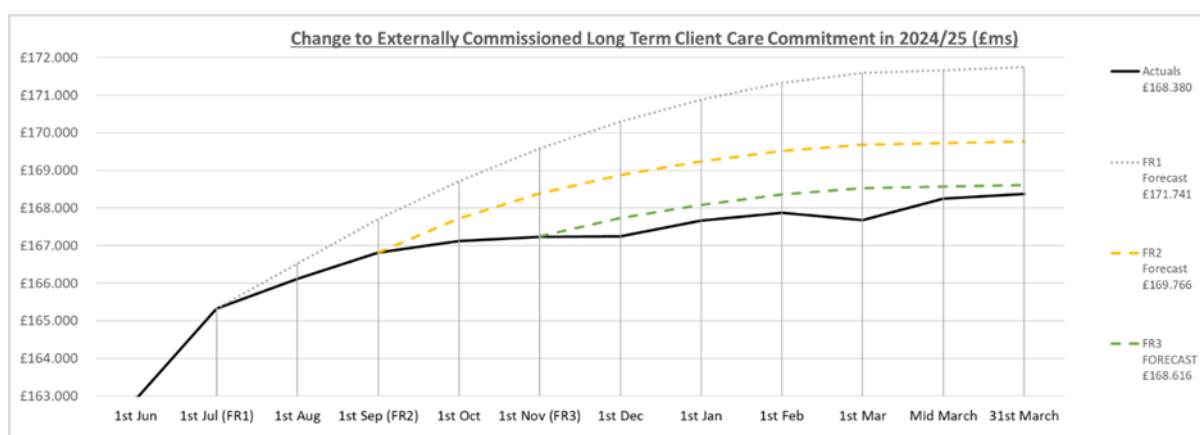
*\*EFS MRP/Interest above relates to both 2024/25 £17.6m and 2025/26 £25.3m*

- 28 During 2024/25, we undertook a Balance Sheet review through our Treasury Advisors, Arlingclose Ltd. As part of that review, they considered the revenue impact of the current Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) policy currently in place. We asked them to assess our alignment with current Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) guidance. Changes to the Accounting Policy for MRP were set out in the 2025/26 – 2028/29 MTFS against the Capital Financing Budget (Refer to Appendix A, Annex 5, Section 3 of the MTFS – [Approved Feb 2025](#)).
- 29 Changes to the Accounting Policy needed to be made in 2024/25 due to new regulations coming in from 1 April 2025 and therefore have the benefit of reducing the 2024/25 charge to revenue with a betterment to the overall outturn position plus ongoing impacts from 2025/26 onwards have been reflected through the MTFS. In summary the out-turn impact for 2024/25 being is a net improvement of £3.411m.
- 30 There are a number of key issues that have caused the revenue overspend, including:
- Continued demand and complexity of care beyond levels previously identified in Adult's services;
  - Increasing demands of Children's Social care, in terms of complexity and the number of cases;
  - Increased borrowing costs associated with the unfunded Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit;
  - Non delivery of some previously agreed savings and/or income targets;
  - The financial impact of investment in transformation and improvement activity over the medium term;
  - Under-recovery of rent allowances;
- 31 In order to mitigate the cost pressure facing the Council, various tasks to urgently review spend and identify additional savings have been undertaken in year through actions led by the Strategic Finance Management Board, which included:
- regular line by line reviews of budgets have been undertaken throughout the year to identify any additional funding or potential areas of underspend.
  - The cessation of any non-essential spend
  - Management of vacancies, particularly agency usage
  - Review of Section 106 legacy budgets
  - Identification of any other areas of discretionary spend including grants awarded, where spend can be reduced or stopped.
  - Review Debt management / overall level of bad debt provision

### **Specific commentary on the forecast outturn position by Committee**

## Adults and Health adverse variance of £17.6m

- 32 Throughout 2024/25 the Adults, Health and Integration Directorate has been forecasting an overspend of up to £20m driven by increases in costs of individual placements for people who draw on care and support. This forecast position included mitigations which have been delivered through the year. The final outturn position is an overspend of £17.6m.
- 33 This position represents an improvement on the position that was reported at the Third Financial Review (TFR) of £2.4m. This further improvement results from a number of factors. First, the final outturn for external care costs was slightly lower than the TFR projection as demonstrated in the chart below. As shown in the graph the level of activity between December and March grew at a slower rate than in previous months and was anticipated at the end of quarter 3. At that time there was concern that activity would increase as a result of winter pressures and so a cautious approach was adopted in forecasting the outturn.



- 34 Secondly, smaller favourable variances in other areas have allowed more external care costs than previously anticipated to be funded using eligible external grants. The terms and conditions of these grants allow these costs to be funded if they have been defrayed before the end of the financial year. Finally, income levels continue to exceed earlier expectations for two reasons, income is driven activity and directly related to care costs and the new adoption of a new charging policy adopted in 2024/25.
- 35 This final position provides a secure foundation to build on in 2025/26 and beyond through the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as new transformation projects (e.g. Prevent Reduce, Enable) are brought forward to improve outcomes for service users alongside containing the financial outlay for the Council in responding to ongoing high levels of demand. Although a small amount of the improvement between TFR and the Year End position is of a temporary nature, the outturn position provides greater confidence that the growth for care costs and income which are in the MTFS reflect the adjustment levels needed to re-size the service budget in 2025/26.

## Public Health

- 36 There are various factors which have impacted the final position for the Public Health (PH) ringfenced grant reserve movement. Some of this links to additional grant received for PH outcomes, as well as work by the service to manage vacancies and reduce contract costs where possible. The service will continue to work with the wider council services when planning future years' expenditure. This will ensure the best possible VFM is achieved for CEC residents, whilst also ensuring that services funded from the grant continue to meet the statutory ringfenced criteria for PH outcomes. It is important to note that the reserve needs to be sufficient to ensure that when current contracts are re-commissioned they remain affordable, as there is no guarantee that the PH grant allocation will increase to cover cost increases.

### **Children and Families adverse variance of £3.5m**

- 37 At the end of the last financial year the outturn for Children and Families was an overspend of £8.2m. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy included growth to address the pressures that were emerging throughout 2023/24. The costs of children's social care are a concern for many local authorities and not unique to Cheshire East.
- 38 The provisional outturn position for 2024/25 reflects a £3.5m in-year pressure. This is an improvement of £1.9m since the third financial review mainly due to: £0.7m drawdown from reserves to offset the costs relating to flexible capital receipts; £0.2m improved position on catering; £0.2m increase on transport; there was an increase £1.2m in Social Care Cost relating to support accommodation costs but other costs reduced by a similar amount across other placements; use of grants to reduce commissioning cost of children's contracts £0.2m; and reduced staffing cost due to vacancy management and use of grants in Education, Strong Start and Integration (£1.0m).
- 39 The key pressure areas for the directorate include:
- Children's social care placements (£3.4m adverse variance) where the complexity of children in care has continued to increase and the number of children in care has increased from 528 at April 2024 to 550 at March 2025 (compared to a decrease from 586 at April 2023 to 541 at March 2024). Placement costs are increasing by significantly more than inflation and in-year growth is more than projected in the budget, particularly relating to supported accommodation costs.
  - The use and cost of agency staff in children's social care to cover vacancies, sick absence, and maternity leave. The number of staff is greater than the planned establishment to ensure we are able to meet our statutory needs. A review of the staffing structure and establishment gap has been factored into the MTFS for 2025/26.
  - Home to school transport costs (£0.5m adverse variance) – where a mix of increasing numbers of pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHCP), and increasing contract costs / direct payment costs.

- Schools Catering (£0.2m adverse variance) – where the costs of the service are above the current charged income level and base budget.

40 These in-year pressures were considered as part of the MTFS for 2025/26. These include:

- Reviewing costs of placements as more detailed reviews are underway focusing on the expected length that some placements may need to be in place for;
- Staffing establishment reviews now scheduled on a 6 weekly basis including a review of agency staff and alternative working;
- Reunification children to be identified with targeted work in place for individual cases;
- Tracking of similar spend across teams to be held in the same place as residential and supported accommodation spend to increase overall grip and understanding;
- Work on Edge of Care Service proposals to identify early intervention that may reduce admissions and costs.

41 Dedicated School Grant (DSG)

For details on DSG please see paragraph 66 below

### **Corporate Policy favourable variance of £2.2m**

42 The Corporate Services Directorate has a net budget of £42.0m for 2024/25 and the final level of spending is £41.9m. Expenditure includes £3.8m on transformation that was not part of the original budget.

43 A number of adjustments have been processed to make an overall reduction to the level of expenditure. They are:

- Contributing to an Insurance Reserve (£0.3m).
- Contributing to an Elections Reserve (£0.3m).
- Creation of an ICT Reserve to assist with change in 2025/26 (£0.3m).
- Funding transformation spend from existing earmarked reserves (£3.1m).

44 As a result, the final outturn is an underspend of £2.2m. The main reasons for the underspend are as follows:

- Vacancy management ~ most services have contributed to a total underspend of £2.3m on staffing budgets from vacant posts, some of



which are now filled. This has enabled the service to manage a £0.54m pressure from an MTFS savings target that could not be delivered.

- ICT underspend ~ ICT has delivered a £1.7m underspend. This is mainly due to the expenditure on contracts being lower than expected and a full review of pre-payments.
- Members allowances ~ the budget has underspent by £0.3m.
- Expenditure control ~ tighter control on non-pay spending across the Directorate has achieved savings in most services totalling £0.3m.
- Additional income ~ Registrations Service (£0.5m), Procurement (£0.1m), and Finance (£0.1m) along with additional grant, and court costs income in the Benefits Service (£0.2m).

45 However, these underspends have been offset by the following:

- Rent Allowances ~ under-recovery of £1.5m.
- Transactional Service Centre ~ overspend of £0.3m mainly due to the additional costs of the stabilisation programme which has been put in place to improve the performance of the service and recognises the need to change the way in which Unit4 is used.
- Unavoidable costs ~ External Audit costs, and Bank Charges in Finance of £0.4m.
- Income shortfalls ~ in Project Management Office, Internal Audit, and Legal Services totalling £0.5m.

46 At Third Finance Review (FR3), Corporate Services was forecast to overspend by £2.5m meaning the outturn has improved by £4.7m. The main reasons for such a major change are as follows:

- Transformation ~ forecast costs of £3.7m were included in the FR3 figures. At outturn £3.1m of these costs have been shown as funded from reserve reducing the outturn figure by a corresponding amount.
- ICT shift of £1.1m from contract spend review.
- Establishment Reset ~ after the production of FR3 figures, staffing budgets were re-aligned following an establishment review, and the impact of backdated pay award became much clearer meaning more accurate staffing forecasts were possible increasing the underspend at outturn by £0.5m.

**Place Directorate total favourable variance of £8.6m.**

- 47 Overall, the Place Directorate is reporting an underspend of 8.6m at outturn against a £92.2m budget. This represents a £3.7m improvement from FR3.
- 48 The key issues relate to holding vacancies with staffing - expenditure running 16% below budget totalling £5.9m, reduced utility costs of £2.3m and other net changes such as increased income of £0.6m. Previously reported pressures from planning income and waste etc have been managed.

**Environment and Communities favourable variance of £1.5m**

- 49 Environment and Neighbourhood Services is reporting an underspend of £1.5m against a net budget of £47.8m. This is a £1.9m improvement from FR3. The key reasons for the underspend are £1.6m underspend in the Planning Service comprising underspends in Development Management of £0.5m and Building Control of £0.4m, both mainly due to vacancies. Strategic Planning is £0.7m underspent due to £0.3m vacancies plus £0.3m delayed Local Plan costs. The overall improvement is £0.9m since FR3 due to Improved Planning application income £0.3m, vacancy management £0.4m and additional income/funding £0.1m.
- 50 Environmental Commissioning for ANSA has seen a £0.3m underspend from an increase on the surplus of the core contract, this is an improvement on FR3 of £0.3m. Environmental Commissioning Orbitas is also £0.3m underspent, this is from additional income, which is a £0.1m improvement on income since FR3. Carbon neutral is £0.1m underspent due to recharging staff time to capital schemes, Regulatory Services is a £0.4m underspend, this is £0.3m due to vacancies and £0.1m income, a £0.2m improvement from FR3. Libraries is £0.1m underspent mainly from vacancies and there has been a £0.9m overspend on Leisure Commissioning. This is due to non-delivery of MTFS savings and represents a £0.5m worsening since FR3, due to delayed closure of sites and historic MTFS items. Other services: £0.4m overspend mainly in relation to the HSE fine.

**Economy and Growth favourable variance of £5.3m**

- 51 The Growth and Enterprise Directorate and Place Directorate are reporting an underspend of £5.3m against a budget of £28.2m. This is £1.5m improvement from FR3.
- 52 The key reasons for the underspend are as follows:
- 53 Facilities Management is underspent by £1.8m, a £0.1m improvement from FR3 due to vacancies. There have been savings against gas and electricity compared to higher budgeted costs of £2.3m and an underspend on Business rates of £0.3m due to revaluations and appeals. Vacancy management, savings in supplies and additional income have contributed to the underspend



by £0.7m. This has been offset by pressures against maintenance budgets of £0.6m; partial achievement of the office estate rationalisation savings target £0.3m, Disrepair claims which is a £0.3m pressure and Water and cleaning costs, a pressure of £0.2m.

- 54 Economic Development is £0.8m underspent, this is as a result of reduced cost of supplies £0.3m, increased income £0.3m and vacancy management £0.2m, this is a £0.2m improvement from FR3. The Housing outturn is £0.7m underspent, due to vacancies and some grant funding, this is a £0.1m improvement from FR3.
- 55 Tatton, Green infrastructure, Cultural Economy and Visitor Economy is £1m underspent, this is a £0.8m improvement from FR3 due to holding vacancies and increasing income.
- 56 The Assets service is underspent by £0.7m, £0.3m is due to vacancies, £0.3m from better income and £0.1m due to a reduction in maintenance spend. The £0.5m improvement from FR3 is mainly from additional income. Farms is underspent by £0.2 due to lower maintenance spend.

### **Highways and Transport favourable variance of £1.8m**

- 57 Transport & Infrastructure is reporting an underspend of £1.8m against a net budget of £16.2m. This is an improvement of £1.3m since FR3.
- 58 The key reasons for the underspend are:
  - Car Parking: £0.3m overspend, £0.4m vacancies are offset by reduced car park income £0.7m. This represents a £0.6m worsening since FR3 from reduced income.
  - Strategic Transport is a £1.2m underspend, largely due to vacancies, which represent a £1.1m improvement from FR3, there has also been a delay in new bus contracts taking effect.
  - An underspend of £0.8m across Ansa Transport commissioning, Infrastructure, Highways and Rail Transport Integration due to vacancies.

### **Finance Sub – Central items**

- 59 Finance Sub Committee are reporting a variance of £7.4m, key variances relate to:
  - Financing and Investment £1.1m net pressure reflecting £3.0m increased cost of interest payments on borrowing offset by £1.8m increased interest receipts from investments.
  - (£0.2m) additional Flexible Capital Receipts above £1m budgeted.
  - Reserves – transfers to / from of £10.6m (net) reflects the following:

- +£1m reduction in available Capital Financing Reserve at outturn compared to forecast balance reflected in the February 2024 MTFS.
  - (£3.8)m use of the General Fund reserve forecast to fund transformation activities in services in year.
  - +£3.5m Transfer to Reserve as reflected in the 2025/26 MTFS (Forecast Reserves) to fund Transformation delivery in 2025/26.
  - +£5.3m Transfer to Reserve – as noted in paragraph 69 below
  - +£2.1m Transfer to General Fund – as noted in paragraph 69 below
  - +£2.5m new Earmarked Reserves
- As reported in the MTFS 2025/26 approved in February 2025, following a balance sheet review by our Treasury Advisors, Arlingclose Ltd, the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy has been revised and amended with effect from 1 April 2024, bringing it in closer alignment with CIPFA Guidance. The effect of this change has reduced the MRP charge to Revenue in 2024/25 by £3.4m, the ongoing improvement has been reflected in the MTFS/Budget for 2025/26.
  - There is a further £1.88m positive variance as a result of in year balance sheet reviews against S106 balances/schemes and bad debt. The S106 Review identifying a one off contribution in year where work has been completed in prior years but has not been reflected in transferring money from S106 into the general fund, a reduction of £0.8m (£0.5m at FR3); £1.08m reduction in the bad debt provision following a review in year of the approach to Adult Social Care debts, further reviews are ongoing for Sundry Debts, the effects of which will be reflected in 2025/26 in year reporting.

### **Finance Sub – Exceptional Financial Support**

- 60 Use of (£17.6m) Exceptional Financial Support – as reported at FR3, the Council proposed to utilise the full £17.6m conditional EFS in 2024/25 to cover the in year adverse overspend in order to protect and minimise the use of reserves. The costs of accepting the EFS support will impact over the medium term. The financing of the use of EFS has been reflected in the MTFS/Budget for 2025/26 (see also para 27).

### **Companies**

- 61 The Council's wholly owned companies' core contract expenditure was £43.7m in 2024/25, relating to services provided at cost for the Council. This position includes £1.1m of additional costs in year, relating to pay award pressures, Household waste recycling closure costs; offset by £1.2m in savings( including a £0.7m rebate on the Core contract), due to a reduction in inflation compared to budget and reduced tonnages against waste contracts, improvement in the

recycling income, improvements against fuel spend, income, staffing vacancies, and other mitigations and efficiencies.

- 62 The net decrease in core contract costs is reflected in the Council's outturn position, mainly against Environment & Communities Committee services, with a net reduction against Highways & Transport Committee functions. The companies rebated £0.7m management fee back to the Council, related to core contract underspend, reflected in the Council's outturn position. In addition, in line with 2024/25 agreed policy proposals £1m of company reserves were returned to the Council as planned plus a further £0.5m agreed in year to assist with the Council's in year position. Both amounts have been reflected in the out-turn position.
- 63 Ansa and Orbitas realised £0.334m in profits (after tax) from commercial activities.

### **Delivery of the 2024/25 approved budget change items**

- 64 Table 6 presents a summary of the final progress on the delivery of the 2024/25 approved budget change items. For items rated as Amber these are for items where there are risks and/or mitigating actions in place. For items rated as red these are for items where services are reporting an adverse variance and there has been an in year non delivery/achievement. New mitigation items have also been included that have come forward since the approval of the MTFS to help the in-year position where identified.
- 65 The green and blue columns show that these budget change items are either delivered or even exceed in some cases. The table below summarises the final progress for the year by Committee.

**Table 6: Summary of the final progress on the delivery of the 2024/25 approved budget change items**

Committee	Approved Change Budget £m	Outturn £m	Completed £m	Green £m	Amber £m	Red £m	Mitigations £m
Adults & Health	+1.136	+18.707	-2.723	-10.955	-	+33.521	-1.136
Children & Families	+9.909	+13.375	+0.533	-1.001	+0.205	+15.431	-1.793
Corporate Policy	+0.489	-1.759	+0.193	-0.482	-	+1.581	-3.051
Economy & Growth	+3.316	-1.943	-0.061	+1.988	-0.836	+0.940	-3.974
Environment & Communities	-0.052	-1.587	+0.875	-2.012	-0.051	+2.397	-2.796

Finance Sub	-19.667	-12.277	-6.592	-22.583	+10.517	-	+6.381
Highways & Transport	+4.869	+3.084	+2.638	+0.707	+0.820	+0.351	-1.432
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>+17.600</b>	<b>-5.137</b>	<b>-34.338</b>	<b>-10.655</b>	<b>+54.221</b>	<b>-7.801</b>

- 66 A complete list of all approved budget change items, with final progress noted against each item, can be found in **Annex 1, Section 2**.

### Revenue Grants for Approval

- 67 Approvals for Supplementary Revenue Estimates for allocation of additional grant funding are detailed in **Annex 1, Section 3**.

### Reserves Position

- 68 On 1 April 2024, Earmarked Reserves totalled £32.278m and the General Fund Reserve Balance totalled £5.580m. Of the total earmarked reserves, £13.7m has been transferred to the General Fund and £7m has been utilised to support the revenue budget for 2024/25. The General Fund reserves have been partially used to fund Transformation Costs of £3.8m and a contribution has been made to the revenue budget spend in year of £11.7m.
- 69 Table 7 shows the forecast level of Earmarked and General reserves at the end of 2024/25. This includes the creation of two new reserves :
- an earmarked reserve to cover the one off costs of Transformation in 2025/26 and 2026/27 of **£5.3m** to help mitigate anticipated one off cost impacts of change.
  - a Transfer to General Fund Reserves - **£2.5m** to increase financial resilience into 2025/26 and future years.
- 70 At outturn, some £2m of Earmarked reserves planned to be spent in 2024/25 have not been fully spent in year and therefore an additional slipped number of Earmarked reserves are being taken forward into 2024/25. There is planned spend in place for these earmarked reserves 2025/26.
- 71 New Earmarked reserve requests of £2.520m have been approved to fund some specific one-off items in 2025/26.
- 72 The Council outturn position is reporting £23.322m of earmarked reserves at the end of the financial year (MTFS Feb 2025 forecast £11.5m), of this £3.2m is considered ring-fenced, with special conditions limiting its use. The £11.8m change from the February 2025 forecast mainly reflects additional service requests of £2.6m, cost of transformation (£5.3m) and £3.9m lower than forecast planned use of reserves in year.

**Table 7: General and Earmarked Reserves**

Committee Reserves	Opening Balance 01 April 2024 £000	Transfers to General Fund £000	Drawdowns in year £000	Carry Forwards £000	New Requests Approved £000	Closing Balance Forecast 31 March 2025 £000
Adults and Health	5,226	(2,857)	9	(9)	835	3,204
Children and Families	1,724	0	(1,724)	0	456	456
Corporate Policy & Central	20,772	(9,276)	(3,878)	(50)	9,714	17,282
Economy and Growth	2,777	(1,008)	(866)	173	320	1,396
Environment and Communities	870	(390)	(328)	330	0	482
Highways and Transport	908	(205)	(215)	14	0	502
<b>Earmarked Reserves Total</b>	<b>32,277</b>	<b>(13,736)</b>	<b>(7,002)</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>11,325</b>	<b>23,322</b>
General Fund Reserve	5,580	2,082	(3,966)	139	2,473	6,308
<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>37,857</b>	<b>(11,654)</b>	<b>(10,968)</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>13,798</b>	<b>29,630</b>

73 A full list of all earmarked reserves can be found in **Annex 1, Section 5**.

### Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve

- 74 The key pressure on DSG relates to the high needs block where the SEND service continues to see a significant increase in the number of pupils with an EHCPs, and the associated school placement costs.
- 75 This has placed pressure on the grant used to provide funding for children with SEND in various settings and led to a £31.7m deficit in 2023/24. This adds on to the brought forward deficit of £46.9m to take the DSG Reserve to a £78.6m deficit position at the end of 2023/24. This was an improvement on the budget gap as determined by the Council's DSG Management Plan that was reported to Children and Families Committee in April 2024 and set out the planned expenditure and income on high needs over the medium term. The gap has improved further during 2024/25 with an in-year deficit of £33.5m compared with £41.4m in the management plan. The overall deficit is £112.1m at the end of the year. Please note this includes an underspend on early years of £1.6m that is expected to be recouped in 2025/26.

**Table 8 Dedicated Schools Grant**

Dedicated Schools Grant Deficit	£m
Deficit Balance Brought forward	78.6
Additional In-year Pressures	33.5

Deficit Balance at 31 March 2025

112.1

**Debt**

- 76 Sundry debt includes all invoiced income due to the Council except for statutory taxes (Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates). The balance of outstanding debt at 31 March 2025 was £18.5m. This has increased by £1.6m since FR3 (end of November 2024).
- 77 Annually, the Council raises invoices with a total value of over £95m. Around 40% of the Council's overall sundry debt portfolio relates to charges for Adult Social Care, the remainder being spread across a range of functions including Highways, Property Services, Licensing and Building Control.
- 78 The Revenue Recovery team (using their experience gained in collecting Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates) engage with services to offer advice and assistance in all aspects of debt management, including facilitating access to debt collection services (currently provided by Bristow & Sutor).
- 79 The total amount of service debt over six months old is £11.9m; split as £10.5m of Adult Social Care debt and £1.4m of Sundry Debt. A provision of £6.1m was made at year ended 31 March 2025 to cover doubtful debt in the event that it needs to be written off. There has been an in year review of the Bad Debt provision which has to date focused on Adult Social Care debt. This has lead to a reduction in the provision of £0.7m in the current year. Further work is planned for a review of debt across other service areas in 2025/26.
- 80 The level of Adult Social Care debt can fluctuate depending on when in the month the snapshot is taken, for example if it is before or after the Direct Debit income is received and allocated. The debt also has different levels of risk depending on the type of debt. For example, around £3.5m is linked to deferred arrangements which is debt that is secured on property or assets, and therefore carries a low risk. There is also around £9.4m of debt which is deemed to be lower risk as its linked to areas such as probate, property sales or deputyship.
- 81 The Highways position for outstanding debt is consistent throughout the year. The debt is generally made up of three elements: the movement of funds from Cheshire West and Chester Council and Warrington Borough Council in relation to the Cheshire Road Safety Group (these are settled quickly); third party claims for damage to the highway; and permit fees. The third party claims are often paid in instalments.
- 82 The previous outturn positions are:
- 31 March 2025 Outstanding debt £2.2m, over 6 months old £0.6m.
  - 31 March 2024 Outstanding debt £1.6m, over 6 months old £0.7m



- 83 The Council has robust processes in place to ensure that all outstanding debt is chased up (where commercially viable) and, where necessary, payment plans are put in place with advice from Legal Services.

