

# Economy and Growth Committee

## Agenda

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<b>Date:</b>	<b>Tuesday 9th September 2025</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>5.30 pm</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>The Capesthorne Room - Town Hall, Macclesfield, SK10 1EA</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 5 - 12)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2025.

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For requests for further information

**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](#)

4. **Public Speaking/Open Session**

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. **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2030** (Pages 13 - 54)

To consider the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and approve it for public consultation.

6. **First Financial Review of 2025/26**

To note and comment on the First Financial Review and Performance Position of 2025/26.

*Report to follow.*

7. **Garden Village Handforth Delivery** (Pages 55 - 70)

To consider the update report on progress made towards delivering Garden Village Handforth.

8. **Work Programme** (Pages 71 - 74)

To consider the Work Programme.

9. **Crewe Town Centre Regeneration Programme** (Pages 75 - 106)

To consider the update on the regeneration of Crewe town centre.

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

The reports relating to the remaining items on the agenda have been withheld from public circulation and deposit pursuant to Section 100(B)(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the matters may be determined with the press and public excluded.

The Committee may decide that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3, 5 and 7A of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

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

11. **Crewe Town Centre Regeneration Programme** (Pages 107 - 116)

To consider the confidential appendices

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

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**CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Economy and Growth Committee**  
held on Tuesday, 3rd June, 2025 in the Council Chamber, Municipal  
Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe CW1 2BJ

**PRESENT**

Councillor M Gorman (Chair)

Councillors S Bennett-Wake, L Buchanan, A Burton, P Coan, A Farrall,  
S Gardiner, A Heler, G Marshall, C O'Leary, J Pearson, 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  
Karen Whitehead, Housing Standards and Adaptations Manager  
Steve Reading, Finance Officer  
Adrian Leslie, Legal Officer  
Rachel Graves, Democratic Services Officer

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors D Brown and F Wilson.  
Councillor S Gardiner and S Bennett-Wake attended as substitutes.

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In relation to Item 5, Councillors S Gardiner and Garnet Marshall declared that they were members of the Strategic Planning Board and as there was a possibility that future planning applications in relation to the site would be considered by the Board, they would leave the meeting for this item.

In relation to Item 5, Councillor C O'Leary declared a non-registerable interest as he had been involved in the Save Danes Moss campaign.

In relation to Items 6 and 7, Councillor C O'Leary declared a non-pecuniary and non-registerable interest they covered areas of his funded and published research.

**3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING****RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2025 be approved as a correct record.

#### **4 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION**

Mr Thomas Eccles, Chair of Danes Moss Trust, spoke in relation to Item 5 – South Macclesfield Development Area. He referred to the recommendations and stated that a fourth option was missing which was for the full-scale restoration of the site to a natural peatland habitat with no urban development and he hoped that this would be considered in the review of options for the site.

#### **5 SOUTH MACCLESFIELD DEVELOPMENT AREA**

Having previously declared an interest Councillors S Gardiner and G Marshall left the meeting during consideration of this item.

The Committee considered the report which provided an update on the South Macclesfield Development Area project which included the planning history, land ownership, financial investment, and the next steps for the project.

During consideration of the report, it was asked if clarification could be provided on the planning implications of the withdrawal of the reserve matters applications and any new applications being submitted. Officers agreed to provide a written response.

Reference was made to the Council's investment of £3.283m to date in promoting the South Macclesfield Development Area for residential development in line with the Local Plan, and it was asked if a breakdown of the expenditure could be provided.

The Committee emphasised the importance of consultation with stakeholders, including local residents and environmental groups, on the development of alternative options for the site.

The recommendations were proposed and seconded and during the debate an amendment was proposed and seconded.

##### Amendment

Recommendation 1 to be amended as follows:

“Add after ‘Delegate to Director of Growth and Enterprise’ the words ‘in consultation with the chair, vice chair and opposition spokesperson for economy and growth’ and add after ‘on this site,’ the words ‘nature-led recovery option’.”

The proposer and seconder of the recommendations agreed to accept the amendment and therefore the amendment became part of the substantive motion.

**RESOLVED** (by majority): The Committee

- 1 delegate to the Director of Growth and Enterprise, in consultation with the chair, vice chair and opposition spokesperson for economy and growth, to take all actions necessary to review alternative options for the site. This will include disposal, development on this site, nature-led recovery option, 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.

The meeting adjourned for a short break during which Councillor S Gardiner and G Marshall returned to the meeting.

**6 INTERIM HOUSING STRATEGY 25-28**

The Committee considered the report on outcome of the consultation on the Interim Housing Strategy 2025-2028.

An overview of the 229 responses to the consultation was provided which showed that 93% of the respondents were Cheshire East residents, with responses predominantly from those over the age of 55.

During consideration of the report, reference was made to the use of the term 'rough sleepers' and it was asked if this could be replaced with "people experiencing street homelessness." Officers undertook to see clarification on the definition to be used.

The Committee asked about the housing offer to young people leaving care to enable independent living. In response it was stated that a working group, which included the housing team and representatives from children's commissioning, had been established to work towards the commissioning of a revised housing offer for young people which would include an increase in the provision of emergency accommodation and supported accommodation for young people by 2026.

Reference was made to the options available for those wanting to downsize and it was noted that one of the actions in the Interim Housing

Strategy Action Plan was to explore downsizing and the opportunities available from housing providers.

It was asked if there was a register of empty houses and in response it was stated that the Council held a register, and information would be circulated to committee members on this.

**RESOLVED** (by majority): The Committee

- 1 note the consultation responses and amendments to the Interim Housing Strategy 2025-2028.
- 2 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.

## **7 HOME REPAIRS AND ADAPTATIONS FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE POLICY**

The Committee considered the report on the outcome of the consultation on the Home Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Policy.

During consideration of the report concern was raised that the £30,000 Disabled Facilities Grant cap had not been uplifted since 2008 and the Committee suggested that the Chair write on their behalf to the Government requesting an inflationary increase to the Grant cap, as without this there could be situations where people would not be able to afford necessary adaptations.

The Committee emphasised the need for coordination with adult social care and occupational therapists and asked that the policy aligned with broader health and housing strategies.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously): That the Committee

- 1 note the consultation responses and amendments made to the Home Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Policy.
- 2 approve and adopt the final version of the Home Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Policy 2025-2028.
- 3 the Chair of Economy and Growth Committee to write to the government on behalf of the Committee requesting an inflationary uplift to the £30,000 Disabled Facilities Grant cap.

The meeting adjourned for a short break.



## 8 FINAL OUTTURN 2024/25

The Committee received the report which provided an overview of the Cheshire East Council final outturn for the financial year 2024/25 and the financial performance of the Council relevant to the committee remit.

It was reported that the Growth and Enterprise Department and Place Directorate were reporting an underspend of £5.3m against a budget of £28.2m. This was a £1.5m improvement from Quarter 3. The main reasons for the underspend were savings against gas and electricity compared to higher budgeted costs, an underspend on business rates, reduction in maintenance spend and vacancy management.

The Committee acknowledged the efforts of staff in achieving the savings despite the high vacancy levels.

During discussion concerns were raised on the sustainability of relying on vacancies to achieve savings and the impact of adjusting capital projects expenditure on future costs.

The Committee asked if information could be provided on benchmarking against other councils using reliance indicators and if additional training could be provided for councillors on financial matters.

**RESOLVED** (by majority): That the Committee

- 1 note 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 note the contents of Annex 1
- 3 approve the new Reserves in the Reserves Section, as set out in Annex 1 to the report at Section 5, Table 1, which includes proposed movements to the reserves.
- 4 note that Council will be recommended to approve the Supplementary Revenue Estimate Request for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £1,000,000, as per Annex 1 to the report at Section 3, Table 1.
- 5 approve the Supplementary Capital Estimates and Capital Virements between £500,000 and £1,000,000 in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules, as detailed in Annex 1 to the report at Section 4, Table 4.

- 6 note the Council will be recommended to approve the Supplementary Capital Estimates over £1,000,000 in accordance with Budget and Policy Framework Rules, as detailed in Annex 1 to the report at Section 4, Table 5.