**Table 9 – Debt Summary as at 31 March 2025**

**DEBT SUMMARY as at 31st March 2025**

	Outstanding Debt £000			Over 6 months old £000		
	FR3	Outturn	Increase / (Decrease)	FR3	Outturn	Increase / (Decrease)
<b>Adults and Health Committee</b>						
Adults, Public Health and Communities	14,170	22,614	8,444	9,325	10,556	1,230
<b>Children and Families Committee</b>						
Children's Social Care (Incl. Directorate)	189	500	311	1	1	(0)
Prevention and Early Help	51	157	107	(8)	(8)	1
Schools	17	20	2	3	1	(2)
<b>Highways and Transport Committee</b>						
Highways and Infrastructure	1,305	2,160	855	755	626	(129)
<b>Economy and Growth Committee</b>						
Growth and Enterprise	621	2,010	1,390	420	375	(45)
<b>Environment and Communities Committee</b>						
Environment and Neighbourhood Services	377	522	146	214	243	29
<b>Corporate Policy Committee</b>						
Finance and Customer Services	126	367	241	67	86	19
Governance and Compliance	0	46	46	-	0	0
Human Resources	-	94	94	-	-	-
ICT	3	1,573	1,570	2	0	(2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,859</b>	<b>30,063</b>	<b>13,205</b>	<b>10,780</b>	<b>11,881</b>	<b>1,101</b>

## Council Tax and Business Rates

### Council Tax

- 84 **Table 10** details each precepting authorities share of the budgeted collectable rates income.

<b>Table 10 Share of Council Tax Collectable Rates</b>	<b>Band D Charge</b>	<b>Collectable Rates £m</b>
<b>Cheshire East Council</b>	<b>1,792.59</b>	<b>287.1</b>
Town and Parish Councils	71.57	11.5
Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner	262.94	42.1
Cheshire Fire Authority	90.09	14.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,217.19</b>	<b>355.1</b>

- 85 The collectable rates valuation is based on the assumption that of the total amount billed, at least 99% will be collected. Table 11 demonstrates that, excluding a slight reduction during the Covid-19 pandemic, the target to collect at least 99% of Council Tax within three years continues to be achieved.

<b>Table 11 Council Tax Collection Rates</b>	<b>2020/21 %</b>	<b>2021/22 %</b>	<b>2022/23 %</b>	<b>2023/24 %</b>	<b>2024/25 %</b>
After 1 year	97.4	97.8	98.2	98.0	*97.8

After 2 years	98.6	98.5	98.8	98.6	**
After 3 years	98.9	99.0	99.1	**	**

\*\* Data is not yet available.

- 86 After accounting adjustments, the Council Tax Collection Fund position at outturn was a £0.420m surplus for 2024/25, of which, £0.353m is attributable to Cheshire East Council. This is a £0.347m improvement to the declared surplus of £0.73m from January 2025 and will be held in the Collection Fund Adjustment Account until January 2026, when a revised declaration to take this final position into account can be made.

### Non-Domestic Rates (NDR)

- 87 Collectable rates are distributed between Cheshire East Council (49%), Cheshire Fire Authority (1%), and Central Government (50%).
- 88 Non-domestic Rates valuations for 2024/25 were set out in the NNDR1 return to Central Government in January 2024. Any variance to this forecast is included in the following years' NNDR1 return and any gain or loss will be recovered in 2025/26. The total Net Rates Payable into the Collection Fund was forecast at £155.7m.
- 89 **Table 12** demonstrates that the target to collect at least 99% of Non-Domestic Rates within three years continues to be achieved.

<b>Table 12 Non-Domestic Collection Rates</b>	<b>2020/21 %</b>	<b>2021/22 %</b>	<b>2022/23 %</b>	<b>2023/24 %</b>	<b>2024/25 %</b>
After 1 year	92.4	95.6	98.2	97.7	97.9
After 2 years	97.4	98.3	98.8	99.0	**
After 3 years	99.0	99.2	99.4	**	**

\*\* Data is not yet available.

- 90 After accounting adjustments, the Non-Domestic Rates Collection Fund is out-turning a final deficit of £2.288m for 2024/25, of which, £1.121m is attributable to Cheshire East Council. This deficit is £0.238m more than the declared deficit of £2.050m from January 2025 and will be held in the Collection Fund Adjustment Account until January 2026 when a revised declaration to take this final position into account can be made.

### Treasury Management Strategy update

- 91 Treasury Management income for 2024/25 is £3.3m which is higher than the budgeted £1.9m. However, borrowing costs are also higher than budgeted at £18.9m compared to budget of £16.1m. The net additional financing costs (borrowing less investment interest) is therefore £1.4m in excess of that budgeted.
- 92 Interest rates have seen substantial rises over the last 3 years which has significantly increased the cost of borrowing. Borrowing costs have begun



to fall and the expectation is that they will continue to fall although market uncertainty may impact on the timing of future reductions.

- 93 The cost of short-term borrowing from other local authorities has generally followed Base Rate over the year. However, liquidity in the market from October onwards caused rates to increase disproportionately compared to underlying Base Rates. The Council's application for Exceptional Financial Support also reduced the credit quality of the Council to some lenders which exacerbated the shortage of liquidity available. As a result some PWLB borrowing was undertaken with a mix of 1-2 year maturity loans and 2-3 year Equal Instalments of Principal (EIP) repayment loans. The average rate payable on these loans is 4.84%. This provides some surety of cost at lower rates than we could otherwise have achieved at the time and reduces over-reliance on short term borrowing. The relatively short period of these PWLB loans should provide opportunities to refinance at lower cost if rates fall in line with expectations.
- 94 The cost of short term borrowing in 2024/25 is 5.29% which is an increase from 4.82% in 2023/24. The average rate paid on all borrowing was 5.03%.

### **Investment Strategy**

- 95 There have not been any material changes to the Investment Strategy since that reported at in the MTFS for 2025/26 – 2028/29 in Feb 2025, see link [APPENDIX A MTFS 2025-26 to 2028-29 FINAL](#). Annex 1, Section 7 to this report includes updates to the Investment Strategy indicators for 2024/25 out-turn where available.

### **Consultation and Engagement**

- 96 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.
- 97 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**

- 98 The recommendations in this report support the 'Reporting' element of the financial cycle.

- 99 The overall process for managing the Council's resources focuses on value for money, good governance, and stewardship. The approach to these responsibilities is captured in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Financial changes take place during the year and are authorised in line with the Constitution. This report sets out where further approvals are required.
- 100 This report provides strong links between the Council's statutory reporting requirements and the in-year monitoring processes for financial and non-financial management of resources.
- 101 Outturn reporting provides an opportunity to check performance and management of risks against the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The four-year MTFS is approved by Council, but risks were identified as part of this process which will require access to reserves and exceptional financial support. Members had regard to such risks as the deficit in Dedicated School Grant reserves and potential liabilities associated with the Extra Care Housing PFI (Private Finance Initiative) Scheme when approving the budget.

### **Other Options Considered**

- 102 Outturn reporting could be delayed until post audit, to avoid the risk of provisional figures changing. This is not a recommended option as the audit completion certificate is not expected until February 2026. Delaying the reporting element of the financial cycle minimises the ability to react to issues during in-year monitoring. Provisional reporting has historically been accurate, so it is appropriate to react to the financial information provided in this report.
- 103 General Reserves are used to manage risk, in accordance with the Reserves Strategy. In the Planning cycle for the 2026/27 MTFS members will have to re-consider the robustness of all estimates and the overall adequacy of reserves based on up-to-date information and forecasts, which will include a review of the level of General Reserves.

### **Implications and Comments**

#### *Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance*

- 104 The Finance Sub-Committee has responsibility for oversight of the Council's budget and treasury management responsibilities and therefore the recommendations fall within its remit. Its approval of the supplementary estimates and virements follows the Budget and Policy Framework Rules and it is recommended that each committee also approves them.<sup>2</sup>

- 105 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. The purpose of this paper is to provide a progress report at the final outturn stage in 2024/25.
- 106 Other implications arising directly from this report relate to the internal processes of approving supplementary revenue estimates, supplementary capital estimates and virements referred to above which are governed by the Finance Procedure Rules.

#### *Section 151 Officer/Finance*

- 107 The Council's financial resources are agreed by Council and aligned to the achievement of stated outcomes for residents and communities. Monitoring and managing performance help to ensure that resources are used effectively, and that business planning and financial decision making are made in the right context.
- 108 The Council's Audit & Governance Committee is responsible for reviewing and analysing the Council's audited position at year-end. Final Group Accounts are due for approval by February 2026 following public scrutiny, external auditing, and any associated recommendations to the Committee.
- 109 The forecast outturn for 2024/25, as reported within the MTFS, was used to inform the budget setting process for 2025/26. Analysis of the final outturn helps to inform the Council of potential issues arising for the 2025/26 budget or highlights potential underlying issues that can be managed in future budget setting cycles.
- 110 At this stage further work is underway to identify whether the variations reported at outturn will form a significant risk to the 2025/26 budget.

#### *Human Resources*

- 111 This report is a backward look at Council activities at outturn and states the year end position. 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*

- 112 Financial risks are assessed and reported on a regular basis, and remedial action taken if required. Risks associated with the achievement of the 2024/25 budget and the level of general reserves were factored into the financial scenario, budget, and reserves strategy.

#### *Impact on other Committees*

- 113 All Committees will receive this Outturn report.

*Policy*

114 This report is a backward look at Council activities during the final quarter.

115 The final outturn position, ongoing considerations for future years, and the impact on general reserves will be fed into the assumptions underpinning the 2026-30 Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

*Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion*

116 Any equality 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.

*Consultation*

<b>Name of Consultee</b>	<b>Post held</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date returned</b>
Statutory Officer (or deputy):			
Adele Taylor	S151 Officer	12/05/2025	14/05/2025
Janet Witkowski	Acting Monitoring Officer	14/05/2025	22/05/2025
Other Consultees:			
Executive Directors/Directors:			
CLT		07/05/2025	

**Access to Information**

Contact Officer:	Adele Taylor, Interim Executive Director of Resources (s151 Officer) <a href="mailto:adele.taylor@cheshireeast.gov.uk">adele.taylor@cheshireeast.gov.uk</a> Sal Khan, Interim Head of Finance & Deputy Chief Finance Officer
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	<a href="mailto:sal.khan@cheshireeast.gov.uk">sal.khan@cheshireeast.gov.uk</a>
Appendices:	<b>Annex 1</b> – Final Outturn 2024/25 <b>Annex 2</b> – Grants Register <b>Annex 3</b> – Capital Programme
Background Papers:	<a href="#">Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-28</a> <a href="#">First Financial Review 2024/25</a> <a href="#">Second Financial Review 2024/25</a> <a href="#">Third Financial Review 2024/25</a>

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## ANNEX 1



# Outturn 2024/25

## Results to end of March 2025

# Contents

Section 1: 2024/25 Final Outturn ..... 3

Section 2: 2024/25 Approved Budget Change Items .....5

Section 3: Revenue Grants for approval and year end Register .....25

Section 4: Capital .....27

Section 5: Reserves .....37

Section 6: Treasury Management .....44

Section 7: Investment Strategy .....56



# Section 1: 2024/25 Final Outturn

- 1.1. Table 1 provides a service summary of financial performance. The final outturn position shows that services were £10.2m over budget 2024/25.
- 1.2. It also shows that central budgets were £7.4m above budget resulting in an overall outturn of £17.6m overspend against a net revenue budget of £364.5m.

<b>Table 1 Outturn 2024/25</b>	<b>Revised Budget (NET)</b>	<b>Outturn</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Forecast Variance FR3</b>	<b>Movement from FR3 to Outturn</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
<b>Service Committee</b>					
Adults and Health	137.1	154.7	17.6	20.0	(2.4)
Children and Families	92.6	96.1	3.5	5.4	(1.9)
Corporate Policy	44.2	41.9	(2.2)	2.5	(4.7)
Economy and Growth	27.9	22.7	(5.3)	(3.8)	(1.5)
Environment and Communities	47.8	46.3	(1.5)	(0.6)	(0.9)
Highways and Transport	16.2	14.4	(1.8)	(0.5)	(1.3)
<b>TOTAL SERVICE EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>365.8</b>	<b>376.0</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>(12.7)</b>
<b>Finance Sub:</b>					
Central Budgets	25.0	32.4	7.4	(4.6)	12.0
Funding	(390.8)	(390.8)	(0.0)	-	(0.0)
<b>TOTAL FINANCE SUB</b>	<b>(0.0)</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>18.3</b>	<b>(0.7)</b>
<b>Exceptional Financial Support</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(17.6)</b>	<b>(17.6)</b>	<b>(17.6)</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>(0.0)</b>	<b>(0.0)</b>	<b>(0.0)</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>(0.7)</b>

1.3. The outturn position reflects the following :

- Includes those savings that have been identified as non-achievable though the tracker on our High Level Business Cases (HLBC) with no/some alternative actions currently presented;
- A review of the on-going impacts of adverse variances identified in 2023/24;
- Any identified, emerging items of significance:
  - Within Adult Social Care, significant growth is forecast for care costs in line with position seen year to date, less mitigations linked to delivery of savings;
  - Includes the assumptions around additional revenue resources in Childrens Services to resource the draft improvement plan in relation to the recent OFSTED inspection;
- Impact of the confirmed increased 2024/25 pay award £1.6m (unfunded);

- Detailed review of any vacancy underspends in all areas;
- One-off items that have been identified so far through line by line reviews and/or identification of additional funding that has been announced since the MTFS was set.
- Mitigation activities delivered or forecast to be delivered by 31 March as reflected in paragraph 28 of the main covering report.
- Review of Section 106 legacy budgets, the effects of which are partly reflected in the FR3 forecast out-turn as a one off contributions to reserves work undertaken to date has identified an improvement (reduction) of the Council's bad debt provision of £1.0m,
- Changes to the MRP Policy following a Balance Sheet review through our Treasury Management advisors, Arlingclose Ltd, during 2024/25 reduced the in year charge to revenue by £3.4m.

1.4. Further items impacting on the level of the Council's balances are detailed in Section 5.

## Section 2: 2024/25 Approved Budget Change Items

The following table provides detailed commentary on the outturn against the approved budget change items that were agreed as part of the budget agreed in February 2024. These are split by relevant committee.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
	<b>Adults and Health Committee</b>	<b>+1.136</b>	<b>+18.707</b>	<b>+17.571</b>	
1	Fees and Charges	-1.800	-1.800	0	Green – see below
2	Client Contributions	-0.800	-6.122	-5.322	Green - £5.322m surplus vs client contribution in 2024/25. This is in addition to achieving the budgeted increase for Fees and Charges & Client Contribution increase in-year (£2.6m)
3	Working Age Adults - Prevent, Reduce, Delay	-1.467	-1.467	0	Green – Delivered
4	Older People – Prevent, Reduce, Delay	-1.566	-1.566	0	Green - Delivered
5	Market Sustainability and Workforce grant	-1.100	-1.100	0	Completed
6	Revenue grants for Adult Social Care	-2.480	-2.480	0	Completed
7	Pension Costs Adjustment	-0.493	-0.493	0	Completed
8	Investment in Adult Social Care	+7.600	+31.417	+23.817	Red – MTFS growth for Care Costs not sufficient to cover the pressure seen in 2023/24 plus the expected growth in 2024/25. Mitigations to reduce pressure reported separately.
9	Pay Inflation	+1.892	+2.104	+0.212	Red – Actual cost of NJC Pay increase in 2024/25 exceeded budget growth in the 2024/25 MTFS.
10	Resettlement Revenue Grants – reversal of 2023/24 use	+0.850*	+0.850*	0	Completed
11	Adult Social Care Transformation Earmarked Reserve Release – reversal of 2023/24 use	+0.500*	+0.500*	0	Completed
12	Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care – Removal of Grant Income	-	-	-	Completed - Now a 2025/26 Item
13	Asset Management	TBC	TBC	-	Green - The business case for future usage of the site will be revisited and taken through the appropriate CEC

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
					governance procedures. The model of care in relation to high-cost adult social care and health provisions will be part of this work.
14	Investigate potential agency creation	TBC	TBC	-	Green - This proposal has been consistently delivered in relation to the usage of a Care Workers agency in all but name. Care4CE, the Council's in house care provider, has been utilising workers, both casual and agency, as a bank of workers for several years to successfully deliver operational requirements.
In year	Other variances to reconcile to 2024/25 Outturn position	0	+1.688	+1.688	
In year	Mitigations reducing the Outturn reported position	0	-2.824	-2.824	

*\* Item represented a one-off spend in 2023/24. As it is not a permanent part of the budget, the value of the proposal is reversed in 2024/25.*

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets (some of the budget change items have been separated out since the publication of the MTFS)	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
	<b>Children and Families Committee</b>	<b>+9.909</b>	<b>+13.375</b>	<b>+3.466</b>	
15	Discretionary offer to children with disabilities	-0.900	-0.979	-0.079	Green - On Track, project team progressing multiple improvements to redesign the service offer, ensuring consistency and efficiency.
16	Remove school catering subsidy	-0.516	-0.282	+0.234	Red – Catering service ended on 31 March. A rate uplift applied from September 2024 in order to cover the costs of the service through to the end of March 2025. Some schools managed their own arrangements before the end of the financial year, impacting on the savings target.
17	Review of structure to further integrate children and families services	-1.000	-0.200	+0.800	Red - Delivery Planning in progress to address saving. Including: further Establishment review, service redesign, cross directorate risk management.
18	Reduce discretionary Post-16 Travel Support	-0.400	-0.367	+0.033	Red - Agreed by Committee
19	Achieve the Family Hub model	-0.250	-0.250	0	Green - Committee approved new model of delivery in Nov Committee. Savings are not going to be delivered in 2024/25 therefore alternative saving being found to cover this.
20a	Other Service Reviews – Review of commissioned services across the C&F directorate. Review of the current Domestic Abuse Service	-0.100	-0.100	0	Completed – Grant income.
20b	Other Service Reviews – Maximise grant allocation to cover all costs	-0.100	0	+0.100	Red - Plan to explore current / future grants to ensure where T&Cs allow, contribution to fund base costs (e.g. staffing and on costs) is maximised.
20c	Other Service Reviews – Traded services	-0.050	+0.010	+0.060	Red - Part delivered. One off savings in other service areas cover the remainder.
21a	Reduce Growth in expenditure – review of high cost, low outcome external residential placements	-1.000	-1.000	0	Red - Whilst work has been taking place to open CE Children's Homes and our first open is now open, with our second due in spring, our collaboration with Foster4 working well to increase our foster carers, we still are seeing more children coming into care. There is also increasing instability with the residential market, driving up prices. Complex young people need high packages of support, which are extremely expensive. We are due to review all

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets (some of the budget change items have been separated out since the publication of the MTFS)	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
					high cost placements and other placements to identify children for whom reunification to family would be appropriate. Processes are also in place by the Head of Provider Services to review costs being paid to providers. Merged overspend on ref. 30.
21b	Reduce Growth in expenditure – increase commissioning approach to establish greater opportunities to provide accommodation for +16 young people	-0.400	+1.561	+1.961	Red - 16+ and 18+ Commissioning Plans / Market Shaping in Progress. Responding to increasing demand and complexity.
21c	Reduce Growth in expenditure – Foster Care	-0.250	-0.250	0	Green - A Delivery Plan to increase Foster Care provision.
21d	Reduce Growth in expenditure – reduced spend on expert assessment in court proceedings and services post public law proceedings	-0.250	-0.527	-0.277	Green - Task & Finish Group put in place to explore and develop processes and capacity to reduce costly legal proceedings.
22	Pension Costs Adjustment	-0.515	-0.432	+0.083	Red - Teacher's pension legacy costs are not reducing as anticipated. Completed - CEC pension reduction.
23	Growth to deliver statutory Youth Justice service, and growth to ensure budget is sufficient to meet Safeguarding Partnership duties	+0.170	+0.205	+0.035	Amber - It is incumbent upon the three statutory safeguarding partners, the police, health and the Local Authority, to ensure that adequate funding is allocated to the Children's Safeguarding Partnership so it can fulfil its statutory functions in delivering the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. An internal audit identified the Local Authority had not reviewed its contributions to the partnership and was insufficiently contributing to the delivery of the partnership arrangements. As a result, growth was approved by committee. This has been supported by an increase in contributions from all partner agencies. A vacancy has also been held in the business unit.
24	Growth to provide capacity to deliver transformation for SEND	+0.500	+0.235	-0.265	Green.
25	Wraparound Childcare Programme (funded)	+0.587	+0.587	0	Amber - Currently reviewing sufficiency and funding details to manage delivery within budget.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets (some of the budget change items have been separated out since the publication of the MTFS)	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
25	Wraparound Childcare Programme (funded)	-0.587	-0.587	0	Amber - Currently reviewing sufficiency and funding details to manage delivery within budget.
26	Legal Proceeding - Child Protection	+0.770	+0.770	0	Green.
27	Growth in School Transport budget	+0.936	+1.359	+0.423	Red.
28	Pay Inflation	+1.374	+1.915	+0.541	Red - NJC Pay Claim now approved - over spend against budget as a result of £1,290/2.5% increase. Increase compared to flat percentage budget increase of 3% within original MTFS.
29	Use of Children & Families Transformation Reserve – reversal of 2023/24 use	+1.065*	+1.065*	0	Completed.
30	Growth in Childrens Placement costs	+10.825	+12.435	+1.610	Red - Closely monitored throughout the year to ensure that funding is sufficient to meet demand and complexity.
31	Revenue costs for the Crewe Youth Zone (as above) aligned to Supporting Families Funding	-	-	-	Green.
31	Early Help budget to support funding towards the Crewe Youth Zone	-	-	-	Green.
32	SEND Capital Modification	TBC	TBC	-	Amber - Contingent upon wider asset management and associated timelines. Extensive work underway to plan and progress development opportunities. Captured as part of the Capital Program reported to Committee.
33	Childrens Social Work Bank	TBC	TBC	-	Red - Various options currently being explored as part of wider C&F Establishment review and potential peripatetic resource options.
34	Safe Walking Routes to School	TBC	TBC	-	Green - Features as part of School Transport Programme.
35	Withdrawal of the CEC School Meals Service	TBC	TBC	-	Green - Features as part of School Catering subsidy project - CF2428-16.
In year	Outturn variance Education, Strong Start and Integration	0	-1.951	-1.951	Underspend relates to vacancy management, reduced spend, use of grants and income generation across services.
In year	Outturn variance Children and Families Directorate	0	+0.292	+0.292	Overspend relates to external Quality Assurance Agency costs and cost of establishment.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets (some of the budget change items have been separated out since the publication of the MTFS)	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
In year	Outturn variance Children's Social Care	0	+0.006	+0.006	Overspend relating to staffing costs offset by flexible capital receipts.
In year	Outturn variance Quality Assurance, Commissioning and Partnerships	0	-0.140	-0.140	Underspend relates to additional income.

*\* Item represented a one-off spend in 2023/24. As it is not a permanent part of the budget, the value of the proposal is reversed in 2024/25.*



MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets (some of the budget change items have been separated out since the publication of the MTFS)	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
	<b>Corporate Policy Committee</b>	<b>+0.489</b>	<b>-1.759</b>	<b>-2.248</b>	
36	Reduce leadership and management costs	-0.540	-	+0.540	Red - The feedback from the DMA review is that senior management vacancies will require recruitment to in order to complete the complement of Corporate Managers. In year vacancy savings will continue but will be time limited. There is potential to increase costs by additional management support during transformation. This will result in increased budget pressure. This pressure is being mitigated through the four in-year items at the end of this table. Most of those will be permanent and used to deliver this saving.
37	Close the Emergency Assistance Scheme	-0.220	-0.220	0	Completed
38	Reduce election costs and increase charges where possible	-0.150	-0.150	0	Green - The proposal is to make a payment during 2024/25 of £70k-£80k from the existing election account, as part of this one-off saving. The remainder will be delivered by reducing the sum which would normally be paid into the election reserve. This might be mitigated in the year of the next local elections by monies which will be raised by charging town and parish councils for their elections in 2027. However, this will not be sufficient and will be likely to lead to the need for a supplementary estimate.
39a	Accelerate Digital Transformation (ICT Operational efficiencies)	-0.100	-0.100	0	Green – third party costs have been reduced and there are plans to reduce further during the year.
39b	Accelerate Digital (Digital efficiencies)	-0.150	-0.150	0	Green – Removal of temporary budget for Solutions Architect Resource, now covered by an Earmarked Reserve.
40	Enforce prompt debt recovery and increase charges for costs	-0.150	-0.150	0	Completed - The award of costs is a matter for the Magistrates at each court hearing. However, only by exception will they vary from the level already agreed by us with the Court Manager. The approach to the Court Manager has been made and the revised level agreed. The action is therefore complete, but the financial benefits will accrue as we continue

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets (some of the budget change items have been separated out since the publication of the MTFS)	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
					the regular recovery process during the year.
41a	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – School Subsidy (ICT)	-0.032	-0.032	-0.000	Green. ICT will not be offering services to schools in the 2025/26 academic year.
41b	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – Organisational Development	-0.100	-0.100	0	Completed
41c	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – Registration Services	-0.050	-0.050	0	Green
41d	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – School Subsidy	-0.018	0	+0.018	Amber - Part of the £50k School Subsidy saving - Finance team to assist in identifying options. These are listed at the end of the table.
41e	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services	-0.010	0	+0.010	Amber - Finance team to assist in identifying options. These are listed at the end of the table.
41f	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – Printing	-0.050	0	+0.050	Amber - Finance team to assist in identifying options. These are listed at the end of the table.
41g	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – Hybrid working / mileage	-0.050	0	+0.050	Amber – Options being considered regarding reduced travel spend including ensuring efficient planning around meeting attendance and minimising unnecessary movements across the area. This maximises efficient use of time as well for teams.
42	Pension Costs Adjustment	-0.378	-0.378	0	Completed
43	Mitigation of reduction in the Dedicated Schools Grant	+0.136	+0.136	0	Completed
44	Pay Inflation	+1.446	+1.581	+0.135	Red - NJC Pay Claim now approved - over spend against budget as a result of £1,290/2.5% increase. Increase compared to flat percentage budget increase of 3% within original MTFS.
45	Legal Services Capacity	+0.455	+0.455	0	Completed
46	ICT Review 1	+0.450	+0.450	0	Completed - The move to Software as a Service has necessitated the transfer from Capital to Revenue budget requirements. The Shared Service continues to reduce third party costs and agency spend as per the Business case.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets (some of the budget change items have been separated out since the publication of the MTFS)	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
47	Workforce Strategy Review	TBC	-	-	Completed - There are no savings attributed to this area in 2024/2025. Opportunities to explore workforce options are being considered alongside transformation work. Any savings are likely to be realised in 2025/26 at the earliest. It is recommended that this item is removed from the list.
In year	Recognising the increased level of Registration service income of £350k.	0	-0.350	-0.350	This will be a permanent change to deliver the Red ranked items above.
In year	Recognising the receipt of £45k of Police and Crime Commissioner grant income.	0	-0.045	-0.045	This will be a permanent change to deliver the Red / Amber ranked items above.
In year	Taking the underspend on phones in corporate services (mobiles and rental) compared to budget.	0	-0.060	-0.060	This will be a permanent change to deliver the Red / Amber ranked items above.
In year	Adjustment required to balance to Outturn position of -£2,249k for corporate including ICT.	0	-2.496	-2.496	This figure is a mix of permanent and temporary items to assist the in-year position.
In-year	Reduce Members Allowances budget for excess budget relating to a pay award that was not taken	0	-0.100	-0.100	This will be a permanent change to deliver the Red / Amber ranked items above.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
	<b>Economy and Growth Committee</b>	<b>+3.316</b>	<b>-1.943</b>	<b>-5.259</b>	
49	Service Restructures within Place based Services	-0.787	-0.368	+0.419	Amber – achievement through permanent savings remains challenging without a full restructure. Mitigation is through offset of underspend 'in year' and proposals are to be considered to offset permanently.
50	Reduce opening hours for main offices	-0.050	-0.050	0	Completed
51	Office estate rationalisation	-0.550	-0.440	+0.110	Amber - due to the timeline for the transfer of buildings being extended. This item is being mitigated by in year savings and by the items at the end of the table which are a mix of permanent and temporary measures.
52	Tatton Park	-0.046	-0.046	0	Amber - Savings can be achieved through investment in the Tatton Vision Programme. To date this programme has achieved cumulative MTFS savings of £624k. Amber rating reflects the fact that the Tatton Vision capital programme was under review and so progress delayed.
53	Transfer of Congleton Visitor Information Centre	-0.020	-0.020	0	Green - Transfer of Congleton VIC to the Town Council has already occurred.
54	Pension costs adjustment	-0.157	-0.157	0	Completed
55	Tatton Park ticketing and electronic point of sale (EPOS) upgrade	+0.005	+0.005	0	Green - A procurement process is currently underway to source a supplier who can ensure onsite and web-based delivery of a new system which aligns with present and future needs. Improved functionality should enable future savings delivery.
56c	West Park collection	+0.012	+0.012	0	Green - Cost for vital conservation and storage of West Park Museum collections and ongoing temporary storage requirements.
56d	CEC archives	+0.008	0	-0.008	Amber - Timescales for implementation of the Archives capital project have slipped due to grant funding decisions, with revised opening date of Spring 2026.
57	Property Information and Management System - Estates – Revenue Adjustment	+0.030	+0.031	+0.001	Completed
58	Housing	+0.035	+0.035	0	Green - Consultation on the Housing Restructure commenced 22 May and

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
					includes the post that the funding is attributed to. The new structure was implemented on 1 August 2024.
59	Environmental Hub Waste Transfer Station	+0.040	+0.040	0	Green - Project on track delivery Q1/2. The replacement of bay 1 in the Councils Environmental Hub Residual Waste Transfer Station building with a new design more likely to provide long-term resilience to wear and tear, to enable the continuation of waste processing at the transfer station.
60	Rural and Visitor Economy	+0.045	+0.045	0	Green - Additional revenue support is required to cover the increase in electricity charges for the Rural and Culture Economy Service to maintain existing service provision at Tatton Park and Countryside sites.
61	Minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) - Estates - Revenue Adjustment	+0.079	+0.018	-0.061	Amber – Prioritised negotiations with 3rd parties/tenants occupying premises being expedited to avoid delays on obtaining access for surveys, completing necessary improvement works and legally completing lease renewals.
62	Public Rights of Way Income Realignment	+0.115	+0.115	0	Completed. Adjustments made to budget forecasts 2024/25
63	Pay inflation	+0.788	+0.940	+0.152	Red - NJC Pay Claim now approved - over spend against budget as a result of £1,290/2.5% increase. Increase compared to flat percentage budget increase of 3% within original MTFS. This item is being mitigated by the items at the end of the table which are a mix of permanent and temporary measures.
64	Crewe town centre maintenance and operation	+0.650	+0.579	-0.071	Green – Delays in completing some projects in 2024-25. Expenditure is expected in 2025-26
65	Assets - Buildings and Operational	+3.119	+1.292	-1.827	Green - Growth for Energy was not fully utilised as it was calculated when energy markets prices were incredibly high, together with significant increased inflation– the market has subdued since then and prices have stabilised, this has been adjusted for in 25/26. There were also some credits received in year due to over performance on Energy contracts. Business rates remain a challenge to predict due to revaluation, appeals and complex transitional relief calculations, this along with some one-off rebates meant there was an underspend in this area.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
					The growth increase provided for revenue maintenance has enabled existing budgets to offset the inflation factors that were applied to the contract prices, and this was fully utilised with a pressure at yearend
66	Landfill Site Assessments revenue adjustment - Estates – CE Owned Landfill sites (53 sites) Review and Risk Assessment completions	-	-	-	Amber - £10k cost growth in for 25/26. Second stage of the review to commence shortly. Internal capacity within Environmental Services to be identified.
67	Tatton Park Estate Dwellings Refurbishment	-	-	-	Completed - Provision for response maintenance issues for 8 onsite dwellings to ensure properties meet standards required as part of tenancy agreements and the National Trust lease.
68	Improving Crewe Rented Housing Standards	-	-	-	Green
In year	Growth & Enterprise 2024/25 mitigations to balance back to outturn position	0	-3.305	-3.305	
In year	Place Directorate 2024/25 mitigations to balance back to outturn position	0	-0.669	-0.669	

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
	<b>Environment and Communities Committee</b>	<b>-0.052</b>	<b>-1.587</b>	<b>-1.535</b>	
69	Refresh wholly owned company overheads and contributions	-1.000	-1.500	-0.500	Green - ASDV Review recommendations have now been approved in full by Finance Sub-Committee in their role as shareholder of the wholly owned companies. The process of insourcing these services is largely completed which has released the reserves in year to meet this one-off contribution.
70	Strategic Leisure Review (Stage 2)	-1.305	-0.526	+0.779	Amber - Initial savings secured via committee decision on 11th March 2024. Proposals are being developed with EHL and town and parish councils to secure the residual £250k amount (£56k of this achieved through removal of car park refunds) - dialogue is ongoing. Delays to disposing of Middlewich and Holmes Chapel Leisure Centres in year are having a negative impact on savings position. Covid insurance contribution from EHL not secured.
71	Mitigate the impact of contract inflation and tonnage growth	-0.490	-0.490	0	Completed - Mitigate the impact of contract inflation and tonnage growth.
72	Emergency reduction of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) to four core sites	-0.263	-0.200	+0.063	Amber - Full saving on basis of original HLBC was not achieved due to introduction of mobile provision offer as a result of Full Council decision and costs associated with trial of booking system.
73	Libraries Strategy	-0.365	-0.138	+0.227	Green - Committee approval to implement final Strategy secured on 27th November, revised opening hours at Tier 3 sites went live from January 2025 and Tier 2 sites as of 1st April 2025. Staffing levels yet to be reduced with staff consultations due to be launched in 2025-26 relating to restructure of service. Engagement with Town and Parish Councils undertaken to shape the Strategy proposals and seek funding contributions, due to a delay with legal agreements only Bollington was secured for 2024-25. Progress has been made with preparing legal agreements for 2025-26. As part of funding libraries in a



MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
					different way, libraries have increased income from meeting room hire and fees/charges
74	Reduce costs of street cleansing operations	-0.200	-0.200	0	Green - Value of saving now reduced from ANSA Management Fee for 2024/25, fully achieved in 24-25 due to removal of any vacancies and under-utilised fleet.
75	Reduce revenue impact of carbon reduction capital schemes	-0.336	0	+0.336	Amber – Carbon Neutral Council target deferred from 2025 to 27, as agreed at Full Council on 27.02.24, large scale prudential borrowing funded schemes spend now reprofiled to suit, however budget not sat within E&C Committee. Discussion with Corporate Financing team to re-allocate. This item is being partly mitigated by the item at the end of the table which is a mix of permanent and temporary measures.
76	Increase Garden Waste charges to recover costs	-0.045	-0.045	0	Green – Increase Garden Waste charges for the calendar year 2025 to recover costs
77	MTFS 80 (Feb 23) – Waste Disposal – Contract Inflation and Tonnage Growth (updated forecast)	+3.577	+3.577	0	Green – rating due to fluctuations in waste markets relating to recyclates and continued levels of inflation, outside CEC control and not aligned to projections. Outturn 24-25 witnessed a reduction in inflationary costs and an improved basket of goods rate that fully mitigated the pressure identified mid-year.
78	Pay Inflation – CEC & ASDV	+1.861	+2.397	+0.536	Red - NJC Pay Claim now approved - over spend against budget as a result of £1,290/2.5% increase. Increase compared to flat percentage budget increase of 3% within original MTFS. This item is being partly mitigated by the item at the end of the table which is a mix of permanent and temporary measures.
79	Pension Costs Adjustment	-0.151	-0.151	0	Completed
80	MTFS 90 (Feb 23) Strategic Leisure Review	+1.250	+1.250	0	Completed - Growth item budget adjustment only - replacing 2023/24 £1.3m savings target.
81	MTFS 91 (Feb 23) – Green Spaces Maintenance Review	-0.200	-0.200	0	Green - Year 2 saving - Policy now implemented and full saving secured from ANSA contract.
82	MTFS 92 (Feb 23) - Review Waste Collection Service - Green Waste	-3.150	-3.150	0	Green - Subscription levels in line with original business model.



MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
83	Review MTFS 92 (Feb 23) Garden waste subscription financial model in line with latest subscription levels and with actual observed position on any waste migration	-0.429	-0.429	0	Green – 24-25 outturn fully achieved the MTFS target, there will need to be continued monitoring of subscription levels and any adverse impacts is already in place in 25-26.
84	MTFS 93 (Feb 23) Libraries - Service Review	-0.200	-0.200	0	Amber - Year 2 of Service Review - reduction in staffing levels have been implemented and now include vacancy management in year to ensure achievement of saving. Currently covered temporarily by vacancy savings
85	Explore a Trust delivery model for Libraries and other services	+0.150	+0.003	-0.147	Green - Growth item to cover one off costs relating to implementation of alternative delivery model(s) for libraries service. Aligned to development of Libraries Strategy.
86	CCTV – Service Efficiencies	-0.030	-0.030	0	Green – Ongoing actions to increase customer base for existing services, identification of new chargeable services/customers and service efficiency savings as well as increased fees and charges to meet the target.
87	Congleton Town Council Collaboration Agreement – Grounds Maintenance	-0.062	-0.062	0	Completed - Congleton Town Council Collaboration Agreement on Grounds Maintenance Cheshire East Contribution reduced in line with reductions in Cheshire East Maintained green space.
88	Closed Cemeteries	+0.005	+0.005	0	Completed - Inflationary adjustment to previous budget allocation only.
89	Environmental Hub maintenance	+0.023	+0.023	0	Completed - Inflationary adjustment to previous budget allocation only.
90	Review Closed Landfill Sites	+0.300*	+0.300*	0	Completed - The Council has responsibility for a number of closed landfill sites across the borough for which it holds a provision.
91	Land Charge Income Adjustment	+0.050	+0.067	+0.017	Amber - Uncertainty around implementation timescales of HMLR changes to centralise some aspects of land charges functions hence understanding of actual impact, to be regularly monitored.
92	Building Control Income Alignment	+0.203	+0.286	+0.083	Amber - Due to current national trend of downturn in planning and related building control income. To be monitored through more regular financial forecasting in service. Reforms to national planning policy recently consulted upon may have a positive impact on this position moving forward due to uplift in both volume and pace of developments coming forward. To be

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
					considered in due course following Govt announcement.
93	Local Plan Review	+0.255	0	-0.255	Amber - Reprofiled budget adjustment to provide additional funding towards development of new Local Plan
94	Planning income	+0.400	+0.522	+0.122	Amber – Forecast reduced income in year due to current national trend of downturn in planning applications and hence income. Proactively monitored through regular financial forecasting in service. Partially mitigated by continued high level of vacancies and the item at the end of the table. Recent national planning policy forms announced by Govt which were recently subject to a consultation process may help to alleviate the income position, but will require vacancies to be filled to cater for the likely increase in applications. To be considered as and when further announcement made.
95	Planning Service Restructure	-	-	-	Green - No action for 2024/25. Growth for 2025/26 to be kept under review.
96	Review of Household Waste Recycling Centres	+0.100	+0.100	0	Green – completed on time following decision at Environment and Communities Committee on 26 September 2024 to proceed with preferred option and finalisation of new operating contract procurement process.
In year	Environment & Neighbourhood Services mitigations 2024/25 to balance back to outturn position	0	-2.796	-2.796	

\* Item represented a one-off saving in 2023/24. As it is not a permanent part of the budget, the value of the proposal is reversed in 2024/25.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
	<b>Highways and Transport Committee</b>	<b>+4.869</b>	<b>+3.084</b>	<b>-1.785</b>	
97	Highway maintenance savings	-0.750	-0.750	0	Green - Savings are being achieved through: - reducing the number of cuts on grass verges from 10 to 8; - directly employing staff to carry out surveys, rather than sub-contracting; - reductions in staffing and vacancy management; and - reliance on the Council's adverse weather reserve for snow clearance. Service budgets have been reduced to reflect the savings being made.
98	Introduce annual increases to car parking charges	-0.150	-0.150	0	Green - Annual inflation adjustment to existing P&D tariffs can be implemented by 1st July 2024, in advance of bringing charges into effect in the "free towns". This is 3 months earlier than planned.
99	Pension Costs Adjustment	-0.052	-0.052	0	Completed
100	Highways	-0.031	-0.031	0	Completed - This saving was delivered by changes to response times to defects in 2023/24.
101	Safe Haven outside schools (Parking)	-0.023	0	0.023	Red - Introduction of CCTV camera enforcement of waiting/loading restrictions at school gates on a trial basis using bespoke equipment that is type approved and proven for these purposes in order to improve road safety and increase enforcement capacity at these high risk locations.
102	Transport and Infrastructure Strategy Team - Restructure	+0.120	0	-0.120	Amber - Vacancies in existing structure provide some flexibilities of resourcing. Business case for a recruitment plan has been developed setting out the opportunity to reduce costs of outsourcing / agency staffing. This will be taken forward in 2025/26.
103	Pay Inflation	+0.339	+0.351	+0.012	Red - NJC Pay Claim now approved - over spend against budget as a result of £1,290/2.5% increase. Increase compared to flat percentage budget increase of 3% within original MTFS. This item is being mitigated by the item at the end of the table which is a mix of permanent and temporary measures.
104	Parking - PDA / Back Office System contract	+0.100	+0.048	-0.052	Green - Market testing completed - exploring a direct award opportunity with implementation testing and data migration. System to be implemented in 2025-26
105	Flood and Water Management Act 2010	+0.100	+0.100	0	Green - The requirement is to be ready to implement changes when regulations are implemented nationally.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
	SuDS & SABs Schedule 3 Implementation				A training plan for existing staff has been identified. Recruitment is to be progressed.
106	Energy saving measures from streetlights	+0.242	+0.242	0	Completed - This entry was in the MTFS to cancel an unachievable saving from 2022/23. There is no further action.
107	Parking	+0.245	+0.820	+0.575	Amber - Following decisions in January 2024, tariffs were uplifted on 1 July 2024 and extend pay and display to car parks in "free towns" from the start of December. Statutory consultations on Sunday and Evening charges have been completed to inform implementation in 2025-26. A trial of demand-responsive tariffs began with the opening of the new multistorey car park in Crewe.
108	Highways Revenue Services	+2.479	+2.479	0	Completed - This is a growth item. The growth has been factored into 2024/25 service levels and business plans. No further action.
109	Local Bus	+2.250	+1.459	-0.791	Green – network of new contracts was successfully tendered and began operating on 30 March 2025.
110	FlexiLink Service Improvement Plan	-	-	-	Green - A bus service review is underway, including proposals relating to flexible transport. Committee received a report updating on the outcomes of the consultation and the approach to procurement on 19 September 2024. The review of flexible transport will consider its role in filling gaps in local bus service provision, especially in rural areas, as well as options to extend hours of operation, open up the service to more users and introduce fares to make a contribution to operating costs.
111	Highways Depot Improvements	-	-	-	Red - This later year saving is subject to the approval of the business case for capital investment in depots. This will be reviewed during 2024/25.
112	Bus Stop Advertising Revenue Generation	-	-	-	Amber - Opportunity to shadow CWAC council's extension of the existing contract in the interim period. Intention to link this to wider on street advertising project in the transformation project.
In year	Highways & Infrastructure 2024/25 mitigations to balance to outturn position	0	-1.432	-1.432	

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Central Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
	<b>Finance Sub-Committee</b>	<b>-19.667</b>	<b>-12.277</b>	<b>+7.390</b>	
113	Capital Financing Budget	+9.508	+10.517	+1.009	Amber – assumes use of available capital financing reserve of £2.135m compared to budget.
114	Central Bad Debt Provision adjustment	+0.600	+0.600	0	Completed - budget adjustment.
115	Use of Earmarked Reserves – MTFS Reserve	+0.255	+0.255	0	Completed - budget adjustment / planned use of reserve.
115	MTFS Reserve – reversal of 2023/24 use	+1.536	+1.536	0	Completed - budget adjustment / planned use of reserve.
116	Collection Fund Reserve - Use of Earmarked Reserves	-0.834	-0.834	0	Completed - budget adjustment / planned use of reserve.
116	Collection Fund Reserve – reversal of 2023/24 use of reserves	+2.234	+2.234	0	Completed - budget adjustment / planned use of reserve.
117	Brighter Futures Transformation – reversal of 2023/24 use of reserves	+1.271	+1.271	0	Completed - budget adjustment / planned use of reserve.
118	Use of General Reserves – Fund in-year budget shortfall [NEW]	-11.654	-11.654	0	Completed - Drawn down in line with the MTFS forecast.
Amber 119	Council Tax - % increase	-13.527	-13.527	0	Green - Council tax and business rates income collection managed through the Collection Fund therefore no impact on current year funding target.
120	Council Tax – Base increase	-2.461	-2.461	0	Green - Council tax and business rates income collection managed through the Collection Fund therefore no impact on current year funding target.
121	Business Rates Retention Scheme – use of S31 compensation grants	-1.350	-1.350	0	Green - Grants received in line with final settlement from MHCLG.
122	Unring-fenced Grants + Revenue Support Grant	-5.245	-5.245	0	Green - Grants received in line with final settlement from MHCLG.
123	Council Tax and Business Rates Collection [NEW]	TBC	-	-	Initial case was to implement a working group to review council tax collection. No savings value was assigned to the case. The intention now is to bring forward via an informal briefing to include options around the council tax support scheme review (FS2428)

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Central Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
124	Council Tax Support [NEW]	TBC	-	-	No change to Council Tax support scheme for 2024/25 or 2025/26. To be reviewed for 2026/27.
In year	Bad Debt Provision reduction (one off)	-	-1.081	-1.081	New bad debt policy has been adopted by Adults Social Care.
In year	S106 Review (one off)	-	-0.574	-0.574	S106 Review identifying a one off contribution in year where work has been completed in prior years but has not been reflected in transferring money from S106 into the general fund
In year	Increased use of reserves re Transformation spend included in Service position	-	-3.827	-3.827	Use of reserves to fund essential expenditure to progress the Transformation programme in 2024/25
In year	Creation of new Transformation Reserve as set out in the 2025/26 MTFS	-	3.500	3.500	Creation of a reserve as reflected in the 2025/26 MTFS to fund Transformation delivery in 2025/26.
In year	Creation of new Change and Improvement reserve	-	5.300	5.300	New reserve created to cover one off costs of change and improvement activity in 2025/26 and 2026/27.
In year	Review of MRP accounting policy wef 1.4.2024	-	-3.411	-3.411	New MRP Accounting Policy adopted with effect from 1 April 2024 and as approved in the 2025/26 MTFS (Feb25)
In year	Creation of new earmarked service reserves	-	2.525	2.525	Additional reserves to fund one off expenditure in 2025/26 which is not included in service base budgets.
In year	Transfer to General Fund Reserve	-	2.473	2.473	Additional transfer to reserves to increase the Council financial sustainability in future years.
In year	Financing and Investment Interest	-	1.100	1.100	Pressure reflecting increased cost of interest payments on borrowing offset by interest receipts from investments
In year	Other in year variances to budget	-	0.376	0.376	

## Section 3: Revenue Grants for approval and year end Register

- 3.1. Cheshire East Council receives two main types of Government grants; specific purpose grants and general use grants. Specific purpose grants are held within the relevant service with a corresponding expenditure budget. Whereas general use grants are held in central budgets with a corresponding expenditure budget within the allocated service area.
- 3.2. Spending in relation to specific purpose grants must be in line with the purpose for which it is provided.
- 3.3. **Table 1** shows additional specific purpose grant allocations that have been received over £1m that **Council** will be asked to approve.
- 3.4. **Table 2** shows additional specific purpose grant allocations that have been received which are over £500,000 and up to £1m and are for **Committee** approval.