## 9 APPOINTMENTS TO MEMBER ADVISORY GROUPS

The Committee considered the report on the appointment of the Handforth Garden Village Member Advisory Group and the Farms Policy Member Advisory Group for the municipal year 2025-26.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously):

That the Committee appoint the Handforth Garden Village Member Advisory Group and the Farms Policy Member Advisory Group for the municipal year 2025-26 with the following memberships:

### **Farms Policy Member Advisory Group**

1. Councillor Linda Buchanan
2. Councillor Anna Burton
3. Councillor Alison Heler
4. Councillor Garnet Marshall
5. Councillor Chris O’Leary.

### **Handforth Garden Village Member Advisory Group**

1. Councillor David Brown
2. Councillor Michael Gorman
3. Councillor Patrick Redstone
4. Councillor Rob Vernon
5. Councillor Fiona Wilson

## 10 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme.

It was reported that there was an additional item for the September 2025 meeting in relation to an update on the Crewe Town Centre Regeneration Programme.

The Committee was asked to approve the establishment of the Task and Finish Group for the Rural Action Plan, which would help shape the Rural Action Plan for 2026 -2030. The Group would be made up of 5 members of the Committee and was expected to run from June 2025 to January 2026.

Following full Council’s resolution “*that each committee determine whether their committee meetings during the 2025-26 municipal year should include twilight meetings, which should start no earlier than 5.30 pm*”, it

was proposed that the September meeting of the Committee be held as a twilight meeting, starting at 5.30 pm.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee

- 1 note the Work Programme 2025-26.
- 2 approve the establishment of a Rural Action Plan Task and Finish Group on a 2:2:1 basis, with membership nominations submitted to Democratic Services.
- 3 agree the 9 September 2025 meeting of the Economy and Growth Committee be held as a twilight meeting commencing at 5.30 pm.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.40 pm

Councillor M Gorman (Chair)

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OPEN

## **Economy and Growth Committee**

**Date: 09 September 2025**

### **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-30**

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

**Report Reference No: EG/10/25-26**

**Ward(s) Affected: All**

**For Decision or Scrutiny: Decision**

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 This report presents the draft 2026-2030 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (Appendix one).
- 2 The Economy and Growth Committee are asked to consider the draft strategy and approve it for public consultation.
- 3 The draft strategy aligns with the commitments outlined in the Cheshire East Plan (2025-2029) including unlocking prosperity for all and improving health and wellbeing.

#### **Executive Summary**

- 4 The Homelessness Act 2002 mandates that councils conduct a review of homelessness within their jurisdiction and develop and publish a strategy based on the review's findings. Additionally, the strategy must detail how the Council plans to support the Government's goal to end rough sleeping.
- 5 The existing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2021-2025) requires updating to reflect the current status of homelessness and rough sleeping and to outline future actions to address these issues.
- 6 A comprehensive review of homelessness and rough sleeping was conducted in 2024-2025, providing the necessary evidence to formulate a new strategy. Approval is sought to proceed with public consultation on the draft document.

- 7 As a statutory document, it is crucial for the Council to demonstrate extensive consultation with internal services, external agencies, and residents in the development of the final strategy.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Economy and Growth Committee is recommended to agree:

1. That the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2030 go out to public consultation and
2. Note, that following consultation the final version of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2030 will be presented to the Committee for approval to adopt.

#### Background

- 8 Homelessness or the threat of becoming homeless can have a significant impact on the lives of individuals and families. It can have a detrimental impact on mental health and wellbeing. Rough sleeping is the sharp edge of homelessness and it is the Government's intention in partnership with Councils to end rough sleeping.
- 9 On 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021, the Economy and Growth Committee approved the 2021-2025 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and the associated action plan.
- 10 During the lifetime of the existing strategy the Housing Options Team have completed a number of interventions to prevent and relieve homelessness including:
- Publishing the Unlawful Eviction and Harassment Policy to ensure tenants are aware of their legal rights and landlords are aware too. It also outlined the action the Council can take against landlords or agents who do not follow the law.
  - Reviewed, consulted and amended the Cheshire East Allocations Policy, aligning it with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 to ensure that those facing domestic abuse receive priority.
  - The Housing Options Team were awarded the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation (DAHA)

- Reviewed our Housing Related Support Contracts and undertook a recommissioning procurement to ensure that our provision meets current needs.
  - Restructured our service to reflect the changing demands of the service, to prioritise frontline services and to deliver savings.
  - Improved partnership working with mental health services, adult social care and drug and alcohol services through a multi-disciplinary team pilot to tackle long term and repeat rough sleeping.
  - Commissioned and recruited support services to encourage non-UK nationals with new immigration status to access work and independent accommodation and to reduce reliance on Council Services.
  - Developed Housing Led supported accommodation to meet the needs of people who are not suited to shared accommodation but need high level support.
  - Provided a specialist support role to meet the needs of Domestic Abuse Survivors leading to the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation and the delivery of a successful Whole Housing Approach pilot.
- 11 The evidence to support the development of a new strategy was established through a comprehensive review of the current position.
- 12 A robust review was undertaken in 2024-2025 and the key findings highlighted were:
- There has been a notable increase in individuals experiencing multiple, interconnected needs that hinder access to temporary accommodation and independent living. These overlapping issues often fall below the threshold for statutory homelessness assistance but present challenges when placed in mainstream supported accommodation.
  - There is a subset of clients with multiple disadvantages who frequently re-engage with services, indicating a need for more tailored and sustained support.
  - Specific attention is required for individuals affected by:
    - Private rent evictions
    - Refugee status
    - Domestic abuse

- Discharges from prison and hospital settings
  - There is a lack of public awareness of the Housing Options Service and how to access it.
  - Referral pathways are unclear, and many residents struggle to find suitable, affordable, and settled accommodation.
  - A shortage of appropriate 'move-on' accommodation is causing bottlenecks, leaving individuals in unsuitable housing for extended periods.
  - Access to the private rented sector remains limited due to rising rents, despite increases in Local Housing Allowance. Collaborative efforts with private landlords and partner agencies are essential to address this gap.
- 13 The Homelessness Strategy Steering group, which several external and internal services attend, including Adult and Children's Services, Mental Health, Drug Services, and Police and Probation Services have played a fundamental role in the development of the draft strategy and support the priorities which the strategy focuses on.
- 14 The priority and aim of the strategy is to ensure that: "Through strong partnerships and shared experience homelessness in Cheshire East will be rare, brief and not reoccurring."
- 15 The strategy themes are:
1. Increase the prevention of homelessness
  2. Prevent rough sleeping
  3. Improve access to accommodation
  4. Enhance partnerships to improve health and wellbeing outcomes
- 16 There are a number of actions which underpin the priorities which are outlined within the action plan which accompanies the strategy.

## **Consultation and Engagement**

- 17 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out the priority areas of work, based on the evidence collated during the review of homelessness within the area and prior to the development of the strategy. It is good practice to consult with individuals and agencies, providing them with the opportunity to comment on priorities and actions which inform our strategic direction. By publicly consulting on the draft strategy, the Council negates the risk of implementing a strategic direction that does not properly reflect the range of needs and views within the Borough, ensuring it is representative



18 It is our intention to consult with a wide range of organisations on the draft strategy including but not exclusively:

- People with lived experience
- Internal Council Services
- Local Registered Housing Providers
- Health
- Supported Accommodation Providers
- The voluntary sector and charities, including “by and for” organisations
- Local residents
- Key Stakeholders and external agencies

19 We are proposing to commence consultation on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2025 for a period of 12 weeks, ending on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2025.

20 The consultation will take place through a number of mechanisms including:

- Online questionnaires
- Briefing sessions
- Team meetings
- Strategic groups
- Direct approach to relevant partners

and will be promoted through social media channels and a press release.

21 The aim of the consultation is to seek views on the strategy including:

- Whether the priorities and themes of the strategy accurately reflect the local picture and provide the right amount of detail
- To determine if the evidence base included within the strategy reflects other organisations understanding
- If the proposed action plans for each priority will achieve the aims of the strategy
- Are there other issues relating to homelessness which should be prioritised
- Any further observations on the strategy as a whole
- The contribution other services can provide to support the delivery of the strategy to provide wrap around support to some of our most vulnerable

## Reasons for Recommendations

- 22 The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on Council's to conduct a review of homelessness in their area and formulate and publish a strategy for the future based on the results of that review. The strategy is required to set out how services will be delivered to prevent and relieve homelessness
- 23 As a statutory document, it was important that the Council can demonstrate that they have consulted widely with internal services, external agencies and residents.
- 24 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy 2026-2030 is a significant contributor to achieving the priorities of the Corporate Plan including unlocking prosperity for all and improving health and welling.