**Table 1 – Council Decision**

## 3.5. Supplementary Revenue Estimate Requests for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding (Specific Purpose) over £1,000,000

Committee	Type of Grant	£000	Details
Children & Families: Schools	Core Schools Budget Grant (CSBG)	2,502	This grant is from the Education and Skills Funding Agency and is to support schools with their overall costs in the 2024 to 2025 financial year, in particular following confirmation of the 2024 teacher pay award.
Corporate Policy	Housing Benefit Subsidy	2,231	This grant is from the Department for Work and Pensions. Payment of claims administration within Housing Benefits.

**Table 2 – Committee Decision**

## 3.6. Supplementary Revenue Estimate Requests for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding (Specific Purpose) over £500,000 up to £1,000,000

Committee	Type of Grant	£000	Details
Adults & Health	Homes for Ukraine Scheme	755	This grant is from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to provide support to families to rebuild their lives and fully integrate into communities.
Children and Families	Staying Close (Specific Purpose 2025/26)	602	This grant is to support the Staying Close programme, to improve outcomes for young people leaving care who do not have that continued support as they transition into independence.

3.7. **Annex 2** contains the full Grants Register for 2024/25 comparing the MTFS budgeted levels to the final outturn for every grant received.



# Section 4: Capital

**Table 1: Financial Parameters for 2024/25 to 2027/28**

Parameter	Value (£m)			
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
<b>Repayment of Borrowing</b>				
<b>Minimum Revenue Provision*</b>	15.3	18.5	22.7	24.8
<b>External Loan Interest</b>	19.4	17.9	18.9	20.9
<b>Investment Income</b>	(4.3)	(4.1)	(2.7)	(2.7)
<b>Contributions from Services Revenue Budgets</b>	(0.9)	(1.3)	(2.3)	(2.5)
<b>Total Capital Financing Costs</b>	<b>29.4</b>	<b>30.5</b>	<b>36.1</b>	<b>39.8</b>
<b>Actual CFB in MTFS</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>35.0</b>	<b>38.8</b>	<b>41.9</b>
<b>Budget underspend /(overspend)</b>	<b>(0.9)</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>2.1</b>
<b>Capital Receipts targets*</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>Flexible use of Capital Receipts</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>

\*Anticipated MRP based on achieving capital receipts targets

- 4.1. The revised programme is funded from both direct income (grants, external contributions) and the Council's own resources (prudential borrowing, revenue contributions, capital reserve). A funding summary is shown in **Table 2**. For detailed tables by Committee please see **Annex 3**.
- 4.2. **Table 3** lists details of Delegated decisions up to £500,000 for noting.
- 4.3. Table 4 lists Capital Supplementary Estimates over £500,000 and up to £1,000,000 for committee approval and Capital Virements over £500,000 and up to and including £5,000,000 that require Relevant Member(s) of CLT and Chief Finance Officer in consultation with Chair of the relevant Committee and the Chair of Finance Sub-Committee to approve.
- 4.4. **Table 5** lists details of Capital Supplementary Estimates over £1,000,000 that requires Committee to make a recommendation to Council to approve.
- 4.5. **Table 6** lists details of reductions in Approved Budgets where schemes are completed and surpluses can now be removed. These are for noting purposes only.

Table 2: Capital Programme Update

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL CAPITAL PROGRAMME SUMMARY					
CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28					
	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast 2025/26 £000	Forecast 2026/27 £000	Forecast 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast 2024-28 £000
<b>Committed Schemes - In Progress</b>					
Adults and Health	280	468	0	0	748
Children and Families	9,513	46,283	16,356	17,749	89,901
Highways & Transport	40,647	44,009	27,653	119,831	232,140
Economy & Growth	23,110	51,882	29,539	78,575	183,106
Environment & Communities	4,262	13,929	1,034	15,301	34,526
Corporate Policy	5,465	10,125	1,173	0	16,763
<b>Total Committed Schemes - In Progress</b>	<b>83,277</b>	<b>166,696</b>	<b>75,755</b>	<b>231,456</b>	<b>557,184</b>
CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28					
	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast 2025/26 £000	Forecast 2026/27 £000	Forecast 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast 2024-28 £000
<b>New Schemes in 2024-25</b>					
Children and Families	209	9,848	5,248	3,000	18,305
Highways & Transport	570	22,617	15,051	15,051	53,289
Economy & Growth	2,613	4,652	3,366	3,187	13,818
Environment & Communities	1,653	4,677	1,150	0	7,480
<b>Total New Schemes</b>	<b>5,045</b>	<b>41,794</b>	<b>24,815</b>	<b>21,238</b>	<b>92,892</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>88,322</b>	<b>208,490</b>	<b>100,570</b>	<b>252,694</b>	<b>650,076</b>
Funding Requirement					
<b>Indicative Funding Analysis:</b>					
Government Grants	49,791	129,470	75,248	119,235	373,745
External Contributions	4,002	19,742	13,121	68,619	105,483
Revenue Contributions	901	1,290	0	0	2,191
Capital Receipts	0	1,210	1,324	33,381	35,915
Prudential Borrowing (See note 1)	33,629	56,776	10,876	31,460	132,742
<b>Total</b>	<b>88,322</b>	<b>208,490</b>	<b>100,570</b>	<b>252,694</b>	<b>650,076</b>

**Note 1:**

Appropriate charges to the revenue budget will only commence in the year following the completion of the associated capital asset. This allows the Council to constantly review the most cost effective way of funding capital expenditure.

**Table 3: Delegated Decisions – lists details of Delegated decisions up to £500,000 for noting**

Committee / Capital Scheme	Amount Requested £	Reason and Funding Source
Supplementary Capital Estimates that have been made up to £500,000		
Children and Families		
Family Hubs Transformation	115,115	Transfer of Family Hubs Revenue grant to capital project.
Economy & Growth		
Housing Strategy		
Disabled Facilities Grant	342,795	To uplift to match the budget allocation to the grant received.
	231,842	To include income received from external parties
Home Repairs Vulnerable People	17,131	To include income received from external parties
Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2	6,361	To include income received from external parties
Culture & Tourism		
Cattle Handling Facility - Oakwood Farm	37,694	To increase the budget to cover additional expenditure, funded by Revenue Contribution
Wilmslow Dobbin Brook Informal Footpath s106	89,000	Supplementary Capital Estimates approved in quarter
Alsager Footpath No.10 s106	23,140	
Infrastructure		
Spath Lane, Handforth	14,364	To increase the budget to cover additional expenditure, funded by S106 Contribution
Marsh Lane, Holmes Chap Bus St	38	
Coppenhall East, Remer Street, Crewe (11/1643N).	102,351	Supplementary Capital Estimates approved in quarter
Linley Lane/B5077 Junction & Footway improvements	150,000	
Wheelock St, Middlewich S106 ref 686A	11,282	
Holmes Chapel Road, Middlewich S106 Ref 448	20,859	
London Road. Nantwich S106 457D	117,617	
Old Newcastle Rd, - s106 ref 369B	20,099	
Bank Corner Junction, Alsager	76,715	
Main Road, Weston	281,663	
Davenport Arms	21,551	
Highways & Transport		
Jack Mills Way Part 1 Claims	6,763	To align the budget with expected contributions from Network Rail
Active Travel Fund - Tranche 5	239,282	Additional Active Travel funding from Department for Transport
BSIP Phase 3 funding	250,000	Additional Bus Service Improvement Plan funding from Department for Transport
Total Supplementary Capital Estimates Requested	1,686,379	
£		
Capital Budget Virements that have been made up to £500,000		
Children & Families		
Early Years sufficiency capital fund	155	Virement to Family Hubs Transformation
Education and 14-19 Skills		
Macclesfield Planning Area secondary	5,560	Transfer of remaining budget to Tyherington High school project
Brine Leas High School	8,271	
Shavington Planning Area - Secondary	15,776	Virements from Basic need on project closure
Congleton Planning Area	1,993	
Holmes Chapel Secondary School	5,191	Virements to Basic Need on project closure
Sandbach Boys School	1,979	
School Condition Grant	107,350	Virements to School Condition Allocation from remaining budgets on various closed school managed schemes
SCG - Condition Assessments 2021-22	14,269	Virements to individual schemes from School Condition Allocation on closure
Edleston Primary School - Condition Project	390	
Styal Primary School - Condition Project	223	
High Needs	32,396	Virement to High Needs from budget remaining on various closoed schemes
Leighton SEND Reception Adaptations	25,629	Virements to schemes from High Needs
Provision of SEN Unit - Wistaston Primary School	17,347	

Economy & Growth		
Future High Street Funding - CEC Innovation Centre	278,000	Future High Street grant funding realigned from Sustainable Energy Network to cover TADIC's energy improvement measures.
Macclesfield Indoor Market Refurbishment (MIMR)	98,285	Virement from Facilities Management Premises Capital Programme to contribute to the full cost of the project.
Macclesfield Indoor Market Toilet Refurbishment	5	
Strategic Housing		
Home Repairs Vulnerable People	458,000	At Economy & Growth Committee on 12/11/24 a virement for £458,000 was approved from the Green Homes Grant to Home Repairs for Vulnerable People in the capital programme.
Infrastructure		
Future High Street Funding - Southern Gateway	76,934	To vire Future High Street Fund from Flag Lane Link To utilise Future High Street Funding originally allocated to Delamere Street and Chester Street (Housing projects) which did not progress and were abandoned.
	8,331	
Crewe Green Link Road Ph2	6,097	Payment of residual invoices relating to Crewe Green Link Road funded by S106 which was originally earmarked for David Whitby Way.
Environment & Communities		
Environment Services		
Green Investment schemes (Solar Farm)	200,000	Transfer of funds from Carbon Nuetral 2030 Investments (Previousl Solar Energy)
Highways & Transport		
A532 Safer Road Fund Scheme	243,000	Prudential Borrowing funding element vired from A537 to cover revised forecast expenditure.
Sustainable Travel (Active Travel) - Boulderstone Bridge	7,633	There has been a fine adjustment to the agreed contribution to Network Rail, which now stands at £379,190.35. Transfer from Client Contract and asset Management
Hollinswood Rd/Redhouse Ln	42,603	Department for Transport grant reallocated from the Client Contract and asset Management project to cover expenditure in 2024-25
Traffic Signs and Bollards - LED Replacement	8592.37	
Footpath Maintenance - Slurry Sealing & Reconstruction Works	3676.85	Reallocated funding within the STEPS Programme to cover 2024-25 expenditure
Hurdsfield Road/Black Lane junction, Macclesfield Cycleway (S Bollin Valley / Greater Bollin Trail	70,252	
	13,833	
Manchester Road, Wilmslow – Northern	100,000	£325,000 virement from STEPS - Active Travel to provide additional budget.
Southern Gateway	100,000	
Ayrshire Way/Park Lane, Congleton	125,000	
Facilities Management		
PSDS - 3C	223,000	Virement from Premises Capital, match funding for grant
Total Capital Budget Virements Approved	2,299,773	
Total Supplementary Capital Estimates and Virements	3,986,153	

**Table 4: Requests for Supplementary Capital Estimates (SCEs)**

Committee / Capital Scheme	Amount Requested £	Reason and Funding Source
<b>Service Committee are asked to approve the Supplementary Capital Estimates above £500,000 up to and including £1,000,000</b>		
<b>Education and 14-19 Skills</b>		
School Condition Allocation	552,916	A provisional amount of £2,000,000 was included within the MTFS for 2025-26. The allocation has now been confirmed as £2,552,916
<b>Highways &amp; Transport</b>		
Mill Street Corridor - Station Link Project	(687,364)	Additional grant funding of £493,800 has been added to the Capital Programme alongside reallocations on various schemes to reflect in year spend. This grant was required to be spent by 31st March 2025.
Park Lane – Ayreshire Way, Congleton Walking and Cycling	107,410	
<b>Growth and Enterprise</b>		
Visitor Economy - Rural Shared Prosperity Fund	49,980	
UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Core	354,077	
Mill Street Corridor	450,000	
Macc on Foot (MOF)	65,975	
Macclesfield Indoor Market Refurbishment (MIMR)	85,500	
Royal Arcade Ph2 Meanwhile Uses	40,280	
<b>Environment and Communities</b>		
Crewe Towns Fund - Cumberland Arena	80,000	
<b>Total Supplementary Capital Estimates Requested</b>	<b>1,098,773</b>	
<b>Total Capital Virements requested</b>	<b>-</b>	
<b>Total SCEs and Virements</b>	<b>1,098,773</b>	

**Table 5: Requests for Supplementary Capital Estimates (SCEs) For Finance Sub Committee Recommendation or Approval**

Committee	Amount Requested £	Reason and Funding Source
<b>Finance Sub Committee are asked to recommend to Council the approval of the Supplementary Capital SCEs over £1,000,000</b>		
<b>Education and 14-19 Skills</b>		
High Needs Capital Grant	3,955,823	A provisional amount of £2,000,000 was included within the MTFS for High Needs Capital Grant. The 2025-26 allocation has now been
<b>Highways &amp; Transport</b>		
Local Transport Grant	7,754,000	Additional Department for Transport Grant allocated for 2025-26
<b>Housing Strategy</b>		
Warm Homes Local Grant (DESNZ)	7,792,725	Department of Energy Security and Net Zero grant funding, supplementary estimates approved by urgent decision.
<b>Total Supplementary Capital Estimates Requested</b>	<b>19,502,548</b>	
<b>Total Supplementary Capital Estimates and Virements</b>	<b>19,502,548</b>	

**Table 6: For information – Budget Reductions**

Committee / Capital Scheme	Approved Budget £	Revised Approval £	Reduction £	Reason and Funding Source
<b>Finance Sub Committee are asked to note the reductions in Approved Budgets</b>				
<b>Adults</b>				
Community - Rural Shared Prosperity Fund	412,627	360,570	(52,057)	Reduction in budget at closing 2024-25.
<b>Education and 14-19 Skills</b>				
Devolved Formula Capital	330,000	317,884	(12,116)	Reduction in 2025-26 budget upon confirmation of allocation due to academy conversions
<b>Environment &amp; Communities</b>				
Wilmslow Town Villas	80,964	47,452	(33,512)	Reduction in budget as external funding of £33,512 paid directly to ANSA for work done rather than via CEC
<b>Economy &amp; Growth</b>				
<b>Housing Strategy</b>				
Local Authority Housing Fund	742,380	731,580	(10,800)	To mirror the amount of grant to be received.
<b>Highways &amp; Transport</b>				
Alderley Edge Bypass Scheme Implementation	60,611,100	60,411,100	(200,000)	To align budget to revised forecasting.
<b>Infrastructure</b>				
Flowerpot Phs 1 & Pinchpoint	10,037,232	4,245,620	(5,791,612)	To align the available budget with external funding available, Grant and S106 Developer Contributions
A500 Corridor OBC Update	2,435,000	1,704,550	(730,450)	To reduce budget to match grant received from Department for Transport to fund the scheme.
	<b>81,483,583</b>	<b>67,818,756</b>	<b>(13,664,827)</b>	

## Prudential Indicators revisions to: 2024/25 and 20245/26 – 2026/27 and future years

### Background

- 4.6. There is a requirement under the Local Government Act 2003 for local authorities to have regard to CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the "CIPFA Prudential Code") when setting and reviewing their Prudential Indicators.

### Estimates of Capital Expenditure

- 4.7. In 2024/25, the Council spent £88.3m on capital expenditure as summarised below.

Capital Expenditure	2024/25 Actual £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m	Future years £m
<b>Total</b>	88.3	208.5	100.6	252.7

### Capital Financing

- 4.8. All capital expenditure must be financed either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Council's own resources (revenue reserves and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing, leasing and Private Finance Initiative). The planned financing of capital expenditure is as follows.

Capital Financing	2024/25 Actual £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m	Future years £m
Capital receipts	0.0	1.2	1.3	33.4
Government Grants	49.8	129.5	75.2	119.3
External Contributions	4.0	19.7	13.1	68.6
Revenue Contributions	1.0	1.3	0.0	0.0
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>54.8</b>	<b>151.7</b>	<b>89.6</b>	<b>221.3</b>
Prudential Borrowing	33.5	56.8	10.9	31.4
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>33.5</b>	<b>56.8</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>31.4</b>
<b>Total Financing and Funding</b>	<b>88.3</b>	<b>208.5</b>	<b>100.5</b>	<b>252.7</b>

Source: Cheshire East Finance

### Replacement of debt finance

- 4.9. Debt is only a temporary source of finance, since loans and leases must be repaid, and this is therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which is known as minimum revenue provision (MRP). Alternatively, proceeds from selling capital assets may be used to replace debt finance. Planned MRP repayments are as follows:

Replacement of debt finance	2024/25 Actual £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m	2027/28 Estimate £m
<b>Total</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>22.7</b>	<b>24.8</b>

Source: Cheshire East Finance

### Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement

- 4.10. The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP repayments and capital receipts used to replace debt. The CFR will decrease by £2m during 2024/25. This assumes that were there has been significant forward funding of certain schemes that grants and other contributions are received in year to repay that forward funding. Based on the above figures for expenditure and financing, the Council's estimated CFR is as follows.

Capital Financing Requirement	2024/25 Actual £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m	2027/28 Estimate £m
<b>Total</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>595</b>

Source: Cheshire East Finance

### Asset disposals

- 4.11. When a capital asset is no longer needed, it may be sold so that the proceeds, known as capital receipts, can be spent on new assets or to repay debt. Repayments of capital grants, loans and investments also generate capital receipts. The Council received £2.2m of capital receipts from asset sales in 2024/25 and has built into the MTFS planned receipts of £3.6m in future years.

Capital Receipts	2024/25 Actual £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m	2027/28 Estimate £m
Asset Sales	2.1	1.0	1.0	1.0
Loans Repaid	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>

Source: Cheshire East Finance

### Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement

- 4.12. The Council's main objectives when borrowing are to achieve a low but certain cost of finance while retaining flexibility should plans change in the future. These objectives are often conflicting and the Council therefore seeks to strike a balance between cheap short term loans and long term fixed rate loans where the future cost is known but fixed over a period when rates are expected to fall.
- 4.13. Projected levels of the Council's total outstanding debt (which comprises borrowing, PFI liabilities, leases) are shown below, compared with the capital financing requirement.

Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement	2024/25 Actual £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m	2027/28 Estimate £m
Borrowing	396	423	476	512
PFI Liabilities	17	17	15	14
<b>Total Debt</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>526</b>
<b>Capital Financing Req.</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>595</b>

Source: Cheshire East Finance

- 4.14. Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short term. As can be seen from the above table, the Council expects to comply with this in the medium term.

### Liability Benchmark

- 4.15. To compare the Council's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing (see para 6.18 of the Treasury Management Strategy update). This assumes that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £20m at each year end. This benchmark is currently £372m and is forecast to rise to £447m over the next four years.

Borrowing and the Liability Benchmark	2024/25 Actual £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m	2027/28 Estimate £m
Outstanding Debt	396	423	476	512
<b>Liability Benchmark</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>447</b>

Source: Cheshire East Finance

- 4.16. The table shows that the Council expects to borrow above its liability benchmark.



### Affordable borrowing limit

- 4.17. The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower “operational boundary” is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

	2024/25 limit £m	2025/26 limit £m	2026/27 Estimate £m	2027/28 Estimate £m
Authorised Limit for Borrowing	570	590	590	590
Authorised Limit for Other Long-Term Liabilities	17	17	15	14
<b>Authorised Limit for External Debt</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>607</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>604</b>
Operational Boundary for Borrowing	560	580	580	580
Operational Boundary for Other Long-Term Liabilities	17	17	15	14
<b>Operational Boundary for External Debt</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>594</b>

Source: Cheshire East Finance

### Investment Strategy

- 4.18. Treasury investments arise from receiving cash before it is paid out again. Investments made for service reasons or for pure financial gain are not generally considered to be part of treasury management.
- 4.19. The Council's policy on treasury investments is to prioritise security and liquidity over yield, that is to focus on minimising risk rather than maximising returns. Cash that is likely to be spent in the near term is invested securely, for example with money market funds, other local authorities or selected high quality banks, to minimise the risk of loss. Money that will be held for longer terms is invested more widely, including in shares and property, to balance the risk of loss against the risk of returns below inflation.

Treasury Management Investments	31/03/25 Actual £m	31/03/26 Estimate £m	31/03/27 Estimate £m	31/03/28 Estimate £m
Short term	20	20	20	20
Long term	20	20	20	20
<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>

Source: Cheshire East Finance

- 4.20. Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue, offset by an investment income receivable. The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e., the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government grants.

Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	31/03/25 Actual	31/03/26 Estimate	31/03/27 Estimate	31/03/28 Estimate
Financing Costs (£m)	29.0	30.5	36.1	39.8
Proportion of net revenue stream %	<b>7.33</b>	<b>7.58</b>	<b>8.75</b>	<b>9.37</b>

Source: Cheshire East Finance

# Section 5: Reserves

## Management of Council Reserves

- 5.1. The Council's Reserves Strategy states that the Council will maintain reserves to protect against risk and support investment.
- 5.2. The opening balance at 1 April 2024 in the Council's General Fund Reserves was £5.6m, as published in the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2023/24. At FR3, the closing balance at 31 March 2025 was forecast to be £0.5m.
- 5.3. During 2024/25, transfers from Earmarked Reserves were made of £13.7m to support the revenue budget. A net total of £11.7m has been drawn down to support the in-year deficit position, whilst a further £3.8m has been used to fund the Council Transformation expenditure.
- 5.4. The current balance on reserves is insufficient in order to provide adequate protection against established and newly emerging risks, such as inflation and particularly the DSG deficit, which is £112.1m at year end and has been highlighted in the MTFS as having no alternative funding.
- 5.5. The Council also maintains Earmarked Revenue Reserves for specific purposes. The opening balance at 1 April 2024 was £32.3m, of which £6.5m has been used to fund expenditure specifically provided for by services. These balances fall within the forecasts approved during the MTFS budget setting process. The closing balance at 31 March 2025 for Earmarked Reserves is £23.3m, of which, £3.2m is ring-fenced for specific use.
- 5.6. The closing balance on General Fund Reserves at 31 March 2025, is £6.3m.
- 5.7. Total reserves available for Council use at 31 March 2025 are £29.6m.
- 5.8. Unspent schools' budgets that have been delegated, as laid down in the Schools Standards Framework Act 1998, remain at the disposal of the school and are not available for Council use. These balances are therefore excluded from all reserve forecasts.

**Table 1 – Reserves Balances****Adults and Health Committee**

Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024 £000	Drawdowns / Transfers to General Fund £000	In-year Net Movement £000	New Reserve Requests* £000	Closing Balance 31 March 2025 £000	Notes
<b><u>Adults Social Care Commissioning</u></b>						
PFI Equalisation - Extra Care Housing	2,857	(2,857)	0	0	0	Asper the MTFS, this reserve will be replenished over the 4 year MTFS period 2024-2028.
<b><u>Public Health</u></b>						
Public Health Reserve	2,369	0	0	835	3,204	Ring-fenced underspend to be invested in areas to improve performance against key targets.
<b>ADULTS AND HEALTH RESERVE TOTAL</b>	<b>5,226</b>	<b>(2,857)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>835</b>	<b>3,204</b>	

\* All New Requests are subject to approval.

**Children and Families Committee**

Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024 £000	Drawdowns / Transfers to General Fund £000	In-year Net Movement £000	New Reserve Requests* £000	Closing Balance 31 March 2025 £000	Notes
<b><u>Childrens Social Care</u></b>						
Domestic Abuse Partnership	131	0	(131)	0	0	To sustain preventative services to vulnerable people as a result of partnership funding in previous years.
<b><u>Strong Start, Family Help and Integration</u></b>						
Troubled Families Initiative	1,593	0	(1,593)	0	0	Crewe Youth Zone and ACT have been assigned funding from shared outcomes of the Supporting Families Programme.
ILAC Spending Plan	0	0	0	456	456	To carry forward funding identified to fund the ILAC improvement plan which spans across two financial years.

<b>CHILDREN AND FAMILIES RESERVE TOTAL</b>	<b>1,724</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,724)</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>456</b>
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\* All New Requests are subject to approval.