## Other Options Considered

- 25 There are no alternatives to the recommendations as it is a statutory requirement for the Council to have a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy in place, which sets out how the Council will prevent homelessness.

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	The Council will not have a statutory strategy in place.	The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will require the Council to put in place a strategy and without one we could jeopardise the Homelessness Prevention Funding which is allocated to the Council to prevent homelessness

## **Implications and Comments**

### *Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance*

- 26 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires that local authorities have a strategy in place to prevent and deal with homelessness. A new strategy should be published every five years.
- 27 In conducting a public consultation exercise, the Council should have regard to settled legal principles (known as the Gunning principles) to ensure that as the consultation is lawful and to mitigate challenge:
- 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 matters being consulted on 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.
  - 4) 'conscientious consideration' must be given to the consultation responses when reaching a final decision.
- 28 The proposal to go out to consult on a draft strategy, in a timeframe sufficient to allow consideration and in doing so to provide sufficient information and return to Committee with a revised strategy that takes into account the consultation responses will meet these principles.

### *Section 151 Officer/Finance*

- 29 The development of a draft strategy has been undertaken taking into consideration the Medium Term Financial Position and the resources available to the Housing Options Service currently. A number of actions will require partnership working and do not place a financial pressure on the Council.
- 30 Some actions will be funded through the Homelessness Prevention Fund. These grants have been in place for a number of years but could be reduced or cut and if this happens the actions associated with this funding will be reviewed.
- 31 All major projects for example the review of temporary accommodation, any reviews to the common allocations policy that stem from work around the allocation of adapted homes or changing in priorities to address

balance or any additional housing pathways or significant commissions will be subject to detailed business cases and if not supported will not proceed.

### *Human Resources*

- 32 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*

- 33 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, 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.
- 34 A number of actions within the strategy will involve collaborating with external partners, stakeholders and other Council departments. They may also be impacted by future financial pressures and changes. We will try and mitigate this risk via regular communication and monitoring.
- 35 There is a risk that delivery of actions within the strategy may be delayed due to the availability of staff and resources, particularly as central government reviews the Allocation of Grant funding. These risks will be monitored and the action plan reviewed on a regular basis.

### *Impact on other Committees*

- 36 There are no direct implications for committees, however the strategic themes within the strategy will require full engagement from all relevant departments. There is a great deal of co-dependency between Housing Options and Homelessness and the outcomes of both Ofsted and CQC inspections.

### *Policy*

- 37 The Cheshire East Interim Housing Strategy approved in June 2025 outlines a number of priorities including “Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping” and identifies within the action plan the requirement to develop a new Homelessness and rough sleeping strategy and action plan.

- 38 The draft strategy aligns with the commitments outlined in the Cheshire East Plan (2025-2029) as outlined below.

<b>Commitment 1: Unlocking prosperity for all</b>	<b>Commitment 2: Improving health and wellbeing</b>	<b>Commitment 3: An effective and enabling council</b>
Collaborating with partners to prevent and relieve homelessness and rough sleeping, providing our residents with the ability to sustain a tenancy through money advice, will contribute towards commitment 1.2 “Child, family and adult poverty is reduced through a coordinated approach with partners”	Homelessness or the threat of becoming homeless can have a significant impact on the lives of individuals and families. It can have a detrimental impact on mental health and wellbeing through homelessness prevention we can improve the health and wellbeing of our residents contributing to the commitment 2.2 “Improved independence, quality of life, health and wellbeing through early intervention and prevention”	Consulting and shaping our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy with internal and external partners will contribute to commitment 3.4 “Service delivery and new ideas are shaped by effective communication, consultation and active engagement with all our communities”

### *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*

- 39 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will be completed for the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and will be submitted for approval to the Council’s Equality and Diversity Officer.
- 40 The EIA will develop further during consultation and engagement with service users
- 41 There are always significant Equality implications for any Homelessness Strategy mainly because legislation prescribes that certain vulnerable groups are given priority to services. This will be reflected in the EIA, with clear justification and balances, main affected groups are those with physical and mental health needs, nationality and ethnicity because of ineligibility to access services and gender and sex because of the current approach to benefit allocation prescribing bedroom allowances based on the sex of children for example.

### *Other Implications*

- 42 A report by Public Health England – Health matters: rough sleeping February 2020 indicates that “those who are rough sleeping or homeless

experience some of the most severe health inequalities and report much poorer health than the general population – The draft strategy outlines how we will work to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping and therefore improving the health and wellbeing of our residents.

- 43 Following an inquiry into children in temporary accommodation, a series of House of Commons committee reports were published outlining the detrimental impact of homelessness on children. The reports highlighted the impact on educational attainment, especially for children residing in temporary accommodation, demonstrating the importance of homelessness prevention. - The draft strategy outlines how we will work to prevent homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation for families with children.
- 44 Rural communities are supported throughout our Common Allocations Policy to protect local accommodation for residents in small communities. Outreach services and bespoke delivery models are deployed to ensure engagement opportunities are fair to those with mobility needs or without access to transport.
- 45 There are no climate change impacts of the strategy, although social and environmental impact is included as a priority in all our partnerships and commissions.

### *Consultation*

<b>Name of Consultee</b>	<b>Post held</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date returned</b>
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy) :</i>			
Ashley Hughes	S151 Officer	20/08/25	26/08/25
Julie Gregory	Acting Monitoring Officer	20/08/25	26/08/25
<i>Legal and Finance</i>			
Julie Gregory	Acting Head of Legal Services	08/07/25	11/07/25
Wendy Broadhurst	Lead Finance Partner (Place)		

<i>Other Consultees:</i>  <i>Executive Directors/Directors</i>			
Phil Cresswell	Executive Director – Place	26/08/25	26/08/25
Peter Skates	Director of Growth and Enterprise		

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Karen Carsberg <a href="mailto:Karen.carsberg@cheshireeast.gov.uk">Karen.carsberg@cheshireeast.gov.uk</a> Nic Abbott <a href="mailto:Nic.abbott@cheshireeast.gov.uk">Nic.abbott@cheshireeast.gov.uk</a>
Appendices:	Appendix one – draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 26-2030
Background Papers:	

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# Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026 – 2030

**“Reducing homelessness in partnership”**

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## **Draft Foreword**

I am pleased to introduce Cheshire East Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2026–2030. This strategy outlines our vision to reduce homelessness across the borough and sets out four key strategic commitments to guide our efforts.

We are launching this strategy at a time of national economic uncertainty, a challenging housing market, and unprecedented levels of homelessness—pressures that are being felt by many of our residents here in Cheshire East.

Our approach is ambitious and people-focused. We are placing a strong emphasis on preventing homelessness before it occurs, while also strengthening support for those who are already homeless. This includes developing tailored pathways for vulnerable groups and enhancing our partnerships to deliver accommodation-led solutions that meet individual needs.

A central aim of this strategy is to expand early intervention and prevention opportunities. We recognise the growing number of individuals facing complex and interconnected challenges that make it difficult to access temporary accommodation or sustain independent living. These challenges often have a profound impact on health and wellbeing. Through this strategy, we are committed to improving outcomes by addressing the health inequalities linked to homelessness and housing instability.

Rough sleeping remains the most visible and acute form of homelessness. Our strategy adopts a preventative, multi-disciplinary approach to break the cycle of chronic and repeat rough sleeping, with a focus on strengthening both in-reach and outreach services.

The pressures on the Council are increasing, but we remain steadfast in our commitment to ensuring that everyone in Cheshire East has access to the support they need, when they need it. Tackling homelessness is not something we can do alone. It requires strong collaboration across sectors and communities. This Strategy will help to enable prosperity and wellbeing for all in Cheshire East. We look forward to working together with our partners to prevent and relieve homelessness wherever it arises, helping to build a borough where everyone can thrive.

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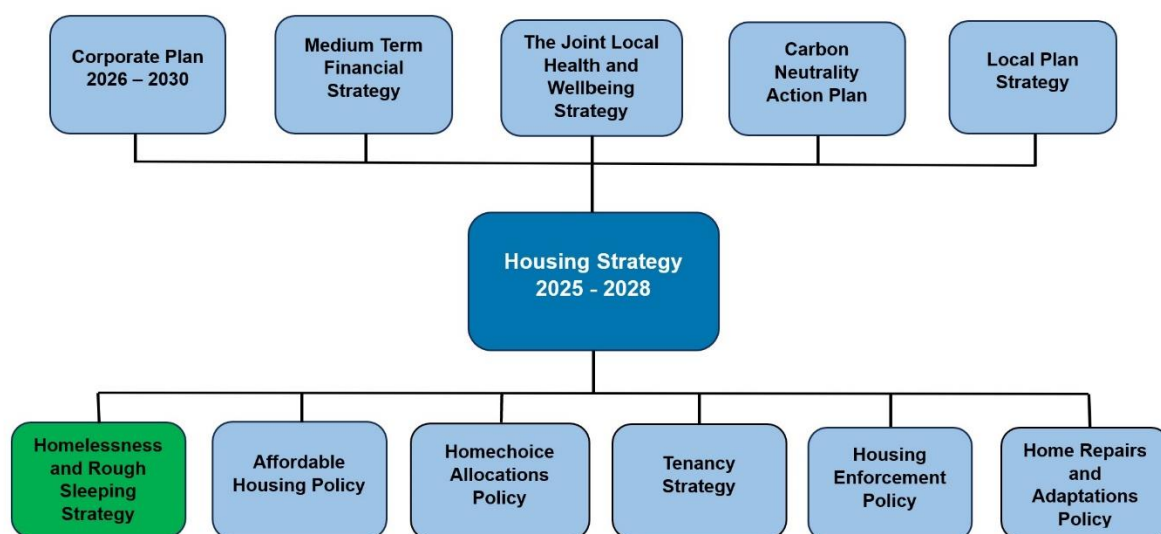
## Introduction

### **Complementary strategies and policies**

The Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan aspires to “enable prosperity and wellbeing for all in Cheshire East.” This Strategy directly supports **Corporate Plan Objective 2: Improving Health and Wellbeing**, particularly by:

- Promoting improved independence, health, and wellbeing through early intervention and prevention.
- Delivering lasting solutions through strong and committed partnerships.

**The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2030** will influence, and be influenced by, several Cheshire East Council Strategies and Policies:

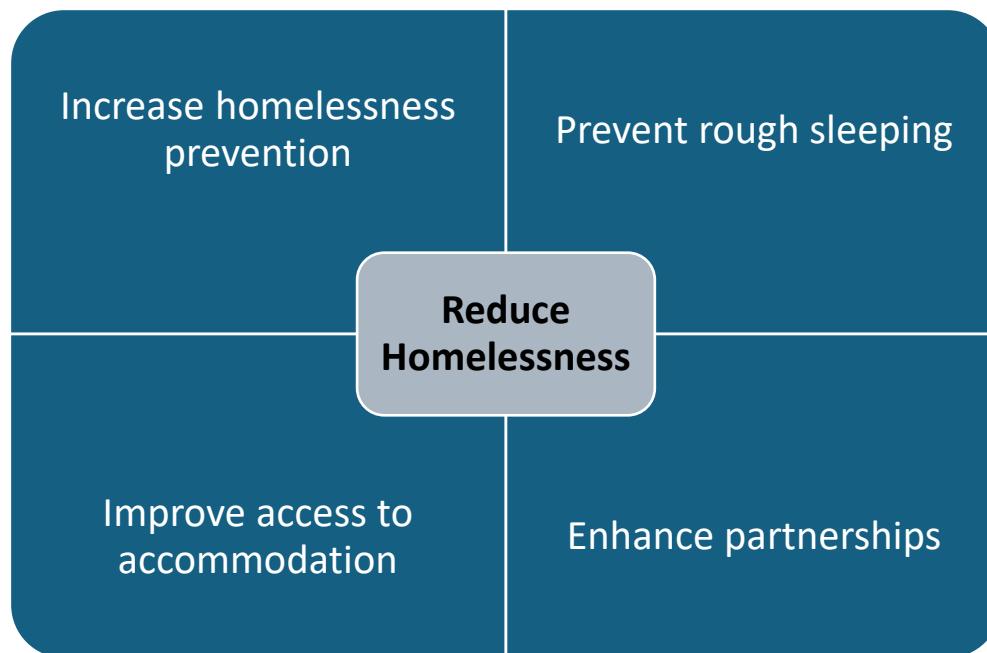


The **Cheshire East Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026–2030** has been developed with awareness of the significant and evolving challenges in the housing sector, including economic instability, the cost-of-living crisis, and reductions in public funding. It sets out our strategic vision and commitments, while remaining adaptable to emerging evidence and changing circumstances throughout its duration.

This Strategy outlines clear objectives and delivery options aimed at reducing homelessness and improving outcomes for our most vulnerable residents. It replaces the current strategy and aligns with the **Cheshire East Council Interim Housing Strategy 2025–2028**. It is designed to be both forward-looking and responsive to national and local developments in homelessness.

Our overarching strategic priority is to **reduce homelessness** - empowering residents to access and maintain suitable housing and enjoy an enhanced quality of life. This Strategy also emphasises inclusive collaboration, ensuring that all stakeholders are actively involved in shaping and reviewing our shared commitments.

## Cheshire East Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2030 – Strategic Commitments



### National strategic context

Homelessness in England has reached unprecedented levels, with current data indicating the highest figures since records began. Recent statistics<sup>1</sup> reveal:

- A continued rise in the number of households receiving homelessness support from local authorities.
- An increase in the number of households reaching the end of statutory homelessness duties.
- Minimal change in the number of households securing accommodation through these duties.
- A decline in the proportion of households successfully supported into accommodation.

### **Legal and policy framework**

Under the **Housing Act 1996**, a person is considered homeless if they have no available accommodation or if it is unreasonable for them to continue occupying their current accommodation.

The **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government** holds primary responsibility for homelessness policy in England. It coordinates cross-government efforts and allocates funding to local authorities, who are legally obligated to support

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statutory-homelessness-in-england-financial-year-2023-24/statutory-homelessness-in-england-financial-year-2023-24#introduction>

individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Additional funding may also be provided by other departments, such as the **Department for Work and Pensions** and the **Home Office**.

### **Statutory homeless duties**

Local authorities must fulfil four key duties:

- **Prevention Duty:** This applies when a household is at risk of homelessness within 56 days. Local authorities must take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness, which may include negotiating with landlords or family members, providing mediation, reducing rent arrears, or securing alternative accommodation. This duty can be extended if prevention efforts are ongoing.
- **Relief Duty:** This duty is triggered when a household is already homeless or becomes homeless after the prevention stage. Authorities must assist in securing suitable accommodation, which may involve private rentals, supported housing, or social housing applications.
- **Main Duty:** If a household remains homeless after the relief stage and is assessed as unintentionally homeless, eligible for assistance, and in priority need, the local authority must provide temporary accommodation until the duty is discharged through an offer of long-term accommodation.
- **Temporary Accommodation Duty** - Temporary accommodation refers to housing arranged by local authorities under their statutory homelessness responsibilities. Most households in temporary accommodation are placed under the **Main Duty**, although it may also be provided during the **Relief Duty** stage or on an interim basis while decisions or reviews are pending.

These are in addition to an overarching duty for the Local Authority to provide advice and information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness and the rights of homeless people or those at risk of homelessness.

### **Changes to Government and housing policies**

In July 2024, the Government launched the new Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, signalling its commitment to bold reforms aimed at increasing housing supply and addressing rising homelessness—key priorities for the current administration. A series of new measures have been introduced or are planned for implementation during this Parliament.