### Corporate Policy Committee and Central Reserves

Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024	Drawdowns / Transfers to General Fund	In-year Net Movement	New Reserve Requests*	Closing Balance 31 March 2025	Notes
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
<b><u>Corporate Directorate</u></b>						
Corporate Directorate Reserve	<b>1,164</b>	(1,164)	0	0	<b>0</b>	To support a number of widespread projects within the Corporate Directorate.
<b><u>Finance and Customer Service</u></b>						
Collection Fund Management	<b>8,154</b>	(1,235)	(1,799)	0	<b>5,120</b>	To manage cash flow implications as part of the Business Rates Retention Scheme.
Capital Financing Reserve	<b>4,531</b>	0	(2,289)	0	<b>2,242</b>	To provide for financing of capital schemes, other projects and initiatives
MTFS Reserve	<b>2,914</b>	(3,169)	255	0	<b>0</b>	Reserve balance has been released to the general fund to support the in-year deficit pressure
Brighter Futures Transformation Programme	<b>490</b>	(470)	(20)	0	<b>0</b>	To fund the Council's four-year transformation programme and its five outcomes of Culture; Estates and ICT systems; Customer Experience, Commercial Approach and Governance.
2025/26 Transformation 1	<b>0</b>	0	0	3,500	<b>3,500</b>	Additional reserve to support the 2025/26 Transformation Programme.
2025/26 Transformation 2	<b>0</b>	0	0	@Bal5,300	<b>5,300</b>	To cover the costs of the Transformation Programme to help mitigate anticipated one off cost impacts of change.
Section 31 Revenue Grants	<b>14</b>	(14)	0	0	<b>0</b>	Residual unspent revenue grants have been released to the general fund to support the in-year deficit.

## Corporate Policy Committee and Central Reserves Continued

Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024 £000	Drawdowns / Transfers to General Fund £000	In-year Net Movement £000	New Reserve Requests* £000	Closing Balance 31 March 2025 £000	Notes
<b><u>Governance and Compliance</u></b>						
Insurance Reserve	3,098	(3,098)	0	314	314	To settle insurance claims and manage excess costs.
Elections General	132	0	0	300	432	To provide funds for Election costs every 4 years.
Brexit Funding	13	(13)	0	0	0	Residual reserve balance has been released to the general fund to support the in-year deficit pressure.
<b><u>Human Resources</u></b>						
HR (CARE4CE Review, Culture Change, Pay realignment, Learning Mgt System)	59	(59)	0	0	0	Residual reserve balance has been released to the general fund to support the in-year deficit pressure.
Pay Structure (M Grade Review)	54	(54)	0	0	0	Residual reserve balance has been released to the general fund to support the in-year deficit pressure
<b><u>ICT</u></b>						
Digital Solutions Architect	150	0	(76)	0	74	To fund a role for the Digital Customer Enablement programme and will be key to realising the cost savings and efficiencies across the Council from the deployment of a number of digital initiatives.
ICT	0	0	0	300	300	To fund costs associated with Gemini / TOM
<b>CORPORATE POLICY AND CENTRAL RESERVE TOTAL</b>	<b>20,773</b>	<b>(9,276)</b>	<b>(3,929)</b>	<b>9,714</b>	<b>17,282</b>	

\* All New Requests are subject to approval.

## Economy and Growth Committee

Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024 £000	Drawdowns / Transfers to General Fund £000	In-year Net Movement £000	New Reserve Requests* £000	Closing Balance 31 March 2025 £000	Notes
<b><u>Directorate</u></b>						
Place Directorate Reserve	1,164	(306)	(510)	70	418	To support a number of widespread projects within the Place Directorate.
Investment (Sustainability)	610	(40)	(21)	0	549	To support investment that can increase longer term financial independence and stability of the Council.
<b><u>Growth and Enterprise</u></b>						
Legal Proceedings	212	0	(33)	0	179	To enable legal proceedings on land and property matters.
Investment Portfolio	534	(534)	0	0	0	The full reserve has been released to the general fund to support the in-year deficit pressure.
Homelessness & Housing Options - Revenue Grants	129	0	(129)	0	0	Grant committed for the purchase and refurbishment of properties to be used as temporary accommodation to house vulnerable families.
Tatton Park Trading Reserve	128	(128)	0	250	250	To fund Tatton Park playground through the Transformation Programme, and cover costs for vehicle replacement, maintenance and repair.
<b>ECONOMY AND GROWTH RESERVE TOTAL</b>	<b>2,777</b>	<b>(1,008)</b>	<b>(693)</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>1,396</b>	

\* All New requests are subject to approval.

## Environment and Communities Committee

Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024	Drawdowns / Transfers to General Fund	In-year Net Movement	New Reserve Requests*	Closing Balance 31 March 2025	Notes
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
<b><u>Environment and Neighbourhood Services</u></b>						
Strategic Planning	568	(281)	0	0	287	To meet costs associated with the Local Plan - site allocations, minerals and waste DPD.
Trees / Structures Risk Management	139	(55)	0	0	84	To help respond to increases in risks relating to the environment, in particular the management of trees, structures and dealing with adverse weather events.
Air Quality	36	0	0	0	36	Air Quality Management - DEFRA Action Plan. Relocating electric vehicle charge point in Congleton.
Licensing Enforcement	8	0	2	0	10	Three year reserve to fund a third party review and update of the Cheshire East Council Taxi Licensing Enforcement Policies.
Flood Water Management (Emergency Planning)	2	0	0	0	2	Relating to Public Information Works.
Neighbourhood Planning	82	(41)	0	0	41	To match income and expenditure.
Spatial Planning - revenue grant	13	(13)	0	0	0	Residual reserve balance has been released to the general fund to support the in-year deficit pressure.
Street Cleansing	22	0	0	0	22	Committed expenditure on voluntary litter picking equipment and electric blowers.
<b>ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD RESERVE TOTAL</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>(390)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>482</b>	

\* All New Requests are subject to approval.



## Highways and Transport Committee

Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024 £000	Drawdowns / Transfers to General Fund £000	In-year Net Movement £000	New Reserve Requests* £000	Closing Balance 31 March 2025 £000	Notes
<b><u>Highways and Infrastructure</u></b>						
Rail and Transport Integration	385	(185)	(200)	0	0	To support the Council's committed costs to the rail and transport networks across the borough.
Flood Risk Adverse Weather Events	400	0	0	0	400	To help the service manage risks such as the impact of adverse weather, specifically flooding or extensive periods where winter maintenance is required.
Highways Procurement Project	104	(20)	(1)	0	83	To finance the development of the next Highway Service Contract. Depot mobilisation costs, split over 7 years from start of contract in 2018.
LEP-Local Transport Body	19	0	0	0	19	Contribution to LEP transport studies/consultancy. Ongoing working around Transport Legacy issues.
<b>ECONOMY AND GROWTH RESERVE TOTAL</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>(205)</b>	<b>(201)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>502</b>	

\* All New Requests are subject to approval.

## Total Reserves

Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024 £000	Drawdowns / Transfers to General Fund £000	In-year Net Movement £000	New Reserve Requests* £000	Closing Balance 31 March 2025 £000	Notes
Total Earmarked Reserves	32,278	(13,736)	(6,545)	11,325	23,322	
General Fund Reserve	5,580	13,736	(15,481)	2,473	6,308	
<b>RESERVE TOTAL</b>	<b>37,858</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(22,026)</b>	<b>13,798</b>	<b>29,630</b>	

\* All New Requests are subject to approval.

# Section 6: Treasury Management

## Management of Council Reserves

- 6.1 Treasury management is the management of the Authority's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Authority has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Authority's prudent financial management.
- 6.2. Treasury risk management at the Authority is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Authority's legal obligation under the *Local Government Act 2003* to have regard to the CIPFA Code.
- 6.3. Investments held for service purposes or for commercial profit are considered in the Investment Report (see **Section 9**).

## 1. External Context

- 6.4. **Economic background:** Both the UK and US elected new governments during the period, whose policy decisions impacted the economic outlook. The Chancellor of the Exchequer delivered her Spring Statement in March 2025, following her Budget in October 2024. Based on the plans announced, the Office for Budget Responsibility downgraded its predictions for UK growth in 2025 to 1% from 2%. However, it upgraded its predictions for the four subsequent years. Inflation predictions for 2025 were pushed up, to 3.2% from 2.6%, before seen as falling back to target in 2027. The market reaction to the Spring Statement was more muted compared to the Budget, with very recent market turbulence being driven more by US trade policy decisions and President Trump.
- 6.5. UK annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) Inflation continued to stay above the 2% Bank of England (BoE) target in the later part of the period. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported headline consumer prices at 2.8% in February 2025, down from 3% in the previous month and below expectations. Core CPI also remained elevated falling slightly in February to 3.5%, just below expected 3.6% but higher than the last 3 months of 2024.
- 6.6. The UK economy Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 0.1% between October and December 2024, unrevised from the initial estimate. This was an

improvement on the zero growth in the previous quarter, but down from the 0.4% growth between April and June 2024. The economy was estimated to have contracted by 0.1% in January 2025, worse than the expectations for a 1% gain.

- 6.7. The labour market continued to cool, but the ONS data still requires treating with caution. Recent data showed the unemployment rate rose to 4.4% (3mth/year) in the three months to January 2025 while the economic inactivity rate fell again to 21.5%. The ONS reported pay growth over the same three-month period at 5.9% for regular earnings (excluding bonuses) and 5.8% for total earnings.
- 6.8. The BoE's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) held Bank Rate at 4.5% at its March 2025 meeting, having reduced it in February. This follows earlier 0.25% cuts in November and August 2024 from the 5.25% peak. At the March MPC meeting, members voted 8-1 to maintain Bank Rate at 4.5%, with the one dissenter preferring another 25 basis points cut. The meeting minutes implied a slightly more hawkish tilt compared to February when two MPC members wanted a 50bps cut. In the minutes, the Bank also upgraded its Q1 2025 GDP forecast to around 0.25% from the previous estimate of 0.1%
- 6.9. The February Monetary Policy Report (MPR) showed the BoE expected GDP growth in 2025 to be significantly weaker compared to the November MPR. GDP is forecast to rise by 0.1% in Q1 2025, less than the previous estimate of 0.4%. Four-quarter GDP growth is expected to pick up from the middle of 2025, to over 1.5% by the end of the forecast period. The outlook for CPI inflation showed it remaining above the MPC's 2% target throughout 2025. It is expected to hit around 3.5% by June before peaking at 3.7% in Q3 and then easing towards the end of the year, but staying above the 2% target.
- 6.10. Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, maintained its central view that Bank Rate would continue to fall throughout 2025. Further to the cut in May to 4.25%, it is anticipated that other cuts will follow in line with MPR months to take Bank rate down to 3.75% by the end of 2025.
- 6.11. **Financial Markets:** Financial market sentiment was reasonably positive over most of the period but economic, financial and geopolitical issues meant the trend of market volatility remained. In the latter part of the period, volatility increased and bond yields started to fall following a January peak, as the economic uncertainty around likely US trade policy impacted financial markets. Yields in the UK and US started to diverge in the last month of the period, with the former rising around concerns over the fiscal implications on the UK government from weaker growth, business sentiment and higher rates, while the latter started falling on potential recession fears due to the unpredictable nature of policy announcements by the US President and their potential impact. Since then, the US announced 'reciprocal tariffs', the immediate aftermath of which saw stock prices and government bond yields falling and introduced further uncertainty over the economic outlook.

- 6.12. **Credit Review:** Due to improving credit conditions our treasury advisors, increased their recommended maximum unsecured duration limit on most banks on its counterparty list to 6 months from the previous limit of 100 days.
- 6.13. Credit default swap prices were generally lower over the period but did start to rise modestly in March but not to any level causing concern. Price volatility over the period was also generally more muted compared to previous periods.
- 6.14. Financial market volatility is expected to remain a feature, at least in the near term and credit default swap levels will be monitored for signs of ongoing credit stress. As ever, the institutions and durations on the Authority's counterparty list recommended by Arlingclose remain under constant review

## 2. Local Context

- 6.15. As at 31 March 2025 the Authority has borrowings of £414m and investments of £39m. Forecast changes in these sums are shown in the balance sheet analysis in **Table 1** below.

**Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary and Forecast**

	31/03/25 Actual £m	31/03/26 Estimate £m	31/03/27 Estimate £m	31/03/28 Estimate £m	*
General Fund CFR	538	578	597	609	
Less: Other long term liabilities *	(17)	(17)	(15)	(14)	
<b>Loans CFR</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>595</b>	
Less: External borrowing **	(396)	(163)	(133)	(119)	
<b>Internal (over) borrowing</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>477</b>	
Less: Usable reserves	(122)	(113)	(108)	(119)	
Less: Working capital	(47)	(50)	(50)	(51)	
<b>(Treasury Investments) or New borrowing</b>	<b>(44)</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>307</b>	

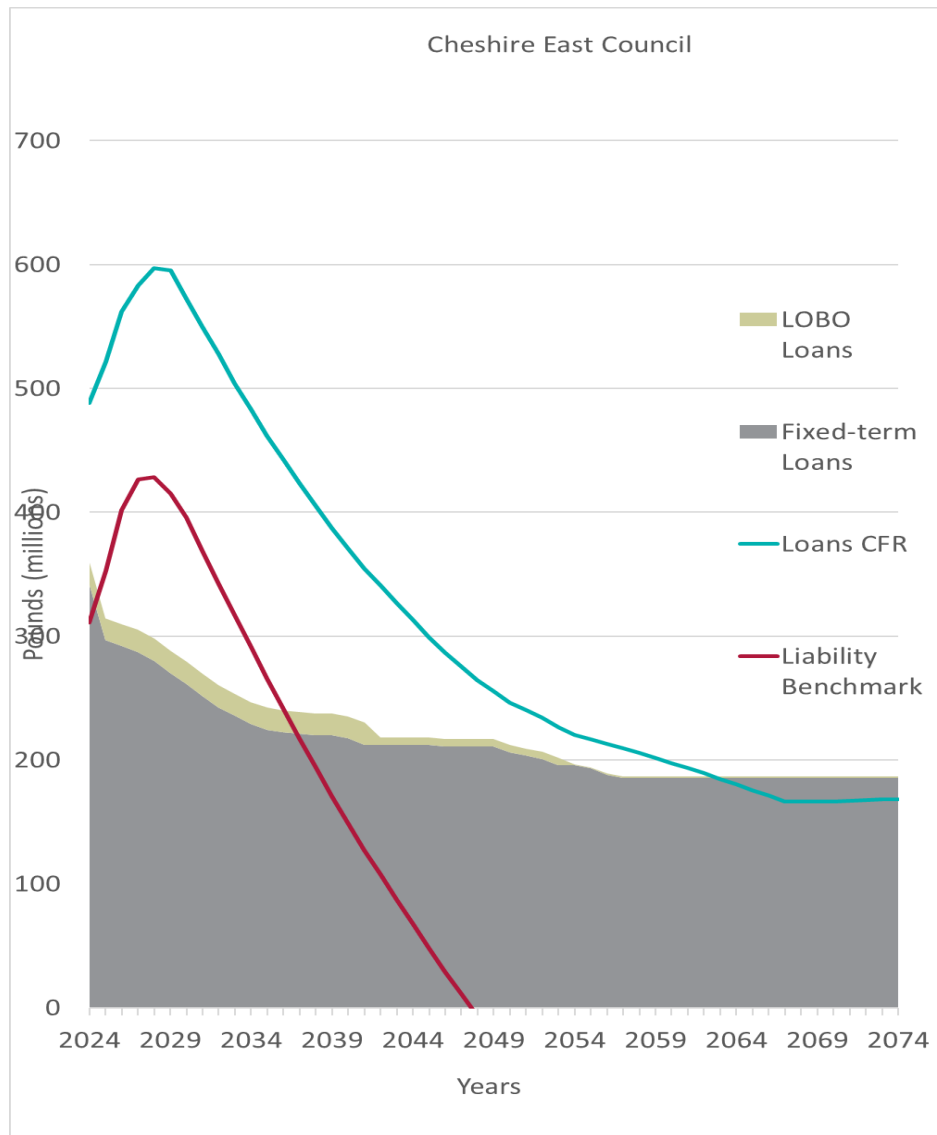
\*finance leases and PFI liabilities that form part of the Authority's debt

\*\* shows only loans to which the Authority is committed and excludes optional refinancing

- 6.16. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. The Authority's current strategy is to maintain borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing.
- 6.17. CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance recommends that the Authority's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. **Table 1** shows that the Authority expects to comply with this recommendation.
- 6.18. **Liability Benchmark:** To compare the Councils actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes the same forecasts as table 1 above, but that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £20m at each year-end to maintain a core strategic investment.

**Table 2: Liability Benchmark**

	31/03/25 Actual £m	31/03/26 Estimate £m	31/03/27 Estimate £m	31/03/28 Estimate £m
Loans CFR	521	561	582	595
Less: Usable reserves	(122)	(113)	(108)	(103)
Less: Working capital	(47)	(50)	(50)	(51)
Plus: Minimum investments	20	20	20	20
<b>Liability Benchmark</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>446</b>

**Chart 1: Liability benchmark**

### 3. Borrowing Strategy

- 6.19. CIPFA's 2021 Prudential Code is clear that local authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return and that it is not prudent for local authorities to make any investment or spending decision that will increase the capital financing requirement, and so may lead to new borrowing, unless directly and primarily related to the functions of the Authority. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield unless these loans are for refinancing purposes.
- 6.20. The Authority has not, and is not planning to borrow to invest primarily for commercial return and so is unaffected by the changes to the Prudential Code
- 6.21. The Authority currently holds loans of £397m, an increase of £60m since 31 March 2024. This increase is primarily due to continued capital expenditure including use of grants received in advance and increasing Dedicated Schools Grant deficit.

- 6.22. The Authority's chief objective when borrowing has been to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required, with flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Authority's long term plans change being a secondary objective. The Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt.
- 6.23. Interest rates have seen substantial rises over the last 3 years which has significantly increased the cost of borrowing. Borrowing costs have begun to fall and the expectation is that they will continue to fall although market uncertainty may impact on the timing of any reductions.
- 6.24. The cost of short-term borrowing from other local authorities has generally followed Base Rate over the year. However, liquidity in the market from October onwards caused rates to increase disproportionately compared to underlying Base Rates. The Council's application for Exceptional Financial Support also reduced the credit quality of the Council to some lenders which exacerbated the shortage of liquidity available. As a result some PWLB borrowing was undertaken with a mix of 1-2 year maturity loans and 2-3 year Equal Instalments of Principal (EIP) repayment loans. The average rate payable on these loans is 4.84%. This provides some surety of cost at lower rates than we could otherwise have achieved at the time and reduces over-reliance on short term borrowing. The relatively short period of these PWLB loans should provide opportunities to refinance at lower cost if rates fall in line with expectations.
- 6.25. The cost of short term borrowing in 2024/25 is 5.29% which is an increase from 4.82% in 2023/24. The average rate paid on all borrowing was 5.03%.
- 6.26. **LOBO's:** The Authority holds £17m of LOBO (Lender's Option Borrower's Option) loans where the lender has the option to propose an increase in the interest rate at set dates, following which the Authority has the option to either accept the new rate or to repay the loan at no additional cost. All of these LOBOS had options during 2024/25. Some LOBO providers have exercised their options but this has not been the case with our loans. Discussions with the provider indicates that they are unlikely to change their position.

## 4. Investment Strategy

- 6.27. The Authority holds invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. Due to the overriding need for short term borrowing, other than £20m invested strategically in managed funds, the investments are generally short term for liquidity purposes.
- 6.28. The CIPFA Code requires the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Authority's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.
- 6.29. The maximum amount that can be invested with any one organisation is set in the Treasury Management Strategy Report. The maximum amount and duration of investments with any institution depends on the organisations credit rating, the type of investment and for banks and building societies, the security of the investment.

Generally credit rated banks and building societies have been set at a maximum value of £6m for unsecured investments and £12m for secured investments. Any limits also apply to the banking group that each bank belongs to. Limits for each Money Market fund have been set at a maximum value of £12m per fund. All potential counterparties are kept under continual review by our treasury advisors and advisory lower limits than those contained in the strategy are applied.

- 6.30. Treasury Management income for 2024/25 is £3,290,000 which is higher than the budgeted £1,870,000. However, borrowing costs are also higher than budgeted at £18.9m compared to budget of £16.1m.
- The average daily investment balance including managed funds during 2024/25 is £65.0m
  - The average annualized interest rate received on in-house investments during 2024/25 is 4.96%
  - The average annualized interest rate received on the externally managed funds during 2024/25 is 5.43%
- 6.31. The Authority's total average interest rate on all investments in 2024/25 is 5.10%. The return is below our own performance target of 5.45% (average Base Rate + 0.50%) due to the short term nature of most of our investments. However, we do compare favourably to the Sterling Over Night Interest Average (SONIA) rate.

**Table 3 – Interest Rate Comparison**

Comparator	Average Rate 2024/25
Cheshire East	5.10%
SONIA	4.90%
Base Rate	4.95%
Target Rate	5.45%

- 6.32. As the Authority holds reserves and working capital, £20m of this has been placed in strategic investments in order to benefit from higher income returns whilst spreading risk across different asset classes.
- 6.33. The investments are in five different funds which are all designed to give an annual income return higher than cash investments but which have different underlying levels of volatility. By spreading investments across different types of fund, the intention is to dampen any large fluctuations in the underlying value of the investments.

**Table 4 –Strategic Investments**

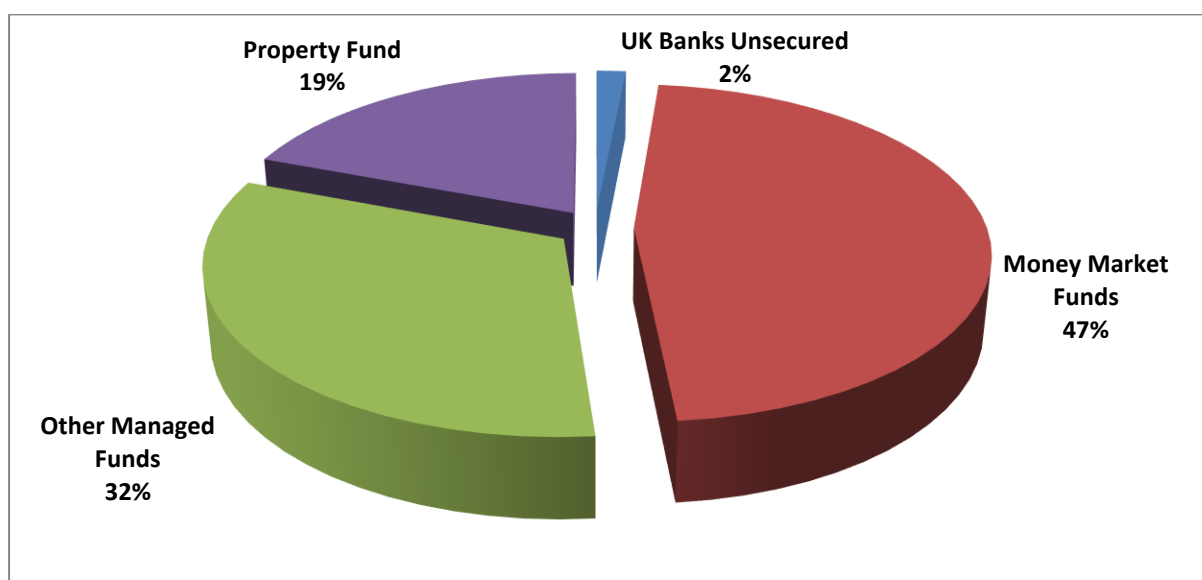
Fund Manager	Asset Class	Invested £m	31/03/25 Value £m
CCLA	Property	7.5	7.4
Aegon	Multi Asset	5.0	4.6



Fund Manager	Asset Class	Invested £m	31/03/25 Value £m
Fidelity	Equity - Global	4.0	4.5
Schroders	Equity - UK	2.5	2.4
M & G	Bonds	1.0	0.8
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>20.0</b>	<b>19.7</b>

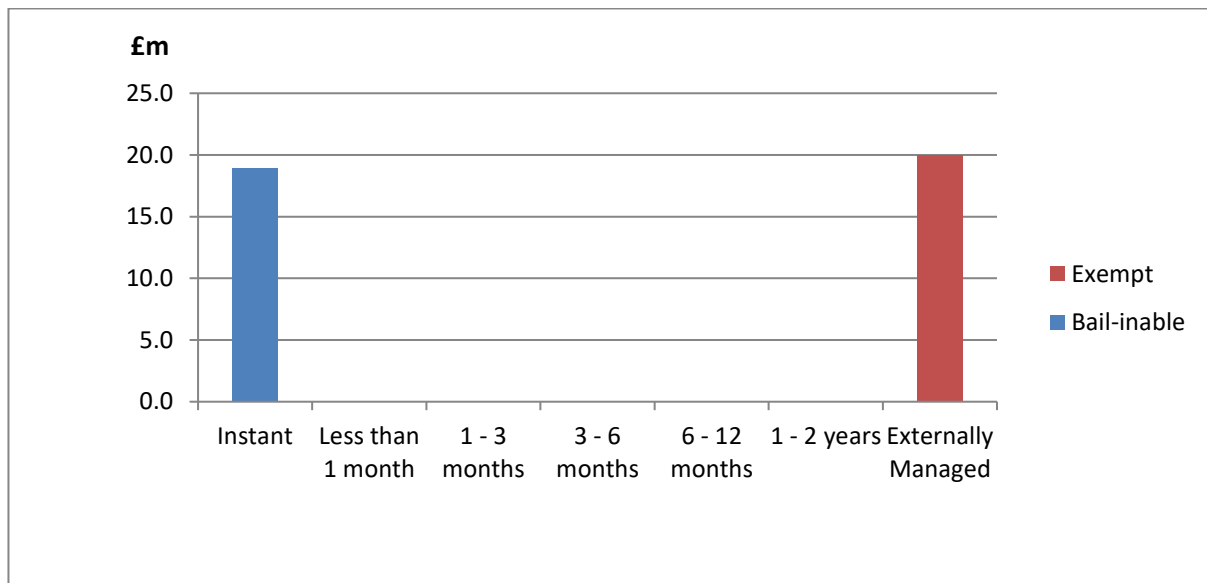
- 6.34. The value of these investments does vary. Fund values had been affected by high inflation, low levels of GDP and market uncertainty following US announcements on global tariffs. However, the past year has shown a gradual improvement. All funds continue to deliver good levels of income return which, although were not significantly higher than cash investments in 2024/25, are expected to remain at this level as interest rates on cash deposits fall in 2025/26 and beyond.