In January 2025, the Government launched a consultation as part of the first steps of a review of their approach to the Homelessness Prevention Grant, a key source of funding provided to all local authorities in England. The aim of the review was to develop a new formula to reflect relative demand and cost pressure. Cheshire East funding allocation could change, and this could impact on the delivery of this strategy.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is designed to be ambitious and forward thinking. With current service demands, pressures and resources the vision is achievable. The Housing Options Service will keep the performance under review

with the changing resources available to Councils and will ensure all actions are effective, efficient and represent good value for money before execution.

### **Renters' Rights Act**

Introduced in the King's Speech in July 2024, this new legislation will strengthen tenant protections, including:

- The abolition of Section 21 'no-fault' evictions
- Enhanced rights for tenants; including the right to challenge rent increases.
- A ban on rental bidding wars, discrimination against households accessing benefits and households with children
- Easier processes for tenants to keep pets, subject to landlord approval and potential insurance requirements.
- Extension of the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector.

Research suggests that nearly 50% of Buy-to-Let landlords may raise rents in response to these changes, with properties in the Northwest expected to be particularly affected. This could place more financial pressure on already stretched households.

### **Social and supported housing reforms**

- The **Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023** introduced significant changes to the regulation of social housing, including enhanced powers for the Housing Ombudsman and improved complaint investigation processes.
- The **Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023** established new regulatory frameworks for Supported Exempt Accommodation. A consultation on the Act took place in early 2025, and we will ensure local implementation of the Act's requirements.

### **Rough sleeping and domestic abuse**

- The **National Rough Sleeping Strategy**, updated in September 2022, builds on the 2018 strategy and is structured around four key themes: Prevention, Intervention, Recovery, and a Transparent and Joined-Up System. It also introduced new duties for local authorities to prevent and relieve rough sleeping.
- The **Domestic Abuse Act 2021** broadened the definition of abuse to include not just physical violence but also financial, emotional, coercive or controlling behaviours. The Act mandated local authorities to provide appropriate support and safe accommodation for victims of domestic abuse and their children.

### **England's homeless children**

- Following an inquiry into children in temporary accommodation, a series of **House of Commons** committee reports were published outlining the

detrimental impact of homelessness on children. The reports highlighted the impact on educational attainment, especially for children residing in temporary accommodation, demonstrating the importance of homelessness prevention.

### **Local strategic context**

In response to national reforms, the **Cheshire East Interim Housing Strategy** outlines priorities for 2025–2028. This shorter-term strategy reflects the dynamic policy environment, and positions the Council to adapt to evolving responsibilities and policy changes.

The **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026–2030** supports the delivery of the Interim Housing Strategy, particularly:

**Strategic Priority 2:** Meeting People’s Specialist Housing Needs.

**Strategic Priority 3:** Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping.

This strategy remains responsive to both national and local developments in homelessness.

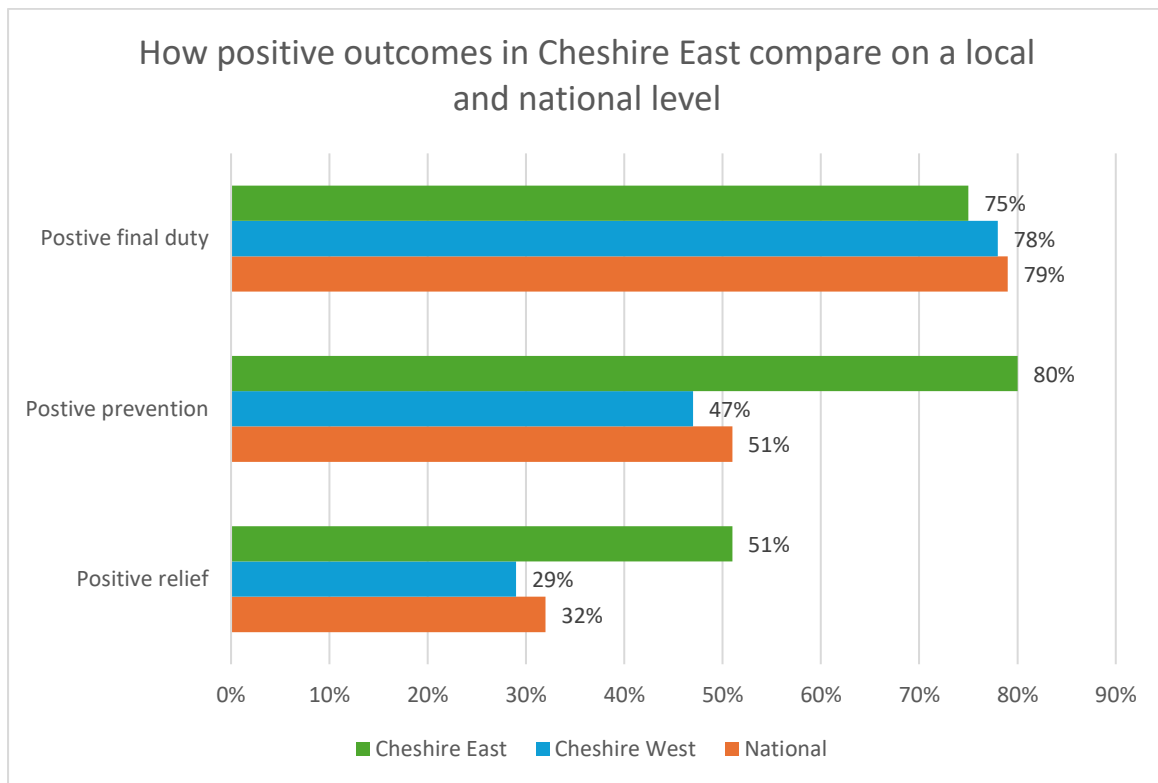
### **Service demand and outcomes**

- The Housing Options Service recorded contact from **4,980 households** seeking advice or assistance relating to homelessness, during 2023–2024, an increase of 126 from the previous year and an increase from 3,593 (1,387 additional households) in 2022.
- **Table 1** illustrates a total of over **8,000 households** since 2020/2021, with a **44.5% increase** in prevention and relief cases over that period.

**Table 1: Cheshire East homelessness prevention and relief (2020–2024)**

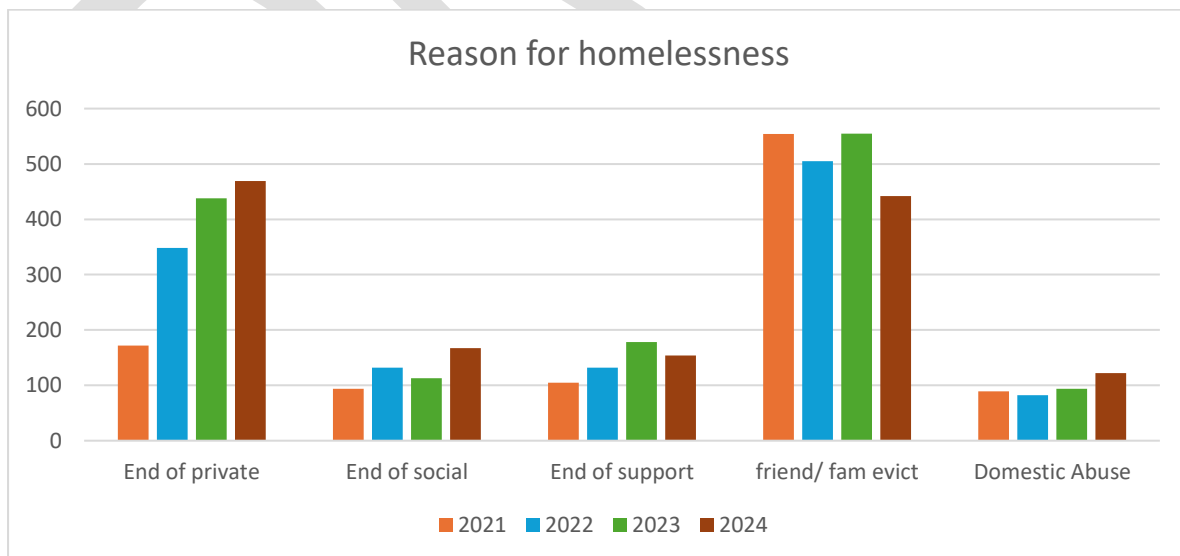
Year	Prevention	Relief	Total
2020–2021	744	608	1,352
2021–2022	953	624	1,577
2022–2023	958	680	1,638
2023–2024	1,147	695	1,842
2042-25	1,170	783	1,953
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,972</b>	<b>3,390</b>	<b>8,362</b>

**Chart 1: Positive outcomes in Cheshire East compared regionally and nationally (23/24)**



*Note: Chart 1 indicates that Cheshire East consistently achieves higher average positive prevention and relief outcomes compared to regional and national averages, with slightly lower final duty cases.*

**Chart 2: Main reasons for homelessness in Cheshire East over the 5-year strategy**



*Note: Chart 2 indicates the key areas for preventative focus.*



## **Homelessness Strategy review**

### **Overview**

A comprehensive review of Cheshire East's 2021-25 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was conducted in 2024. The findings highlighted several areas of ongoing concern, including unexpected data spikes, service gaps, and insufficient multi-agency collaboration for certain client groups.