**Chart 2 – Current Investments by Counterparty Type**



**Table 5 – Types of Investments and Current Interest Rates**

Instant Access Accounts	Average Rate	£m
Money Market Funds	4.54%	18.3
Banks	4.34%	0.6
<b>Externally Managed Funds</b>		<b>£m</b>
Total – see table 4	5.43%	20.0
<b>Summary of Current Investments</b>		<b>£m</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4.93%</b>	<b>38.9</b>

**Chart 3 – Maturity Profile of Investments**

6.35. Note: Bail-inable means that in the event of default the counterparty may be required to use part of the investments as their own capital in which case the Council would not get back as much as they invested. This would apply with most bank and Building Society investments.

## Treasury Management Indicators

6.36. The Authority measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.

6.37. **Interest Rate Exposures:** This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limit on the one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise in interest rates is:

Interest Rate Risk Indicator	Limit
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>rise</u> in interest rates	£2,270,000
Actual impact in 2024/25 of changes in interest rates compared to budget	£250,000

6.38. The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investments will be replaced at current rates. Borrowing and

investment rates during 2024/25 were broadly in line with the budgeted expectations.

- 6.39. **Maturity Structure of Borrowing:** This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk. Lower limits have been set at 0%. The upper limits on the maturity structure of borrowing and the actual maturity profiles as at 31 March 2025 are:

Refinancing rate risk indicator	Upper Limit	Actual
Under 12 months	75%	59%
12 months and within 24 months	75%	8%
24 months and within 5 years	75%	9%
5 years and within 10 years	75%	12%
10 years and within 20 years	100%	5%
20 years and above	100%	7%

- 6.40. Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

- 6.41. **Principal Sums Invested for Periods Longer than 364 days:** The purpose of this indicator is to control the Authority's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The limits on the total principal sum invested to final maturities beyond the period are:

Price Risk Indicator	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£25m	£15m	£10m
Actual amounts committed beyond year end	£0m	£0m	£0m

## Annex A: Existing Investment & Debt Portfolio Position

	31/03/25 Actual Portfolio £m	31/03/25 Average Rate for the year %
<b>External Borrowing:</b>		
PWLB – Fixed Rate	201	4.79%
Local Authorities	170	5.30%
LOBO Loans	17	4.63%
Other	9	4.91%
<b>Total External Borrowing</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>5.03%</b>
<b>Other Long Term Liabilities:</b>		
PFI	17	-
<b>Total Gross External Debt</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Investments:</b>		
<i>Managed in-house</i>		
Short-term investments:		
Instant Access	19	4.96%
<i>Managed externally</i>		
Property Fund	7.5	4.91%
Multi Asset Fund	5	5.53%
Equity - Global	4	5.95%
Equity - UK	2.5	6.47%
Bonds	1	4.13%

<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>5.10%</b>
<b>Net Debt</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>-</b>

# Section 7: Investment Strategy

## Purpose

- 7.1 The Authority is required to present an Investment Strategy to Council on an annual basis. It does this via the MTFS approval process. This short summary updates the tables included in the main Investment Strategy. For a more detailed commentary please see the main Strategy within the published MTFS document.
- The purpose of the Investment Strategy is to:
  - set out the Council's approach to managing investments,
  - establish financial limits for various classifications of investment,
  - recognise the role and responsibilities of the Finance Sub-Committee and its position as the main conduit through which investment opportunities should be considered.
- 7.2 The definition of an investment covers all the financial assets of a local authority as well as other non-financial assets that the organisation holds primarily or partially to generate a profit; for example, investment property portfolios. This may therefore include investments that are not managed as part of normal treasury management processes or under treasury management delegations.
- 7.3 The Council has a Capital Strategy (prepared in line with the requirements of the Prudential Code); and a Treasury Management Strategy (prepared in line with the requirements of the Treasury Management Code) – relevant disclosures are made within each document.
- 7.4 Consequently, this Investment Strategy is part of a suite of related documents and focuses predominantly on matters not covered by the Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy.

## Investment Indicators

- 7.5 The Authority has set the following quantitative indicators to allow elected Members and the public to assess the Authority's total risk exposure arising from its investment decisions.
- 7.6 **Total risk exposure:** The first indicator shows the Authority's total exposure to potential investment losses. This includes amounts the Authority is contractually committed to lend but have yet to be drawn down and guarantees the Authority has issued over third-party loans.

<b>Table 1 Total investment exposure</b>	<b>31/03/24 Actual</b>	<b>31/03/25 Actual</b>	<b>31/03/26 Forecast</b>
Treasury management investments	41,940	38,900	40,000
Service investments: Loans	26,722	26,637	26,567
Service investments: Shares	3,270	1,960	1,960
Commercial investments: Property	22,295	21,815	21,815
Commercial Investments: Loans	3,491	3,147	2,792
<b>TOTAL INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>97,718</b>	<b>92,459</b>	<b>93,134</b>
Commitments to lend	6,013	6,013	6,013
<b>TOTAL EXPOSURE</b>	<b>103,731</b>	<b>98,472</b>	<b>99,147</b>

- 7.7 The Council has total investments exposure estimated at £98m by March 2025 (£59m excluding treasury management), of which £22m relates to property investment backed by physical assets with an income stream and alternative use. Other investments are loans for economic development purposes; and due to their nature, they are not a material element of our budgeting for interest income within the MTFS.
- 7.8 **How investments are funded:** Currently the Authority's investments are largely funded by usable reserves and income received in advance of expenditure. Prudential borrowing is being used in limited circumstances and performance is closely monitored.

<b>Table 2 Investments funded by borrowing</b>	<b>31/03/24 Actual</b>	<b>31/03/25 Actual</b>	<b>31/03/26 Forecast</b>
Treasury management investments	0	0	0
Service investments: Loans	0	0	0
Service investments: Shares	0	0	0
Commercial investments: Property	20,089	19,330	18,820
Commercial Investments: Loans	3,491	3,147	2,792
<b>TOTAL FUNDED BY BORROWING</b>	<b>23,580</b>	<b>22,477</b>	<b>21,612</b>

- 7.9 **Rate of return received:** In part this indicator shows, for Treasury Management and Commercial Property investments, the investment income received less the associated costs, including the cost of borrowing where appropriate, as a proportion of the sum initially invested. Note that due to the nature of the local government accounting framework, not all recorded gains and losses affect the revenue account in the year they are incurred.

<b>Table 3 Investments net rate of return</b>	<b>2023/24 Actual</b>	<b>2024/25 Actual</b>	<b>2025/26 Forecast</b>
Treasury management investments	5.21%	5.10%	4.30%
Service investments: Loans	-2.44%	0.23%	0.00%
Service investments: Shares	NIL	NIL	NIL
Commercial investments: Property	3.20%	3.30%	3.50%
Commercial Investments: Loans	3.13%	3.13%	3.13%

- 7.10 The return for Service Investments: Loans is not a true return but is instead based largely on the % fluctuation in the underlying value of the new assets within the Life Science Fund. As such they do not reflect actual cashflows. In addition there are a number of non-interest bearing loans.
- 7.11 Typically, a return on a share would be based upon the dividend yield and there have been no dividends paid. Therefore, this has been shown as Nil. There has been a downward revaluation of property assets at Alderley Park which has impacted the underlying asset value that we show in Table 5 below. We will continue to monitor for signs of recovery, but the underlying asset value remains more than the Authority paid for the shares.
- 7.12 The major assets included within Commercial Investments: Properties, representing over 90% of the value in that classification, are two commercial retail properties. Whilst we will see fluctuations year-on-year given the pressures on 'bricks and mortar retail', the Council will only experience an impact on its Revenue Account if a site becomes vacant for a prolonged period or is subject to a (lower) rent review.
- 7.13 From the perspective of the Council one of the tenants affected is a home improvements retailer and the second is a national supermarket retailer. Both tenants have thus far weathered the local economic effects of recent years though we have experienced further reductions in asset value in the last financial year. As the lease term reduces this may continue until the leases are renewed.
- 7.14 Much of the investment returns for Commercial Investments relates to rent on these two assets. Rental income on both has held up during the year. Overall returns are affected by the need to offset prudential borrowing costs against the income. However, as this is the major income bearing category of investment more attention needs to be diverted to ensure that occupancy and income are maximised and secured for the long term.
- 7.15 The Commercial investments: Loans are at the expected level of return given the rates in place when they were established.

## Treasury Management Investments

- 7.16 Full details of the Authority's policies and plans for 2025/26 for treasury management investments are covered in the separate Treasury Management Strategy.



## Service Investments: Loans

- 7.17 **Contribution:** The Council lends money to other organisations to support local public services and stimulate economic growth. These are shown below in Table 4. No new loans were issued in the year though there were movements on existing loans and write offs of historic balances.

Table 4 Loans for service purposes Category of borrower	31/03/24 Actual £000	31/03/25 Actual £000	31/03/25 Actual £000	31/03/25 Forecast £000	2025/26 £000
		Balance owing	Loss allowance	Net figure in accounts	Approved Limit
Subsidiaries	0	0	0	0	2,000
Suppliers	23	0	0	0	500
Local businesses	26,470	26,531	61	26,470	30,000
Local charities	158	106	11	95	2,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26,651</b>	<b>26,637</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>26,565</b>	<b>35,000</b>

## Service Investments: Shares

- 7.18 **Contribution:** The Council invests in the shares of its subsidiaries and local businesses to support local public services and stimulate local economic growth.
- 7.19 The Authority invested in Alderley Park Holdings Limited to maintain and stimulate this key strategic site within the borough. Cheshire East is a minority 10% shareholder. This should be seen as a long-term strategic investment with no dividend returns. Valuations are based upon the change in value of our share of the underlying assets. There is a lag between the forecasts used for the Investment Strategy and finalisation of the Council's accounts. Consequently, the value fell from a forecast of £3,270K to an actual of £1,960K, a fall in value of £1,310K, or 40%. This fall is continuing and accelerating a downward trend, and steps will be taken to ascertain the strategy for reversing this trend.
- 7.20 Currently, the valuation (see Table 5) remains greater than the purchase price and the underlying assets at Alderley Park remain strong, with a pipeline of future investments in place. A gain or loss to the Council's Revenue and Capital Receipts accounts would only crystallise in the event of divesting our equity stake.

Table 5 Shares held for service purposes Category of company	31/03/24 actual £000	31/03/25 actual £000	31/03/25 Actual £000	31/03/25 Actual £000	2025/26 £000
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	Value in accounts	Amounts invested	Total Gains/ (Losses)	Value in accounts	Approved Limit (at cost)
Local businesses	3,270	1,070	890	1,960	10,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,270</b>	<b>1,070</b>	<b>890</b>	<b>1,960</b>	<b>10,000</b>

## Commercial Investments: Property

7.21 For the purpose of this Strategy, it should be noted that property is defined as an investment if it is held primarily or partially to generate a profit. To comply with accounting classifications, the Authority includes several assets in Table 6 that might otherwise be excluded as they are not being held to primarily generate a yield or return.

7.22 **Contribution:** The Council invests in local commercial property and land, for a number of reasons. The intention of making a profit that will be spent on local public services is largely a by-product and is not the primary reason.

7.23 We have revisited the historic purchase costs of the assets included in the categories below. For those that were inherited by Cheshire East Council we have used the valuation at 2009/10. This is to allow for a simple calculation of yield.

7.24 The value of properties is updated annually. The most recent valuation is from March 2024 and saw continuing falls to commercial property valuations. The most significant correction came with retail property, and this category is now valued at less than purchase cost. The main driver for the fall in is the reduced number of years remaining on an existing lease. This increases the risk of non-renewal thereby lowering the valuation. The downward trend is expected to continue in 2025 until a new tenancy agreement is agreed. No revised valuation for 2025 is currently available. The figures will be updated in future reports. There has also been a disposal of office property in the year.

Table 6 Property held for investment purposes Property	Actual Purchase cost	31/03/24 actual Gains or (losses) in-year	31/03/24 actual Value in accounts (includes gains/ (losses) to date	31/03/25 expected Gains or (losses)	31/03/25 expected Value in accounts
Industrial Units	1,492	122	1,740	-	1,740
Enterprise Centres	245	20	345	-	345
Retail	23,300	(2,358)	19,730	-	19,730
Office	240	(26)	480	(480)	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,277</b>	<b>(2,242)</b>	<b>22,295</b>	<b>(480)</b>	<b>21,815</b>

## Commercial Investments: Loans

- 7.25 **Contribution:** The Authority has worked alongside Cheshire West and Chester Council and Warrington Borough Council to each provide Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington Ltd with a £10m loan facility to be used to invest in economic development schemes across the Enterprise Zones in the sub-region.
- 7.26 There is currently one loan in place and has been used to fund development of Alderley Park. The purpose is to stimulate economic development, and payback of the loans will be achieved from Business Rates retained by the LEP under Enterprise Zone regulations. Whilst the balance of the facility is still available there are no imminent plans to draw down further amounts.

<b>Table 7 Loans for commercial purposes</b> <b>Category of borrower</b>	<b>31/03/24 Actual</b>	<b>As at 31/03/25 Actual Balance owing</b>	<b>As at 31/03/25 Actual Loss allowance</b>	<b>As at 31/03/25 Actual Net figure in accounts</b>	<b>2025/26 Approved Limit</b>
Partner Organisations	3,351	3,147	126	3,021	10,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,351</b>	<b>3,147</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>3,021</b>	<b>10,000</b>

## Loan Commitments and Financial Guarantees

- 7.27 As Accountable Body for Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington, the Council is acting as Entrusted Entity to a £20m European Regional Development Fund supported 'Evergreen' Development Fund, which has issued loans to third parties. The Council, as contracting party, provides guarantees in respect of the amounts provided through ERDF.
- 7.28 The Fund is designed to provide loan finance to specific projects across Cheshire and the north west and will not generate a return for the Authority. The balances are included this year within Service Investments: Loans (see Table 4 above).

## Proportionality

- 7.29 A major concern for external governing bodies is the extent to which Authorities are dependent upon investment income to fund services. Proportionality forms a key component of the Prudential Code.
- 7.30 Historically, the Authority has not been materially dependent on return-generating investment activity to achieve a balanced revenue budget. However, in the context of the current financial situation faced by the Authority and the sector, those returns will become an important factor in the ability to set a balanced budget. Whilst the proportion of the net revenue budget was consistently low and deemed immaterial this could change and should it fail to achieve the expected net return, the Authority's contingency plans for continuing to provide these services include effective budget management and tight cost control could become more difficult to achieve. Therefore, more emphasis needs to be placed on managing the portfolio and securing an income stream or reviewing exit strategies.

## Capacity, Skills and Culture

- 7.31 **Elected Members and Statutory Officers:** Adequate steps are taken to ensure that those elected Members and statutory officers involved in the investment decision making process have appropriate capacity, skills and information to enable them to: 1. take informed decisions as to whether to enter into a specific investment; 2. to consider individual assessments in the context of the strategic objectives and risk profile of the local authority; and 3. to enable them to understand how the quantum of these decisions have changed the overall risk exposure of the local authority.
- 7.32 The Finance Sub-Committee comprising Members, supported by officers and where necessary external advisors, provides oversight of the Investment Strategy and acts on recommendations from officers that consider opportunities to enhance the Revenue and Capital Budgets of the Council through strategic investments, whether that involves using capital / cash resources or borrowing and lending powers.
- 7.33 **Commercial deals:** Steps have been taken to ensure that those negotiating and reporting commercial deals are aware of the core principles of the prudential framework and of the regulatory regime within which local authorities operate. A team of officers from Place, Finance, Legal, and Procurement are responsible for ensuring that the framework is followed. Where appropriate staff are provided with additional training and up to date skills via CIPFA and other providers.
- 7.34 **Corporate governance:** Corporate governance arrangements have been put in place to ensure accountability, responsibility and authority for decision making on investment activities within the context of the Council's corporate values and Constitution.

## ANNEX 2



# Grants Register 2024/25

**Results to end of March 2025**

## Corporate Grants Register 2024/25

Children & Families Name of Grants received	Original Budget	Final Outturn	Change from Original Budget	Suppleme ntary Revenue Estimate reported
<b>Children &amp; Families: Schools - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)</b>				
Dedicated Schools Grant	183,309,155	178,734,274	-4,574,881	FR3
Pupil Premium Grant	4,958,000	5,018,268	60,268	
Pupil Premium Plus - Post 16 Funding	56,000	92,075	36,075	
Sixth Forms Grant	2,892,000	2,932,912	40,912	
Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM)	1,928,000	1,832,376	-95,624	
Primary Physical Education Sports Grant	982,000	947,911	-34,089	
Teachers Pay Additional Grant	0	1,677,984	1,677,984	FR1
Teachers Pension Grant	0	2,617,416	2,617,416	FR1
COVID-19 Recovery Premium	900,000	245,118	-654,882	
School Led Tutoring Grant	295,000	98,335	-196,666	
School Improvement Monitoring & Brokering Grant FY 2025-26 - carried-forward	0	-264,917	-264,917	
School Improvement Monitoring & Brokering Grant FY 2023-24	0	364,002	364,002	
Milk Subsidy	21,000	0	-21,000	
Core Schools Budget Grant (CSBG)	0	2,502,001	2,502,001	See Table 1 above
Senior Mental Health Lead Training Grant	0	15,600	15,600	
S14 Experts and Mentors Programme Grant - carried-forward	0	6,500	6,500	
Delivering Better Value in SEND	408,000	115,234	-292,766	
National Professional Qualification Grant	0	15,800	15,800	
Early Years Supplementary Grant	0	-45,570	-45,570	
Early Years Budget Grant	0	202,522	202,522	
Early Years Teachers Pay Additional Grant	0	146,161	146,161	
<b>Total Children &amp; Families: Schools - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)</b>	<b>195,749,155</b>	<b>197,254,002</b>	<b>1,504,847</b>	
<b>Children &amp; Families: Children's Services - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)</b>				
Asylum Seekers	3,700,000	2,946,667	-753,333	
Asylum Seekers - difference between estimated grant income relating to 2023/24 and actual	0	111,651	111,651	
Supporting Families (previously Tackling Troubled Families) Payment By Results	0	409,600	409,600	
Supporting Families (Payments by Results) Upfront Grant	720,000	785,100	65,100	

Children & Families Name of Grants received	Original Budget	Final Outturn	Change from Original Budget	Suppleme ntary Revenue Estimate reported
Supporting Families Payments by Results/Upfront Grant - Carry forward to 2025-2026	0	-1,729,854	-1,729,854	
Reducing Parental Conflict Grant - Accrual Reversal from 2023-2024	0	-13,320	-13,320	
Reducing Parental Conflict Grant	0	39,268	39,268	
Adoption Support Fund	70,000	137,257	67,257	
KS2 Moderation & KS1 Phonics	11,000	10,803	-197	
Independent Support Grant (CEIAS) FY2025-2026 c/f from previous years	0	-12,228	-12,228	
Independent Support Grant (CEIAS) FY2023-2024	0	12,228	12,228	
Skills & Lifelong Learning FY2025-2026 c/f from previous years	0	-163,355	-163,355	
Skills & Lifelong Learning FY2024-2025	897,000	995,113	98,113	
Supporting Families; Investing in Practice programme (Mockingbird Family Model)	0	115,284	115,284	
Remand Grant	107,000	120,308	13,308	
Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Housing Grant - carried-forward	0	-111,086	-111,086	
Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Housing Grant	676,000	675,643	-357	
Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Housing Grant - brought-forward	0	148,545	148,545	
Holiday Activities & Food Programme Grant	906,000	906,480	480	
Holiday Activities & Food Programme Grant - Grant carried forward to 2025-2026 for clawback	0	-50,258	-50,258	
Holiday Activities & Food Programme Grant adjustment 2023/24	0	141,202	141,202	
S31 Kinship Grant	0	20,000	20,000	
S31 Kinship Grant - Grant carried forward to 2025-26	0	-20,000	-20,000	
S31 Extension of the Role of Virtual School Heads to children with a social worker 2024/25	118,000	118,136	136	
S31 Extension of the Role of Virtual School Heads to children with a social worker 2024/25 - c/f to 2025/26	0	-118,136	-118,136	
S31 Extension of the Role of Virtual School Heads to children with a social worker 2023/24 - b/f prev year	0	118,136	118,136	
S31 Extension of the Role of Virtual School Heads to children with a social worker 2023/24 - c/f to 2025/26	0	-73,017	-73,017	
S31 Extension of the Role of Virtual School Heads to children with a social worker 2022-2023 - c/f from prev year	0	100,281	100,281	
Covid 19 - Recovery Premium Grant	0	51,286	51,286	



Children & Families Name of Grants received	Original Budget	Final Outturn	Change from Original Budget	Suppleme ntary Revenue Estimate reported
Covid 19 - Recovery Premium Grant - carried-forward	0	-51,286	-51,286	
Household Support Fund - Grant RIA 2023-2024 - To be clawed back in 2024-2025	0	43,312	43,312	
Household Support Fund - Grant received in year 2024-25 (incl clawback)	0	2,871,396	2,871,396	FR1/FR2
Household Support Fund - Grant Debtor 2024-25	0	1,493,076	1,493,076	FR1/FR2
Hong Kong UK Welcome Programme (British Nationals)	0	33,129	33,129	
Early Years - Delivery Support Fund - Carried forward from 2023-2024	0	90,278	90,278	
Early Years - Delivery Support Fund carried forward to 2025-26	0	-19,144	-19,144	
Early Years - Professional Development Programme	0	68,192	68,192	
Early Years - Professional Development Programme - Grant carried forward	0	-29,156	-29,156	
Early Years - Experts and Mentors Programme	0	7,050	7,050	
Early Years - Wraparound Childcare Programme	0	64,932	64,932	
Early Years - Wraparound Childcare Programme	587,000	516,397	-70,603	
Early Years - Wraparound Childcare Programme - Carry forward to 2025-2026	0	-350,172	-350,172	
Family Hubs Transformation Funding - Carried forward from 2023-2024	0	492,103	492,103	
Family Hubs Transformation Funding 2024-25	0	90,200	90,200	
Family Hubs Transformation Funding 2024-25 - Transferred to capital	0	-115,000	-115,000	
Family Hubs Transformation Funding 2024-25 - C/F to 2025-26	0	-38,892	-38,892	
Leaving Care Allowance Uplift Implementation Grant (New Burdens)	72,000	72,022	22	
Staying Close Award	602,000	602,060	60	
Staying Close Award - carried forward	0	-123,520	-123,520	
Supported Accommodation New Burdens Grant	174,000	619,672	445,672	
Enhance Programme Funding	350,000	330,244	-19,756	
Befriending and Mentoring Programme	0	316,599	316,599	
Social Worker Apprenticeship	0	1,125	1,125	
<b>Total Children &amp; Families: Children's Services - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)</b>	<b>8,990,000</b>	<b>12,656,352</b>	<b>3,666,352</b>	
<b>Children &amp; Families: Children's Services - Unring-fenced (general purpose)</b>				
Social Care Support Grant (Children)	9,166,000	9,216,863	50,863	
Staying Put Implementation Grant	0	130,125	130,125	



Children & Families Name of Grants received	Original Budget	Final Outturn	Change from Original Budget	Suppleme ntary Revenue Estimate reported
Extended Rights to Free Transport (Home to School Transport)	0	324,300	324,300	
Extended Personal Adviser Duty Implementation	0	57,414	57,414	
Extension of the role of Virtual School Heads	0	60,595	60,595	
<b>Total Children &amp; Families: Children's Services - Unring-fenced (general purpose)</b>	<b>9,166,000</b>	<b>9,789,297</b>	<b>623,297</b>	

Adults & Health Name of Grants received	Original Budget	Final Outturn	Change from Original Budget	Suppleme ntary Revenue Estimate reported
<b>Adults &amp; Health - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)</b>				
Additional Better Care (for Adult Social Care)	8,706,000	8,705,871	-129	
Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund	979,000	979,180	180	
Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund - top-up	4,098,000	4,267,358	169,358	
Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund - Workforce Element	1,100,000	1,100,000	0	
Discharge Fund	2,021,000	2,034,248	13,248	
Multiply - Supported Employment - brought-forward	0	135,235	135,235	
Multiply - Supported Employment	536,000	414,483	-121,517	
Multiply - Supported Employment - carried-forward	0	-40,747	-40,747	
Supported Internship Grant	0	28,465	28,465	
Asylum Dispersal Scheme - brought forward	0	343,982	343,982	
Asylum Dispersal Scheme	0	459,000	459,000	FR2
Asylum Dispersal Scheme - carried forward	0	-496,156	-496,156	
Afghan - Wrap Around support - brought-forward	0	431,050	431,050	
Afghan - Wrap Around support - carried-forward	0	-153,381	-153,381	
Afghan - Resettlement support - brought-forward	0	403,723	403,723	

Adults & Health Name of Grants received	Original Budget	Final Outturn	Change from Original Budget	Suppleme ntary Revenue Estimate reported
Afghan - Resettlement support	132,000	501,215	369,215	
Afghan - Resettlement support - carried-forward	0	-1,044,138	-1,044,138	
Afghan - Integration Support	0	107,150	107,150	
Homes for Ukraine Scheme - brought-forward	0	211,411	211,411	
Homes for Ukraine Scheme	0	754,668	754,668	See Table 2 above
Homes for Ukraine Scheme - carried-forward	0	-166,300	-166,300	
Private Finance Initiative (PFI) credits	4,125,000	4,124,787	-213	
Private Finance Initiative (PFI) credits (Beechmere) - carried-forward	0	-1,288,996	-1,288,996	
National Grant from DHSC to fund LAs to create additional ASC apprenticeships	0	30,000	30,000	
<b>Total Adults &amp; Health - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)</b>	<b>21,697,000</b>	<b>21,842,108</b>	<b>145,108</b>	
<b>Adults &amp; Health - Unring-fenced (general purpose)</b>				
Social Care Support Grant (Adults)	16,414,000	16,385,551	-28,449	
Local Reform & Community Voices	207,000	207,874	874	
Social Care in Prisons	73,000	67,956	-5,044	
War Pension Scheme Disregard	60,000	58,635	-1,365	
<b>Total Adults &amp; Health - Unring-fenced (general purpose)</b>	<b>16,754,000</b>	<b>16,720,016</b>	<b>-33,984</b>	
<b>Adults &amp; Health: Public Health - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)</b>				
Public Health Grant	18,345,000	18,344,755	-245	
Public Health Grant - Top up	0	281,960	281,960	
OHID SSMTR Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Grant	0	524,528	524,528	FR1
North West Probation Service funding for SMS rehabilitative and resettlement interventions	72,000	123,182	51,182	
CHAMPS Marmot Place Funding - encourage pregnant women to stop smoking - brought-forward	0	21,500	21,500	
CHAMPS SMS - inpatient detox	0	159,253	159,253	
Reducing cardio-vascular disease in Cheshire East	0	6,000	6,000	
Local stop smoking services and support	0	432,331	432,331	
Local stop smoking services and support - carried-forward	0	-42,850	-42,850	
<b>Total Adults &amp; Health: Public Health - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)</b>	<b>18,417,000</b>	<b>19,850,659</b>	<b>1,433,659</b>	

Corporate Policy Name of Grants received	Original Budget	Final Outturn	Change from Original Budget	Suppleme ntary Revenue Estimate reported
<b>Corporate Policy - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)</b>				
<b>Revenues and Housing Benefits:</b>				
Housing Benefit Subsidy	53,221,000	55,451,715	2,230,715	See Table 1 above
Discretionary Housing Payments Grant	349,000	348,661	-339	
Housing Benefit (HB) Award Accuracy Initiative	29,000	26,926	-2,074	
LADS - VEP (RTI) funding	14,000	8,071	-5,929	
New Burdens: Universal Credit, maintenance & natural migration	24,000	24,005	5	
Local Authority Data Sharing (LADS)	0	733	733	
LADS - New Burdens - Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)	60,000	59,230	-770	
LADS - New Burdens - Benefit Cap	1,000	213	-787	
LADS - New Burdens - Single Fraud Investigation	0	911	911	
LADS - New Burdens - Single Housing Benefit Extract Automation	1,000	13,009	12,009	
Additional funding for the Verify Earnings and Pensions service for the financial year ending March 2025	0	4,704	4,704	
Additional New Burden: terminating Employment Support Allowance with Housing Benefit claims 2024/25	0	10,377	10,377	
HB Review Admin Payment	0	236	236	
Business Rates Reliefs Grant - NNDR1	23,442,000	10,629,000	-12,813,000	
Business Rates Reliefs Grant - additional at NNDR3	0	-940,052	-940,052	
New Burdens Administration Grant	0	27,640	27,640	
<b>Democratic Services:</b>				
Police and Crime Commissioner's Panel grant	0	65,260	65,260	
Police And Crime Commissioner Election 2021 Grant	0	84,427	84,427	
<b>Finance and Customer Services:</b>				
Redmond Review	0	51,396	51,396	
Cyber Support Grant	0	3,418	3,418	
Client-Level Data Flows Support	0	0	0	
<b>Total Corporate Policy - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)</b>	<b>77,141,000</b>	<b>65,869,880</b>	<b>-11,271,120</b>	
<b>Corporate Policy - Unring-fenced (general purpose)</b>				
Housing Benefit Administration Subsidy	720,000	706,572	-13,428	
NNDR Administration Allowance	586,652	578,438	-8,214	
New Homes Bonus	4,084,880	4,084,880	0	
Services Grant	271,000	296,984	25,984	
Local Government Transparency Code	0	13,071	13,071	
Debt Charges (Ministry of Justice)	0	38,882	38,882	
Electoral Integrity New Burdens	0	82,055	82,055	
Revenue Support Grant	414,000	414,069	69	

Corporate Policy Name of Grants received	Original Budget	Final Outturn	Change from Original Budget	Suppleme ntary Revenue Estimate reported
Business Rates Levy Surplus	0	356,734	356,734	
<b>Total Corporate Policy - Unring-fenced (general purpose)</b>	<b>6,076,532</b>	<b>6,571,685</b>	<b>495,153</b>	

Place Name of Grants received	Original Budget	Final Outturn	Change from Original Budget	Suppleme ntary Revenue Estimate reported
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<b>Economy &amp; Growth - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)</b>				
Rough Sleeping Initiative	0	179,879	179,879	
Rough Sleeping Initiative	0	41,952	41,952	
Homelessness Prevention Grant	0	815,676	815,676	FR1
Homelessness Prevention Grant	0	238,686	238,686	FR1
Local Authority Housing Fund	0	3,230	3,230	
Shared Prosperity Fund - brought-forward	0	1,064,784	1,064,784	
Shared Prosperity Fund	5,868,000	2,634,087	-3,233,913	
Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington (ECW): Growth Hub Funding	0	234,285	234,285	
Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington (ECW): NP (Northern Powerhouse) 11	0	261,000	261,000	
Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington (ECW): Skills Bootcamp	0	2,229,214	2,229,214	FR3
Natural England - Stewardship scheme	2,000	1,690	-310	
Natural England - Stewardship scheme	7,000	7,512	512	
Apprentice Incentive Scheme	0	500	500	
Natural England - Stewardship scheme	0	111,020	111,020	
<b>Total Economy &amp; Growth - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)</b>	<b>5,877,000</b>	<b>7,823,515</b>	<b>1,946,515</b>	

<b>Environment &amp; Communities - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)</b>				
Bikeability Grant	0	294,307	294,307	
Planning Skills Delivery Fund - brought forward	0	100,000	100,000	
Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums)	0	30,000	30,000	
Air Quality Grant (Cycling) - brought-forward	0	4,047	4,047	
Section 31 grant - Biodiversity net gain	0	43,467	43,467	
DLUHC - Mobile Home Fit and Proper Person Test grant - brought forward	0	250	250	
XL Bully Ban Implementation Fund	0	6,759	6,759	
Fly Tipping Intervention	0	9,330	9,330	
<b>Total Environment &amp; Communities - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>488,160</b>	<b>488,160</b>	

<b>Highways &amp; Transport - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)</b>				
Bus Capacity Grant - brought-forward	0	158,571	158,571	

Place Name of Grants received	Original Budget	Final Outturn	Change from Original Budget	Suppleme ntary Revenue Estimate reported
Bus Capacity Grant - carried-forward	0	-94,884	-94,884	
Bus Recovery Grant - brought-forward	0	150,000	150,000	
Bus Capability Grant - brought-forward	0	0	0	
Local Transport Fund	0	218,883	218,883	
Bus Support Grant - brought-forward	0	0	0	
Bus Support Grant	0	347,865	347,865	
Active Travel Capability Fund - brought-forward	0	196,339	196,339	
Active Travel Capability Fund - carried-forward	0	-49,856	-49,856	
Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) - brought forward	0	229,510	229,510	
Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) - 2024-25	0	159,490	159,490	
Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) - carried forward	0	-377,471	-377,471	
Bus Service Improvement Plan+ (BSIP+) - brought forward	0	1,178,350	1,178,350	
Bus Service Improvement Plan+ (BSIP+) - Phase 2	0	1,187,596	1,187,596	FR1
Bus Service Improvement Plan+ (BSIP+) - Phase 3	0	2,268,000	2,268,000	FR1
Bus Service Improvement Plan+ (BSIP+) - Transfer to Capital	0	-450,000	-450,000	
Bus Service Improvement Plan+ (BSIP+) - carried forward	0	-3,448,795	-3,448,795	
Bus Fare Cap Grant - brought forward	0	1,415	1,415	
Bus Fare Cap - Mikro	0	1,474	1,474	
Bus Fare Cap 2024-25	0	1,543	1,543	
Bus Fare Cap 2024-25 additional	0	2,509	2,509	
Rural Mobility Fund - brought-forward	0	241,950	241,950	
Highways Tree Survey	0	3,359	3,359	
<b>Total Highways &amp; Transport - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,925,848</b>	<b>1,925,848</b>	
<b>Total Ring-fenced Grants</b>	<b>327,871,155</b>	<b>327,710,523</b>	<b>-160,632</b>	
<b>Total Unring-fenced Grants</b>	<b>31,996,532</b>	<b>33,080,998</b>	<b>1,084,466</b>	

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# Capital Programme 2024/25

**Results to end of March 2025**

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28													
	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024/28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	Total Funding £000
Scheme Description													
Committed Schemes in progress													
Adults Services													
Community - Rural Shared Prosperity	361	81	280	0	0	0	280	280	0	0	0	0	280
Electronic Call Monitoring System	389	0	0	389	0	0	389	0	0	389	0	0	389
People Planner System	94	43	0	51	0	0	51	51	0	0	0	0	51
Replacement Care4CE Devices	93	65	0	28	0	0	28	28	0	0	0	0	28
Total Committed Schemes	937	189	280	468	0	0	748	359	0	389	0	0	748
Total Adults and Health Schemes	937	189	280	468	0	0	748	359	0	389	0	0	748



## CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024/28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	Total Funding £000
Committed Schemes in progress													
Childrens Social Care													
Foster Carers Capacity Scheme	534	434	34	67	0	0	101	0	0	0	0	101	101
Crewe Youth Zone	4,826	395	175	4,256	0	0	4,431	3,584	0	0	0	847	4,431
Family Hubs Transformation	282	124	158	0	0	0	158	158	0	0	0	0	158
Children's Home Sufficiency Scheme	1,404	204	155	1,046	0	0	1,200	0	0	0	0	1,200	1,200
Strong Start, Family Help & Integration													
Early Years Sufficiency Capital Fund	1,036	943	42	50	0	0	92	92	0	0	0	0	92
Childcare Capital Expansion	749	0	9	740	0	0	749	749	0	0	0	0	749
Education and 14-19 Skills													
Adelaide Academy	904	55	13	835	0	0	848	678	0	0	0	170	848
Basic Need Grant Allocation	7,551	10	7	7,534	0	0	7,541	7,541	0	0	0	0	7,541
Brine Leas High School	709	5	705	0	0	0	705	705	0	0	0	0	705
Cledford House	11	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Congleton Planning Area	4,523	4,521	2	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	2
Congleton Planning Area - Primary (1)	2,209	179	0	2,030	0	0	2,030	764	1,266	0	0	0	2,030
Congleton Planning Area - Primary (2)	628	574	6	49	0	0	55	55	0	0	0	0	55
Congleton Planning Area - Primary (3)	7,504	4	0	49	2,200	5,250	7,499	4,299	3,200	0	0	0	7,499
Devolved Formula Grant - Schools	1,533	0	443	780	310	0	1,533	1,533	0	0	0	0	1,533
Energy Efficiency Grant - Schools	672	391	165	116	0	0	280	280	0	0	0	0	280
Future Schemes - Feasibility Studies	250	25	99	126	0	0	225	225	0	0	0	0	225
Handforth Planning Area - New School	13,003	3	6	494	4,000	8,499	12,999	135	12,864	0	0	0	12,999
Holmes Chapel Secondary School	3,659	3,664	-5	0	0	0	-5	-5	0	0	0	0	-5
Little Angels Satellite Sites	29	21	0	8	0	0	8	8	0	0	0	0	8

Children and Families

CAPITAL

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28													
Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £000
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024/28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
Committed Schemes in progress													
Education and 14-19 Skills													
Macclesfield Academy Resource Provision	103	3	0	100	0	0	100	100	0	0	0	0	100
Macclesfield Planning Area - Secondary	1,157	1,148	10	0	0	0	10	0	10	0	0	0	10
Macclesfield Planning Area - Secondary New	731	5	1	725	0	0	725	725	0	0	0	0	725
Macclesfield Planning Area - New School	4,001	1	0	0	0	4,000	4,000	0	4,000	0	0	0	4,000
Malbank High School	1,922	1,897	0	25	0	0	25	25	0	0	0	0	25
Mobberley Primary School	1,208	35	2	609	561	0	1,172	872	0	0	300	0	1,172
Nantwich Planning Area (Primary Schools - 210	9,061	733	60	7,768	500	0	8,328	5,308	3,020	0	0	0	8,328
Oakfield Lodge & Stables	50	12	0	37	0	0	38	38	0	0	0	0	38
Poynton Planning Area	1,500	13	8	1,479	0	0	1,487	684	803	0	0	0	1,487
Provision of Sufficient School Places - SEND (Springfield Crewe)	7,182	3,861	3,113	208	0	0	3,322	0	0	0	0	3,322	3,322
Puss Bank SEN Expansion	532	520	0	12	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	12	12
Provision of SEN Unit - Wistaston Primary School	1,523	169	1,354	0	0	0	1,354	1,054	0	0	0	300	1,354
Sandbach Boys School	18	20	-2	0	0	0	-2	-2	0	0	0	0	-2
Sandbach Primary Academy	1,583	106	806	671	0	0	1,477	1,477	0	0	0	0	1,477
Schools Condition Capital Grant	7,600	1,227	199	4,175	2,000	0	6,373	6,373	0	0	0	0	6,373
SEN/High Needs Capital Allocation	4,790	168	19	4,603	0	0	4,622	4,622	0	0	0	0	4,622
Shavington Planning Area - New Primary School	8,040	156	6	1,094	6,784	0	7,884	5,549	2,335	0	0	0	7,884
Shavington Planning Area - Secondary	3,522	2,883	639	0	0	0	639	639	0	0	0	0	639
Springfield Satellite Site (Dean Row)	6,112	5,934	-114	292	0	0	178	0	0	0	0	178	178
The Dingle PS Expansion	1,395	1,135	238	22	0	0	260	260	0	0	0	0	260
Tytherington High School	2,806	172	36	2,597	0	0	2,633	2,633	0	0	0	0	2,633
Various SEN Sites - Small Works/Adaptations	150	0	1	149	0	0	150	150	0	0	0	0	150
Wheelock Primary School	2,411	201	689	1,521	0	0	2,210	1,751	460	0	0	0	2,210
Wilmslow High School BN	14,179	12,355	433	1,391	0	0	1,825	487	1,290	0	0	48	1,825
Wilmslow Primary Planning Area	626	1	0	625	0	0	625	125	500	0	0	0	625
Total Committed Schemes	134,219	44,319	9,513	46,283	16,356	17,749	89,901	53,675	29,747	0	300	6,178	89,901

Children and Families								CAPITAL					
CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28													
Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024/28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	Total Funding £000
New Schemes													
Education and 14-19 Skills													
New Satellite Special School - 1	6,000	0	17	5,983	0	0	6,000	6,000	0	0	0	0	6,000
New Satellite school - 2	9,000	0	13	987	5,000	3,000	9,000	9,000	0	0	0	0	9,000
New SEN places - 1	1,089	0	4	1,086	0	0	1,089	1,089	0	0	0	0	1,089
New SEN places - 2	25	0	0	25	0	0	25	25	0	0	0	0	25
New SEN places - 3	163	0	141	22	0	0	163	163	0	0	0	0	163
SEN New Free School	998	0	10	740	248	0	998	998	0	0	0	0	998
Gainsborough Primary - Flooring	304	0	17	287	0	0	304	304	0	0	0	0	304
New AP Free School	500	0	3	497	0	0	500	500	0	0	0	0	500
Leighton SEND Reception Adaptations	26	0	0	26	0	0	26	26	0	0	0	0	26
Park Lane Refurbishment additional SEND places	200	0	5	195	0	0	200	200	0	0	0	0	200
Total New Schemes	18,305	0	209	9,848	5,248	3,000	18,305	18,305	0	0	0	0	18,305
Total Children and Families Schemes	152,524	44,319	9,722	56,131	21,604	20,749	108,205	71,980	29,747	0	300	6,178	108,205

## CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £000
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
<b>Committed Schemes in progress</b>													
<b>ICT Services</b>													
Accelerate Digital	1,460	0	282	1,177	0	0	1,460	0	0	0	0	1,460	1,460
Care Act Phase 2	6,314	4,599	657	1,058	0	0	1,715	0	0	0	0	1,715	1,715
Digital Customer Enablement	3,102	2,424	516	163	0	0	678	0	0	0	0	678	678
ICT Device Replacement	1,912	683	454	776	0	0	1,229	0	0	0	0	1,229	1,229
ICT Hybrid Model	3,449	445	1,314	1,690	0	0	3,004	0	0	0	0	3,004	3,004
IADM (Information Assurance and Data	19,465	16,421	1,035	2,009	0	0	3,044	0	0	0	0	3,044	3,044
Infrastructure Investment Programme (IIP)	34,429	31,065	311	2,223	830	0	3,364	0	0	0	0	3,364	3,364
Vendor Management	1,006	765	3	239	0	0	241	0	0	0	0	241	241
<b>Finance &amp; Customer Services</b>													
Core Financials	11,317	9,365	894	765	293	0	1,952	0	0	0	0	1,952	1,952
Strategic Capital Projects		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vendor Management - Phase 2	99	24	0	25	50	0	75	0	0	0	0	75	75
<b>Total Committed Schemes</b>	<b>82,553</b>	<b>65,790</b>	<b>5,465</b>	<b>10,125</b>	<b>1,173</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16,764</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16,764</b>	<b>16,764</b>
<b>Total Corporate Policy Schemes</b>	<b>82,553</b>	<b>65,790</b>	<b>5,465</b>	<b>10,125</b>	<b>1,173</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16,764</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16,764</b>	<b>16,764</b>

## CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £000
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
<b>Committed Schemes in progress</b>													
<b>Facilities Management</b>													
Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund - FM 3	5,214	5,023	121	70	0	0	191	0	0	0	0	191	191
PSDS - 3B - Lot 1	1,028	77	135	815	0	0	951	827	0	0	0	123	951
PSDS - 3B - Lot 3 (schools)	4,390	3,267	87	1,036	0	0	1,123	1,056	0	67	0	0	1,123
Septic Tanks	636	285	6	94	251	0	351	0	0	0	0	351	351
Schools Capital Maintenance	8,315	5,575	213	2,527	0	0	2,740	2,459	0	281	0	0	2,740
Corporate Landlord - Operational	999	996	4	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	4	4
Premises Capital (FM)	39,587	32,530	1,516	4,393	1,149	0	7,058	0	0	0	0	7,058	7,058
Poynton Pool Spillway	1,380	468	95	816	0	0	912	0	0	27	0	884	912
<b>Housing</b>													
Crewe Towns Fund - Warm and Healthy Homes	2,126	31	130	1,965	0	0	2,095	2,095	0	0	0	0	2,095
Disabled Facilities	22,884	10,181	3,859	3,244	2,800	2,800	12,703	11,435	341	0	0	928	12,703
Green Homes Grant	3,030	2,378	72	242	339	0	652	652	0	0	0	0	652
Gypsy and Traveller Sites	4,136	2,938	1,120	78	0	0	1,198	175	0	0	0	1,023	1,198
Home Repairs Vulnerable People	1,458	870	117	471	0	0	588	119	33	0	0	436	588
Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2	4,416	740	1,354	2,322	0	0	3,675	3,666	9	0	0	0	3,675
Local Authority Housing Fund	731	293	129	309	0	0	438	438	0	0	0	0	438
Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund	1,565	1,557	8	0	0	0	8	8	0	0	0	0	8
Sustainable Warmth - Home Upgrade Grant not	1,584	1,557	14	14	0	0	28	40	-12	0	0	0	28
Temporary Accommodation	1,479	1,069	7	403	0	0	410	0	164	246	0	0	410
Warm Homes Fund	239	213	5	21	0	0	26	26	0	0	0	0	26
<b>Estates</b>													
Corporate Landlord - Non-Operational	1,336	0	0	1,336	0	0	1,336	0	0	0	0	1,336	1,336
Malkins Bank Landfill Site	1,360	661	121	577	0	0	699	0	0	0	0	699	699
Farms Strategy	2,910	1,689	0	385	209	626	1,220	0	0	0	1,220	0	1,220

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28													
Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	Total Funding £000
Committed Schemes in progress													
Economic Development													
Crewe Towns Fund - Repurposing Our High	1,132	162	364	288	318	0	970	970	0	0	0	0	970
Crewe Towns Fund - Flag Lane Baths	1,968	583	20	1,365	0	0	1,385	32	0	0	0	1,353	1,385
Crewe Towns Fund - Mill Street Corridor	4,477	684	795	2,998	0	0	3,793	3,793	0	0	0	0	3,793
Crewe Towns Fund - Mirion St	1,190	164	901	125	0	0	1,026	1,026	0	0	0	0	1,026
Crewe Towns Fund - Crewe Youth Zone non-	351	125	121	105	0	0	226	226	0	0	0	0	226
History Centre Public Realm & ICV (Crewe Towns Fund) CTC1	580	10	18	152	400	0	570	570	0	0	0	0	570
Handforth Heat Network	13,219	17	18	695	450	12,039	13,202	2,587	7,428	0	0	3,187	13,202
Demolition of Crewe Library & Concourse CTC10	3,396	859	2,379	159	0	0	2,538	1,015	0	0	0	1,523	2,538
Future High Street Funding - CEC Innovation Centre	4,251	530	3,431	291	0	0	3,721	3,721	0	0	0	0	3,721
Crewe Town Centre Regeneration	32,333	30,993	17	1,323	0	0	1,340	239	64	0	0	1,037	1,340
South Macclesfield Development Area	34,630	3,259	24	176	0	31,171	31,371	10,000	10,000	0	11,371	0	31,371
North Cheshire Garden Village	57,866	7,026	2,504	9,345	17,285	21,706	50,840	20,165	0	0	21,700	8,975	50,840
Handforth Garden Village s106 Obligations	6,841	0	0	0	2,740	4,101	6,841	0	0	0	0	6,841	6,841
Leighton Green	2,096	1,468	26	601	0	0	628	0	0	0	0	628	628
Connecting Cheshire Phase 3	8,000	128	593	2,207	2,200	2,872	7,872	0	7,872	0	0	0	7,872
Connecting Cheshire 2020	9,250	5,680	0	585	0	2,985	3,570	5,172	0	0	0	-1,601	3,570
UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Core	1,304	202	1,102	0	0	0	1,102	1,102	0	0	0	0	1,102
Macclesfield Indoor Market Toilet Refurbishment	191	186	5	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	5	5
Macclesfield Town Centre	1,859	1,858	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Culture & Tourism													
Cattle Handling Facility - Oakwood Farm	405	367	38	0	0	0	38	0	0	38	0	0	38
Countryside Vehicles	1,579	700	26	419	217	217	879	0	0	0	0	879	879
Culture & Tourism S106 Schemes	766	124	40	327	216	59	642	0	642	0	0	0	642
New Archives Premises CTC1	10,256	442	1,124	8,450	240	0	9,814	0	0	0	0	9,814	9,814
PROW Capital Works	1,138	1,042	85	11	0	0	96	96	0	0	0	0	96
PROW CMM A6 MARR	100	69	1	30	0	0	31	31	0	0	0	0	31
PROW Flood Damage Investment	72	71	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Visitor Economy - Rural Shared Prosperity Fund	465	113	352	0	0	0	352	352	0	0	0	0	352
Tatton Park Investment Phase 2	3,280	1,434	11	1,109	725	0	1,845	0	0	0	0	1,845	1,845
Total Committed Schemes	313,801	130,694	23,110	51,882	29,539	78,575	183,106	74,095	26,540	658	34,291	47,522	183,106