### **Key findings**

- **Multiple Disadvantages and Complex Needs:** There has been a notable increase in individuals experiencing multiple, interconnected needs that hinder access to temporary accommodation and independent living. These overlapping issues often fall below the threshold for statutory homelessness assistance but present challenges when households are placed in mainstream supported accommodation.
- **Repeat Service Users:** A subset of clients with multiple disadvantages frequently re-engage with services, indicating a need for more tailored and sustained support.
- **Vulnerable Groups:** Specific attention is required for individuals affected by:
  - Private rent evictions
  - Refugee status
  - Domestic abuse
  - Discharges from prison and hospital settings
- There is a lack of public awareness of the Housing Options Service and how to access it.
- Referral pathways are unclear, and many residents struggle to find suitable, affordable, and settled accommodation.
- Performance of a new Housing Related Support contract which aims to enhance transitions through supported housing is being monitored.
- A shortage of appropriate 'move-on' accommodation is causing delays, leaving individuals in unsuitable housing for extended periods.
- Access to the private rented sector remains limited due to rising rents, despite increases in the Local Housing Allowance. Collaborative efforts with private landlords and partner agencies are essential to address this gap.

### **Partnership and innovation**

- Improved partnership working—particularly with mental health services, probation, and social care—is critical. As Government remodels funding there is a risk of reduced resources; innovation and the adoption of best practices will be essential to avoid duplication and deliver efficient, impactful services.

## **Our Challenges**

To address these challenges, the strategy outlines the following focus areas for action:

1. Universal Prevention: Strengthen protective factors such as stable income, secure housing, good health, and mitigate the impacts of ongoing welfare reform
2. Holistic Support for Single Homeless Individuals: Enhance advice and support services tailored to single people.
3. Offender Support: Improve collaboration with the Probation Service to support individuals transitioning from the criminal justice system.
4. Hospital Discharges: Strengthen discharge planning from both general and mental health hospitals.
5. Social Landlord Engagement: Address homelessness arising from social housing tenancies.
6. Relationship Breakdown: Continue to respond to this persistent cause of homelessness.
7. Repeat Presenters: Develop targeted interventions for individuals with recurring homelessness episodes.
8. Move-On Accommodation: Increase the availability and suitability of move-on options to reduce service blockages.
9. Affordable Housing: Expand access to affordable housing, particularly for:
  - Single individuals
  - People under 35
  - Low-income or unemployed residents
  - Those affected by welfare changes and poverty

## **Adoption of national good practice in homelessness prevention**

Cheshire East Council is committed to adopting national good practice<sup>2</sup> in homelessness prevention, as identified by organisations such as Shelter, Crisis, and others. These practices will be integrated into our strategy where appropriate and as resources permit.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://homeless.org.uk/news/prevention-the-golden-thread-in-a-national-homelessness-strategy/>

## **National good practice**

### **Upstream prevention**

Implementing strategies that target the underlying factors contributing to homelessness, rather than merely responding to crises, include:

- Early identification and support for vulnerable individuals and families at risk of homelessness.
- Development of upstream funding opportunities to support early intervention.
- Innovation in preventative services, including piloting and evaluating new approaches.

### **Downstream prevention**

Implementing strategies to enable a rapid response where crisis is imminent but there remains a short window of opportunity before existing accommodation is lost include:

- Creative and flexible approaches to working within existing constraints to prevent homelessness.
- Implementation of specialist measures for groups including:
  - Non-UK nationals
  - People with complex support needs
  - Survivors of domestic abuse
  - Single people

### **Partnership and collaboration:**

- Strengthening partnerships with internal services, statutory agencies, housing providers, support services, third-sector organisations, and charities.
- Engaging individuals with lived experience of homelessness to inform service design and delivery.

### **Building partnerships and working together**

Tackling homelessness requires a collaborative, multi-agency approach. The Housing Options Service recognises that sustainable solutions depend on strong partnerships across sectors. Our aim is to address the root causes of homelessness and support long-term housing stability by building resilience within affected households.

### **Systemic change in homelessness prevention**

Research and national good practice highlight the importance of systemic change in locally led homelessness prevention efforts. One such initiative is **Making Every**

**Adult Matter (MEAM)**, a national charity supporting systemic transformation through collaboration with practitioners, policymakers, and individuals with lived experience.

### **What is systemic Change?**

#### **Systemic change is:**

- Beneficial and impactful
- Sustainable and resilient to future challenges
- Transformational in organisational policies, culture, and practices

#### **Benefits of systemic change:**

1. **Enhanced joint working:**  
Promotes collaboration across services to drive effective change.
2. **Embedded systems thinking:**  
Encourages adoption of evidence-based approaches and continuous learning.
3. **Workforce development:**  
Emphasises trauma-informed and strengths-based practices.
4. **Improved access to services:**  
Facilitates better integration with mental health and other essential services.
5. **Smoother service transitions:**  
Supports individuals transitioning from hospital or prison into stable housing.

#### **Our commitment**

As we implement this strategy, we will deepen our understanding of current system challenges and co-develop a clear vision for change with our partners, such as support providers, Social Services, Probation, Police, and health. We will explore the principles of systemic change and apply them to improve outcomes for individuals and communities affected by homelessness.

#### **Early intervention and prevention**

Prioritising upstream homelessness prevention enables earlier identification and intervention for households at risk of eviction. By focusing on sustaining tenancies through tailored advice and support, we aim to help residents maintain stable housing and reduce the incidence of homelessness.

#### **Equality and inclusion**

Cheshire East Council recognises its responsibility under the Public Sector Equality Duty to assess the impact of policies and decisions on individuals with protected characteristics. This includes considering how factors such as sex, gender identity, age, race, and culture influence engagement with services and the type of support required. These considerations are further explored in the accompanying Equality Impact Assessment.

## **Trauma-informed and psychologically informed approaches**

Understanding the role of trauma is essential in supporting individuals experiencing homelessness—particularly veterans and those fleeing domestic abuse. A trauma-informed approach ensures that services are sensitive to the effects of trauma, while psychologically informed environments foster supportive settings that prioritise health, well-being, and recovery. This approach to support and service delivery will also account for reasonable adjustment to account for neurodiversity.

## **Measuring impact and enhancing support pathways**

The effectiveness of this strategy will be evaluated by ensuring that vulnerable groups have access to clear pathways and tailored support. Data collection from partner agency referrals will be instrumental in identifying key trigger points and informing early interventions. This evidence base will enhance our understanding of effective prevention strategies and support continuous improvement.

## **Data-driven insights and personal experience**

Building a repository of lived experiences will strengthen our upstream prevention efforts. Timely, accurate, and relevant information is critical to identifying primary causes of homelessness and implementing effective responses. By recording *trigger points*, such as family or relationship breakdown, *welfare needs*, such as mental health or substance misuse, and the influence of *protective factors*, such as family networks or education we can build our understanding of cases and map how we might introduce effective interventions or evaluate the efficacy of existing interventions.