Economy & Growth

CAPITAL

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28													
Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	Total Funding £000
New Schemes in 24-25													
Facilities Management													
PSDS - 3C	1,671	0	86	1,585	0	0	1,671	1,448	0	0	0	223	1,671
Estates													
Workplace	1,000	0	255	745	0	0	1,000	1,000	0	0	0	0	1,000
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warm Homes Local Grant (DESNZ)	7,793	0	0	1,354	3,252	3,187	7,793	7,793	0	0	0	0	7,793
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Economic Development													
Macclesfield Indoor Market Refurbishment (MIMR)	2,496	40	1,858	598	0	0	2,456	2,358	0	0	0	98	2,456
Macc on Foot (MOF)	417	5	413	0	0	0	413	413	0	0	0	0	413
Nantwich Town Centre Public Realm	100	0	0	100	0	0	100	0	100	0	0	0	100
Culture & Tourism													
Green Structures Investment	384	0	0	271	113	0	384	0	0	0	0	384	384
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total New Schemes	13,862	45	2,613	4,652	3,366	3,187	13,817	13,012	100	0	0	706	13,817
Total Growth & Enterprise	327,663	130,740	25,723	56,533	32,905	81,762	196,923	87,107	26,640	658	34,291	48,228	196,924

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £000
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
<b>Committed Schemes in progress</b>													
<b>Environment Services</b>													
Bereavement Service Data System	35	7	0	28	0	0	28	0	0	28	0	0	28
Booth Bed Lane, Goostrey	140	0	0	140	0	0	140	100	40	0	0	0	140
Bosley Village Play Area	20	0	0	20	0	0	20	0	20	0	0	0	20
Browns Lane Play Area 2024/25	12	0	0	12	0	0	12	0	12	0	0	0	12
Carbon Offset Investment	568	137	403	29	0	0	431	0	0	0	0	431	431
Carnival Fields	42	0	0	42	0	0	42	0	42	0	0	0	42
Chelford Village Hall Open Space and Sport Improvements	121	119	-0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	2
Chelford Village Hall Phase 2	61	0	0	61	0	0	61	0	61	0	0	0	61
Cremator Flue Gas Modifications	30	0	19	11	0	0	30	0	0	0	0	30	30
Crewe Crematorium and Macclesfield Crematorium Major	30	14	4	12	0	0	16	0	0	0	0	16	16
Elworth Park	52	0	2	50	0	0	52	0	52	0	0	0	52
Energy Improvements at Cledford Lane	985	908	6	71	0	0	77	0	0	0	0	77	77
Fleet EV Transition	6,897	39	951	3,580	327	2,000	6,858	0	0	0	0	6,858	6,858
Fleet Vehicle Electric Charging	585	155	3	286	140	0	430	0	0	0	0	430	430
Future High Street Funding - Sustainable Energy Network	1,566	1,148	202	216	0	0	418	418	0	0	0	0	418
Green Investment Scheme (Solar Farm)	4,150	2,279	1,180	536	155	0	1,871	0	0	0	0	1,871	1,871
Grounds Maintenance Management ICT System	121	101	-42	62	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	20	20
Household Bins Schemes	292	0	292	0	0	0	292	0	0	292	0	0	292
Household Waste Recycling Centres	860	48	36	776	0	0	812	0	0	0	0	812	812
Jim Evison Playing Fields	161	0	19	142	0	0	161	0	161	0	0	0	161
Litter and Recycling Bins	208	119	0	42	25	22	89	0	0	0	0	89	89
Longridge Open Space Improvement Project	66	0	0	66	0	0	66	0	66	0	0	0	66
Macclesfield Chapel Refurbishment	429	22	0	407	0	0	407	0	0	407	0	0	407
Main Road, Langley	259	0	3	257	0	0	259	0	259	0	0	0	259
Newtown Sports Facilities Improvements	99	81	12	6	0	0	18	0	18	0	0	0	18



CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
<b>Committed Schemes in progress</b>													
<b>Environment Services</b>													
Park Development Fund	846	670	0	89	87	0	176	0	0	0	0	176	176
Park Lane, Poynton	39	0	39	0	0	0	39	0	39	0	0	0	39
Park Play, Meriton Road & Stanley Hall	10	0	0	10	0	0	10	0	10	0	0	0	10
Pastures Wood De-carbonisation	51	35	4	13	0	0	16	0	0	16	0	0	16
Pear Tree Play Area, Stapeley Improvements	7	1	6	0	0	0	6	0	4	0	0	1	6
Queens Park Bowling Green	17	0	2	15	0	0	17	0	2	0	0	15	17
Rotherhead Drive Open Space and Play Area	141	117	0	24	0	0	24	0	24	0	0	0	24
Rugby Drive, Macclesfield	71	0	24	47	0	0	71	0	71	0	0	0	71
Shaw Heath Recreation Ground	22	3	12	6	0	0	19	0	19	0	0	0	19
Solar Energy Generation	13,980	91	12	297	300	13,279	13,889	0	0	0	0	13,889	13,889
Stanley Hall Improvements	55	0	53	2	0	0	55	20	35	0	0	0	55
The Carrs Improvement Project	61	0	0	61	0	0	61	0	61	0	0	0	61
The Moor, Knutsford	36	0	32	4	0	0	36	0	17	0	0	19	36
Tytherington Public Art	10	0	10	0	0	0	10	0	10	0	0	0	10
Unsafe Cemetery Memorials	35	9	0	26	0	0	26	0	0	0	0	26	26
Victoria Park Amenity Improvements	20	9	3	8	0	0	11	0	11	0	0	0	11
Victoria Park Pitch Improvements	29	28	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
West Park Open Space & Sports Improvements	120	23	22	75	0	0	98	0	98	0	0	0	98
Wilmslow Town Council - Villas	47	0	47	0	0	0	47	0	13	0	0	34	47
Woodland South of Coppice Way, Handforth	89	68	0	21	0	0	21	0	21	0	0	0	21
Wynbunbury Parish Open Space	5	1	0	4	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	4
Wybunbury St Chad's Closed Cemetery	219	0	0	219	0	0	219	0	0	0	0	219	219
<b>Neighbourhood Services</b>													
Congleton Leisure Centre	13,000	12,963	11	27	0	0	38	0	20	0	0	18	38
Crewe Towns Fund - Valley Brook Green Corridor	3,339	327	264	2,748	0	0	3,012	3,012	0	0	0	0	3,012
Crewe Towns Fund - Cumberland Arena	3,173	128	276	2,768	0	0	3,045	3,045	0	0	0	0	3,045
Crewe Towns Fund - Pocket Parks	1,481	652	302	527	0	0	829	829	0	0	0	0	829
Middlewich Leisure Centre	60	51	0	9	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	9	9
Libraries - Next Generation - Self Service	374	336	0	38	0	0	38	0	0	0	0	38	38
Bollington Leisure	51	0	51	0	0	0	51	51	0	0	0	0	51
<b>Planning &amp; Regulatory Services</b>													
Regulatory Systems & Environmental Health ICT System	313	279	1	34	0	0	34	0	0	0	0	34	34
<b>Total Committed Schemes</b>	<b>55,492</b>	<b>20,967</b>	<b>4,262</b>	<b>13,929</b>	<b>1,034</b>	<b>15,301</b>	<b>34,525</b>	<b>7,475</b>	<b>1,193</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25,114</b>	<b>34,525</b>

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28													
Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £000
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
New Schemes													
Environment Services													
Closed Cemeteries	152	0	0	152	0	0	152	0	0	0	0	152	152
LTA - Tennis Facility Improvements	124	0	39	85	0	0	124	99	0	0	0	25	124
Review of Household Waste Recycling Centres	1,000	0	0	1,000	0	0	1,000	0	0	0	0	1,000	1,000
Strategic Leisure Review	3,400	0	1,329	1,421	650	0	3,400	0	0	0	0	3,400	3,400
Weekly Food Waste Collections	2,712	0	192	2,019	500	0	2,712	2,712	0	0	0	0	2,712
Macclesfield Crematorium - hearth replacement	72	0	72	0	0	0	72	0	0	72	0	0	72
Green Spaces Wilmslow - Mersey Forest	21	0	21	0	0	0	21	21	0	0	0	0	21
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total New Schemes	7,481	0	1,653	4,677	1,150	0	7,481	2,832	0	72	0	4,577	7,481
Total Environment and Communities Schemes	62,973	20,967	5,915	18,606	2,184	15,301	42,006	10,307	1,193	815	0	29,690	42,006

## CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Forecast Budget 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
<b>Committed Schemes in progress</b>													
<b>Highways</b>													
A532 Safer Road Fund Scheme	1,466	677	719	70	0	0	789	447	0	0	0	342	789
A536 Safer Road Fund Scheme	2,404	1,925	428	51	0	0	479	385	0	0	0	94	479
A537 Safer Road Fund Scheme	2,490	2,155	191	144	0	0	335	335	0	0	0	0	335
Air Quality Action Plan	523	421	101	2	0	0	102	87	0	0	0	15	102
Alderley Edge Bypass Scheme Implementation	60,411	60,359	1	51	0	0	52	0	0	0	0	52	52
Bridge Maintenance Minor Wks	12,463	10,037	1,635	792	0	0	2,427	1,406	602	0	0	418	2,427
Client Contract and Asset Mgmt	693	485	62	146	0	0	208	62	0	0	0	146	208
Footpath Maintenance - Slurry Sealing & Reconstruction Works	1,323	514	809	0	0	0	809	809	0	0	0	0	809
Highway Maintenance Minor Wks	69,622	53,616	15,936	70	0	0	16,006	9,994	0	0	0	6,011	16,006
Highway Pothole/Challenge Fund	11,669	8,098	3,399	172	0	0	3,571	3,316	0	0	0	255	3,571
Jack Mills Way Part 1 Claims	307	299	8	0	0	0	8	0	8	0	0	0	8
Local Highway Measures	7,255	6,873	232	151	0	0	382	382	0	0	0	0	382
Ward Members Local Highway Measures	872	0	319	553	0	0	872	496	0	0	0	376	872
 Programme Management	1,547	1,229	317	2	0	0	318	318	0	0	0	0	318
Road Safety Schemes Minor Wks	6,423	5,944	316	163	0	0	478	350	0	0	0	128	478
Traffic Signal Maintenance	1,095	516	278	300	0	0	578	577	0	0	0	1	578
Traffic Signs and Bollards - LED Replacement	1,259	1,011	248	0	0	0	248	0	0	0	0	248	248
Winter Service Facility	957	674	97	97	89	0	283	0	0	0	0	283	283
<b>Infrastructure</b>													
Future High Street Funding - Adaptive Signals	509	455	0	54	0	0	54	0	54	0	0	0	54
Future High Street Funding - Flag Lane Link	1,481	1,249	232	0	0	0	232	232	0	0	0	0	232
Future High Street Funding - Southern Gateway	5,303	1,318	3,783	202	0	0	3,985	3,985	0	0	0	0	3,985
Highways & Infrastructure S106 Funded Schemes	5,590	816	529	2,519	489	1,238	4,774	378	4,391	0	0	5	4,774
Transport & Infrastructure Development Studies	350	10	33	307	0	0	340	340	0	0	0	0	340
Middlewich Eastern Bypass	96,600	26,237	1,441	21,730	22,876	24,316	70,363	46,779	14,611	0	0	8,973	70,363
Mill Street Corridor - Station Link Project	847	92	171	584	0	0	755	171	284	0	0	300	755
North-West Crewe Package	51,366	43,108	5,947	1,411	300	600	8,258	-1,092	3,368	0	0	5,982	8,258
Old Mill Road / The Hill Junction	1,325	187	1	1,136	0	0	1,137	0	1,137	0	0	0	1,137
Poynton Relief Road	54,848	46,283	1,010	2,709	1,146	3,700	8,565	2,236	4,319	0	1,000	1,010	8,565
Sydney Road Bridge	10,501	10,111	1	14	375	0	390	0	390	0	0	0	390

# Highways & Transport

# CAPITAL

## CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £000
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Forecast Budget 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
<b>Committed Schemes in progress</b>													
<b>Strategic Transport and Parking</b>													
A538 Waters Roundabout Pedestrian and Cyclist Crossing	140	87	53	0	0	0	53	53	0	0	0	0	53
Active Travel Fund	3,400	729	97	2,574	0	0	2,671	2,671	0	0	0	0	2,671
Active Travel (Cycling / Walking Route) Investment	2,920	2,765	89	66	0	0	155	90	0	0	0	65	155
Available Walking Routes	151	0	0	151	0	0	151	151	0	0	0	0	151
Bollin Valley / Greater Bollin Trail	114	89	25	0	0	0	25	25	0	0	0	0	25
LEVI Capital Fund 23/24	2,172	0	0	543	543	1,086	2,172	2,172	0	0	0	0	2,172
On-street Residential Charging	551	258	131	162	0	0	293	251	0	0	0	42	293
Park Lane – Ayresshire Way, Congleton Walking and Cycling	482	14	419	49	0	0	468	468	0	0	0	0	468
Route 55 Middlewood Way on Black Lane	770	694	76	0	0	0	76	76	0	0	0	0	76
Sustainable Travel Access Prog	2,245	2,038	21	186	0	0	208	208	0	0	0	0	208
Sustainable Modes of Travel to Schools Strategy (SMOTSS)	1,117	756	126	234	0	0	361	361	0	0	0	0	361
Public Transport Infrastructure	1,615	1,134	452	29	0	0	481	481	0	0	0	0	481
Local Access - Crewe Transport Access Studies	400	88	0	312	0	0	312	312	0	0	0	0	312
Local Access - Macclesfield Transport Access Studies	300	61	0	239	0	0	239	239	0	0	0	0	239
Middlewich Rail Study	20	0	0	20	0	0	20	20	0	0	0	0	20
LTP Development & Monitoring Studies	900	430	30	220	221	0	471	471	0	0	0	0	471
Digital Car Parking Solutions	140	93	3	44	0	0	47	16	0	0	0	31	47
Pay and Display Parking Meters	620	607	0	13	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	13	13
Car Parking Improvements (including residents parking)	322	266	0	56	0	0	56	0	0	0	0	56	56
<b>Total Committed Schemes</b>	<b>647,414</b>	<b>415,274</b>	<b>40,647</b>	<b>44,009</b>	<b>27,653</b>	<b>119,831</b>	<b>232,140</b>	<b>158,389</b>	<b>47,902</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>24,849</b>	<b>232,140</b>
<b>New Schemes</b>													
<b>Highways</b>													
Managing and Maintaining Highways	4,712	0	0	4,712	0	0	4,712	0	0	0	0	4,712	4,712
Pothole Funding	17,397	0	0	5,799	5,799	5,799	17,397	17,397	0	0	0	0	17,397
Integrated Block - LTP	6,009	0	0	2,003	2,003	2,003	6,009	6,009	0	0	0	0	6,009
Maintenance Block - LTP	19,476	0	0	7,878	5,799	5,799	19,476	17,397	0	0	0	2,079	19,476
Incentive Fund - LTP	4,350	0	0	1,450	1,450	1,450	4,350	4,350	0	0	0	0	4,350
<b>Strategic Transport and Parking</b>													
BSIP+ Programme Delivery	539	89	0	450	0	0	450	450	0	0	0	0	450
Car Parking Review	895	0	570	325	0	0	895	0	0	328	325	242	895
			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>New Grant Allocated for 2025-26</b>													
Local Transport Grant	7,754	0	0	7,754	0	0	7,754	7,754	0	0	0	0	7,754
<b>Total New Schemes</b>	<b>61,132</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>30,371</b>	<b>15,051</b>	<b>15,051</b>	<b>61,043</b>	<b>53,357</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>7,033</b>	<b>61,043</b>
<b>Total Highways &amp; Transport</b>	<b>708,546</b>	<b>415,363</b>	<b>41,218</b>	<b>74,379</b>	<b>42,704</b>	<b>134,882</b>	<b>293,182</b>	<b>211,746</b>	<b>47,902</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>1,325</b>	<b>31,882</b>	<b>293,182</b>

OPEN

## **Economy and Growth Committee**

**3 June 2025**

### **Appointments to Member Advisory Groups**

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

**Report Reference No: EG/17/25-26**

**Ward(s) Affected: No specific Ward**

**For Decision**

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 The purpose of this report is to invite the Economy and Growth Committee to agree its appointments to the Handforth Garden Village Member Advisory Group and the Farms Policy Member Advisory Group.
- 2 This report contributes to the Council's objective of being an effective and enabling organisation - effective and responsive governance, compliance and evidence-based decision making.

#### **Executive Summary**

- 3 The Economy and Growth Committee has previously established two Member Advisory Groups to undertake detailed work in development of the Handforth Garden Village project and the revision of the Farms Policy.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Committee re-appoints the Handforth Garden Village Member Advisory Group and the Farms Policy Member Advisory Group, and five members drawn from the Economy and Growth Committee on a 2:2:1 political basis be appointed to each Working Group.

## **Background**

### **Handforth Garden Village Member Advisory Group**

- 4 At its meeting on 19 September 2023, the Committee received a report on the Handforth Garden Village which recommended the establishment of Member Advisory Group to advise officers on activity associated with the development of the Handforth Garden Village.

The membership was on a 2 conservative: 2 labour :1 independent basis and with the following members appointed:

Cllr David Brown	Cllr Nick Mannion	Cllr Mark Goldsmith
Cllr Patrick Redstone	Cllr Fiona Wilson	

- 5 It is recommended that the Handforth Garden Village Member Advisory Group be re-appointed. Since the appointments were made in September 2023, the membership of the Economy and Growth Committee has changes and therefore appointments need to reflect the present membership of the Economy and Growth Committee.

### **Farms Policy Member Advisory Group**

- 6 At its meeting on 19 September 2023, the Committee received a report on the Farms policy which recommended the establishment of Member Advisory Group to receive evidence and consider the options and advise on the setting of any recommendations with the objective that a revised policy be brought forward for adoption.

The membership was on a 2 Conservative: 2 Labour: 1 independent basis and with the following membership:

Cllrs Janet Clowes	Cllr Anna Burton	Cllr Garnet Marshall
Cllr Alision Heler	Cllr Brian Drake	

- 7 It is recommended that the Farms Policy Member Advisory Group be re-appointed for the current municipal year. Since the appointments were made in September 2023, the membership of the Economy and Growth Committee has changes and therefore appointments need to reflect the present membership of the Economy and Growth Committee.

## **Consultation and Engagement**

- 10 There has been consultation with the Groups and the need to appoint to various bodies in accordance with the rules of political proportionality where these apply and in accordance with the agreed terms of reference of each body.

## Reasons for Recommendations

- 11 In accordance with the Constitution, the Committee is responsible for the appointment of the bodies referred to in this report.

## Other Options Considered

12

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	Not appointing to these bodies would negatively affect the Council's ability to make effective decisions in an open and transparent manner.	Failure to comply with the Council's Constitution could leave the Council open to legal challenge.

## Implications and Comments

### *Monitoring Officer/Legal*

- 13 The appointment to working groups allows members to engage, understand and consider complex issues outside of a formal committee but retaining the assurance that the Member Advisory Groups will report back to the Committee when necessary for decisions.

### *Section 151 Officer/Finance*

- 14 There are no financial implications that require an amendment to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

### *Policy*

- 15 There are no direct policy implications.

### **An effective and enabling Council**

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

### *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*

- 16 There are no direct equality, diversity and inclusion implications.

*Human Resources*

17 There are no direct human resources implications.

*Risk Management*

18 Failure to comply with legislation and the Council's Constitution could leave the Council open to legal challenge.

*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 young people.

*Public Health*

21 There are no direct implications for public health.

*Climate Change*

22 There are no direct implications for climate change.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Rachel Graves rachel.graves@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	<a href="#">Agenda and Minutes Economy and Growth Committee 12th Sep 2023</a>



## Economy and Growth Committee Work Programme 2025/26

Report Reference	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item	Decision or Scrutiny
<b>9 September 2025</b>								
EG/02/25-26	First Financial Review of 2025/26	To scrutinise and comment on the First Financial Review and Performance position of 2025/26 and (if necessary) approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements.	Executive Director Resources (S151)	No	No	Yes	No	Scrutiny
EG/10/25-26	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 26-30	To seek approval to go out to public consultation on the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.	Head of Housing	Yes	Yes	No	No	Decision
EG/18/25-26	Nantwich Kingsley Fields S106 Town Centre Public Realm Contribution proposals	To seek committee approval for proposals to utilise S106 contributions for public realm works in Nantwich Town Centre.	Head of Economic Development	No	TBC	TBC	No	Decision
<b>13 November 2025</b>								
EG/07/25-26	Second Financial Review of 2025/26	To scrutinise and comment on the Second Financial Review and Performance position of 2025/26, and (if	Executive Director Resources (S151)	No	No	Yes	No	Scrutiny

Report Reference	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item	Decision or Scrutiny
		necessary) approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements.						
EG/06/25-26	Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2026/27 - 2029/2930	To provide feedback in relation to their financial responsibilities as identified within the Constitution and linked to the budget alignment approved by the Finance Sub-Committee in March 2025	Executive Director Resources (S151)	No	No	Yes	No	Scrutiny
EG/09/24-25	Farms Review	To brief Members on the review and future options for CEC Farms	Head of Rural and Cultural Economy	No	No	No	TBC	Scrutiny and Decision
EG/19/25-26	Knutsford BID Ballot	To consider the formal notification submitted to the Council, setting out the intention of Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire & Merseyside, acting on behalf of the Knutsford Business Improvement District Steering Group requesting that Cheshire East	Development and Regeneration Manager	Yes	No	No	TBC	Decision

Report Reference	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item	Decision or Scrutiny
		Council put a proposal for a Knutsford Business Improvement District (BID) to a postal ballot						
<b>13 January 2026</b>								
EG/04/23-26	Third Financial Review of 2024/25	To scrutinise and comment on the Third Financial Review and Performance position of 2024/25, and (if necessary) approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements.	Executive Director Resources (S151)	No	No	Yes	No	Scrutiny
EG/05/25-26	Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2026/27 – 2029/20230 Provisional Settlement Update	To provide feedback in relation to their financial responsibilities as identified within the Constitution and linked to the budget alignment approved by the Finance Sub-Committee in March 2025.	Executive Director Resources (S151)	No	No	Yes	No	Scrutiny
<b>10 March 2026</b>								
EG/12/24-25	Service Budgets 2025/26	To set out the allocation of approved budgets for 2025/26 for services	Executive Director Resources (S151)	No	No	Yes	No	Scrutiny

Report Reference	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item	Decision or Scrutiny
		under the Committee's remit, as determined by Finance Sub Committee						

## Member Advisory Groups

Group	Membership	Established	Purpose
Handforth Garden Village Member Advisory Group		September 2023	To advise officers on activity associated with the development of the Handforth Garden Village
Farms Policy Member Advisory Group		September 2023	To receive evidence and consider the options and advise on the setting of any recommendations with the objective that a revised policy be brought forward for adoption

## Briefing Reports / Reports for noting

Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Expected Circulation Date via the Members Hub

Note: These reports will be circulated outside of committee meetings.

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