## **Risk Group Classification for Early-Stage Homelessness Prevention**

### **High-Risk Groups**

Early-stage (upstream) homelessness prevention efforts will focus on individuals or households at significant risk of homelessness, particularly those currently within institutional settings or facing imminent housing instability. These include:

- Young people leaving care
- Individuals in hospitals, including mental health institutions
- People exiting the prison system
- Individuals experiencing rent or tenancy issues (in both social and private housing) prior to the issue of an eviction notice
- Victims of domestic violence and abuse

Note: Effective upstream intervention requires that individuals are already in contact with, or known to, relevant support services. For example, someone at risk of eviction due to neighbour complaints may already be engaged with mental health or substance misuse services.

### **Medium-Risk Groups**

This category includes individuals who may not be in immediate danger of homelessness but are experiencing significant challenges that could escalate without support. These include:

- Individuals with mental or physical health conditions
- People with substance dependencies
- Individuals with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)
- People seeking support from Jobcentre Plus due to a reduction in household income

### **Low-Risk Groups**

These individuals may face vulnerabilities that could contribute to future housing instability, though they are not currently at immediate risk. This group includes:

- Survivors of modern slavery or gang-related violence
- Individuals experiencing relationship breakdown
- Vulnerable children and young people in educational settings
- LGBTQ+ individuals
- People from ethnic minority backgrounds

All these groups are identified as at risk and will receive specific focus throughout the life of the strategy.

### **Strategic vision and commitments**

#### ***Our vision***

To reduce homelessness in Cheshire East through strong partnerships and shared experience.

#### **Our commitments**

1. **Increase homelessness prevention** - To deliver rapid, early help and intervention to stop homelessness before it occurs.
2. **Prevent rough sleeping** - To ensure rough sleeping is rare, brief, and non-recurring.
3. **Improve access to accommodation** - To strengthen accommodation-led partnerships to secure appropriate housing solutions.
4. **Enhance partnerships** - To improve health and wellbeing outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.

## **Delivering on the strategic commitments**

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been developed amid significant challenges, including economic instability and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. It is designed to be responsive to change and focused on achieving positive prevention and relief outcomes.

In 2024-25, The Housing Options Service received nearly 5,000 approaches from households who required homelessness advice. Of these, 1,953 households were accepted as homeless or at risk of homelessness within 56 days and successfully prevented from becoming homeless. The provision of free, impartial advice remains a cornerstone of our prevention efforts.

### **Strategic commitment 1: Increase homelessness prevention**

**Objective: To deliver rapid, early help and intervention to stop homelessness before it occurs.**

Prevention is critically important for households because it protects their stability, health and future opportunities. It represents the most cost-effective way of tackling homelessness and demonstrates high value for money to Cheshire East Council.

#### **Key Focus Areas:**

##### **Embed protective factors in communities**

Working in partnership Cheshire East Council will ensure that protective factors are embedded into communities to reduce the risk of homelessness, this will include:

- Decent homes
- Secure homes
- Good health
- Financial resilience
- Education and skills
- Awareness of support and interventions

The Housing Options Service will contribute to this community resilience.

##### **Upstream prevention and early identification**

Preventing homelessness requires early identification and support for at-risk individuals. The Homelessness Reduction Act's 56-day duty is a key trigger for intervention, but our interventions and prevention activities do not have to wait for this trigger. The Housing Options Service will seek to develop innovative initiatives with partners and other agencies to prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity and embed resilience into communities.

##### **Relief and downstream prevention**

While early intervention is ideal, many households approach services at a point of crisis. In such cases, efforts to relieve homelessness are prioritised. Common causes of sudden homelessness include:

- Eviction by family or friends
- Domestic abuse
- Unlawful eviction

The Housing Options Service will work together with strategic partners to be creative where the opportunity to act early has been missed and work to stabilise households in crisis through negotiations, support, and financial initiatives.

### **Addressing non-priority single homelessness**

Whilst legislation states that Local Authorities must focus on households with defined vulnerabilities, Cheshire East Council recognises that single households without enduring vulnerabilities also need support. To provide early intervention and homelessness prevention support represents a cost-effective way of mitigating rough sleeping.

Single people often face multiple challenges, including health issues and service access barriers.

We aim to improve support for underrepresented groups, such as:

- female prison leavers and young women
- non-UK nationals and refugees
- prison leavers
- young people under 25
- people leaving hospital following a protracted stay
- people experiencing multiple and complex needs

### **Systemic change and early intervention**

We aim to develop a shared understanding of current system challenges and a clear vision for change. In collaboration with partners, we will explore systemic improvements to enhance service delivery.

### **Empowering informed decision-making**

The Housing Options Service will seek ways to further support residents to make the right decisions through tailored assessments, mediation, financial assistance, and proactive advice. This includes guidance on welfare entitlements and advocacy to help individuals sustain or secure housing.

### **Tenancy readiness programme**

To promote long-term housing stability, The Housing Options Service will work with partners to develop tailored tenancy readiness programmes which will provide young people and people with limited good quality tenancy experience, including those in supported accommodation, with essential life skills and tenancy sustainment training. This initiative aims to:

- Equip people with practical skills for independent living.



- Strengthen tenancy success rates for those transitioning from supported accommodation.
- Reduce instances of repeat homelessness due to tenancy breakdowns.

By investing in tenancy readiness, we aim to empower our residents to maintain stable, secure housing and build positive futures.

### Strategic Commitment 1: What will we do to increase the prevention of homelessness?

Task	What will be the outcome?
Develop universal prevention by ensuring 'protective factors' that can reduce homelessness across the whole population, such as decent incomes, secure homes, good health, money management, and income maximisation.	Increased levels of applicants supported to retain their current home.
Raise awareness of support services, to ensure that people know that their best outcomes come from early intervention.	A reduction in the use of B&B for reasons where prevention could have occurred, such as private landlord eviction.
Prioritise upstream prevention by early identification of, and support for, vulnerable and at-risk groups.	There are less homeless tonight presentations from at-risk groups.
Develop upstream funding opportunities enabling the development and evaluation of new, expanded and innovative preventative services.	Innovative approaches to the prevention of homelessness are developed and their efficacy monitored.
Improve downstream prevention, developing strategies to ensure that if people approach the service late in their homelessness journey, opportunities are sought to avoid the use of temporary accommodation.	Reduction in B&B emergency placements as a proportion of placements.
Develop robust and clear pathways to assist individuals at risk of becoming homeless after being discharged from hospital.	Decrease in emergency presentations following hospital discharge and more people assisted through discharge planning.
Develop robust and clear pathways to assist individuals at risk of becoming homeless after leaving prison.	Decrease in emergency presentations following prison release and more people assisted through planned release.

Increase tenancy-ready households.	Households receiving tenancy-ready support are sustaining tenancies and we see less early tenancy failure in these groups.
Work with housing providers in shaping 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.
Ensure that Refugees and people who have experienced modern slavery are referred to specialist support services.	Reduced emergency (relief stage) homelessness for refugee households.
Implement specialist prevention measures for groups such as non-UK nationals, people with multiple disadvantages, survivors of domestic abuse, and single people not legally considered as a priority for housing.	Enhanced housing offers reducing homelessness and rough sleeping.
Work to address the accommodation needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Showpeople communities through referrals to the transit site for short-stay accommodation providing security to travelling households as their needs are addressed.	A reduction in the number of unauthorised encampments and homelessness
Ensure re-settlement and tenancy sustainment by working with registered providers in supporting them to ensure that interventions are lasting, to avoid repeat homelessness.	Repeat homelessness is avoided.
Support the development of a Leaving Care Accommodation Pathway to independence.	Reduced homelessness for care experienced young people and increased prevention outcomes for all young people.
Evaluate and develop our in-house temporary accommodation provision.	Reduced number of nights that households spend in hotel or bed and breakfast accommodation.
Develop relationships with non-commissioned support providers and private landlords to deliver housing options for those people with low support needs.	An increase in upstream prevention for non-priority single homeless applicants, and the needs of people at risk of homelessness are met through a variety of housing solutions, lessening demand for temporary and social housing.

Work together with support agencies and housing providers to improve tenancy skills in those without good quality tenancy experience.

Less households made homeless due to tenancy failure

## **Strategic Commitment 2: Prevent rough sleeping**

### **Objective: To ensure rough sleeping is rare, brief, and non-recurring**

This strategic commitment focuses on reducing homelessness by preventing and reducing rough sleeping across Cheshire East.

Local authorities submit rough sleeping data to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, which aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Fewer individuals sleeping rough, as measured by nightly and monthly data
- Shorter durations of rough sleeping
- Reduced recurrence of rough sleeping

Cheshire East Council will adopt a preventative approach to disrupt cycles of chronic and repeat rough sleeping. We will commission services and develop partnerships, working closely with local charities and organisations to support people with experience of rough sleeping to access accommodation and build resilience.

### **Key focus areas:**

#### **Referral and notification process**

Referrals and notifications will serve as key triggers for intervention although these will not replace regular outreach sweeps of towns and to seek people out in remote locations. The Senior Rough Sleeping Officer will act as the central point of contact for receiving and disseminating this information. The team will ensure there are well publicised methods of reporting rough sleepers and that they work in partnership with all agencies such as the Police, street cleaning services, and park maintenance services, in addition to working with charitable services, local businesses and the public to encourage prompt reporting. A clear and efficient procedure will be established to ensure timely communication with the Outreach Team.

#### **Addressing multiple disadvantages**

Many individuals' experiencing homelessness face multiple and complex needs, including mental health challenges, substance misuse, or institutional backgrounds (e.g., Armed Forces, hospital admissions or prison). In the past year, 1,194 households presented with support needs:

- 437 with one support need
- 292 with two support needs

- 465 with three or more support needs

Frontline service providers play a critical role in identifying and referring individuals to the Rough Sleeping Outreach Team. Their expertise and local knowledge are essential to early intervention efforts.

### **Prevention and early intervention**

Preventing rough sleeping involves supporting individuals to remain in their current accommodation or facilitating a smooth transition during times of crisis or change. When prevention is not possible, data from partner agency referrals will be used to identify causes and inform early interventions. This data will also enhance our understanding of the primary causes of homelessness and support the development of upstream solutions.

Building a repository of lived experiences will further inform strategic planning and improve the effectiveness of interventions. Timely, accurate, and up-to-date information is essential for this work.

### **Monitoring and strategic oversight**

Cheshire East Council will monitor the pathways into rough sleeping to identify patterns and underlying causes. This intelligence will guide targeted prevention strategies.

Members of the Cheshire East Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Steering Group will contribute by:

- Referring individuals to the Outreach Service
- Promoting awareness of referral pathways among partners and colleagues
- Developing protocols and ensuring the delivery of the strategic commitments
- The continued promotion and support of the Outreach Service.

### **Our Commitment**

By prioritising homelessness relief, we aim to:

- Reduce the number of individuals sleeping rough
- Minimise the duration of rough sleeping experiences
- Prevent repeat instances of rough sleeping

#### **Strategic Commitment 2: What will we do to prevent rough sleeping?**

<b>Task</b>	<b>What will be the outcome?</b>
Enhance our multi-disciplinary approach to in-reach and outreach services.	Reduction in rough sleeping through a range of interventions and provision of temporary and longer-term housing solutions.

Develop robust partnerships with accommodation providers to ensure pathways to settled accommodation for all.	There is a wide range of accommodation partners engaged with the service and an understanding of our accommodation gaps.
Refine our work with Justice Services to manage prison releases and to prioritise public safety.	A leaving prison pathway is in place and the use of temporary accommodation for people leaving prison is reduced.
Work with providers to speed up move on from hostels, whilst at the same time reviewing how evictions and abandonments can be reduced.	A reduction in unplanned outcomes from supported accommodation, with more people moving successfully into appropriate long-term placements.
Consider the effectiveness of housing-led and 'Housing First' services	More planned move-on outcomes from housing-led accommodation and sufficient units are available to meet needs.
Look for other innovative ways to provide accommodation to prevent and relieve single homelessness.	Good practice will be explored and used to deliver more effective interventions.
Ensure there are a range of housing options available to people with multiple disadvantages.	Less refusals / rejections from support providers.
Evaluate the Rough Sleeping Prevention service and seek to ensure "No Further Night Out" principles are being met.	Reduction in unplanned ends to accommodation.

### **Strategic Commitment 3: Improve access to accommodation**

**Objective: To strengthen accommodation-led partnerships to secure appropriate housing solutions.**

With increasing demand and limited housing supply, it is essential to broaden the range of housing options available to individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This includes expanding beyond social housing to improve access to other tenures and housing types. We will continue to build partnerships with housing providers across all sectors.

We aim to address barriers to long-term accommodation through supported and medium-term housing solutions. Access to safe, decent, accessible, and affordable accommodation—both temporary and permanent—will be measured through prevention and relief outcomes, as these directly contribute to ending homelessness.

## Key Focus Areas:

### Reducing reliance on Cheshire Homechoice

Cheshire East Council does not own council housing. Instead, it partners with Registered Providers of Social Housing through Cheshire Homechoice and a Common Allocations Policy. However, demand far exceeds supply, with over 12,000 applicants and on average only 1,300 properties available annually.

The **Common Allocations Policy**, co-produced between Cheshire East Council and our Registered Provider partners, prioritises those in urgent need while promoting sustainable communities. Despite this, many applicants face long waits or may never secure housing through Homechoice.

The **Tenancy Strategy** expects that the best use is made of Cheshire East's affordable housing stock to meet local housing need to benefit vulnerable households, contribute to strengthened communities, and enable households to make realistic choices based on their own circumstances.

With reducing supply and increasing demand for social housing, the Housing Options Service will look to explore alternatives to moving home altogether, how we might secure existing tenancies, and maintain accommodation for people in the longer term. In addition, we will look to strengthen partnerships with private landlords, seeking opportunities that the Renters' Rights Act will bring.

### Partnership development

While effective protocols exist for care experienced young people and individuals discharged from hospitals or prisons, further enhancement is needed. Multi-agency panels such as the **Ignition Panel** (for young people) and the **Multi-Disciplinary Accommodation Panel** (for individuals with complex needs) are in place to support those facing multiple disadvantages. Enhancing the role of these panels in preventing homelessness and sustaining existing accommodation will reduce the pressure on other housing resources. Also, we intend to explore the need for more protocols, such as a Cuckooing Protocol to improve tenancy sustainability (where criminals take over the home of a vulnerable person).

### Downsizing initiatives

We are developing a downsizing scheme in collaboration with Registered Providers to release under-occupied larger homes and homes in which adaptations for people with disabilities are no longer needed. This will support larger families, households with physical mobility needs, and older residents or smaller households requiring more manageable accommodation. This initiative aligns with the **Tenancy Strategy** and addresses financial hardship caused by under-occupancy penalties in welfare benefits.

## Private rented sector engagement

To mitigate the pressure on social housing, we are working to strengthen relationships with private landlords to provide housing for individuals with low support needs. With forthcoming reforms to the private rented sector and increased tenant protections, we are proactively engaging landlords and sharing best practices with other local authorities.

The **Renters' Rights Act** provides opportunities to engage with private sector landlords to ensure that they are supported within the new legislation to sustain good quality housing for residents.

## Supported Accommodation (Regulatory) Act 2025

This legislation will regulate supported exempt accommodation, which is not subject to standard housing benefit caps. Cheshire East Council will conduct a review and publish a **Supported Housing Strategy**. National standards will be introduced for accommodation quality and the provision of care and support. Importantly, intentional homelessness will not apply where supported accommodation fails to meet these new standards.

## Housing Related Support

Housing Related Support Services provide short-term accommodation and in-home support designed to help individuals to identify and overcome barriers to access or maintain independent living. These services aim to preserve clients' support networks and promote autonomy wherever possible and appropriate.

To ensure the sustainability of Housing Related Support Services, a comprehensive re-modelling of services was undertaken. The updated service model launched in April 2024, with a strong focus on tenancy sustainment as a key strategy for preventing homelessness. This approach is expected to significantly reduce instances of repeat homelessness. The Single Point of Access system facilitates referrals for housing-related support, though service suitability remains a challenge.

Housing Related Support Services operate across Cheshire East, divided into North and South regions. The provision includes:

### Accommodation-Based Services:

Service	Units
Rough Sleeping Prevention (South)	60
Complex Needs (North)	32
Emergency Accommodation (North)	8

Service	Units
Housing-Led Support	9
General Needs Supported (North & South)	26 / 16
Single Homeless Accommodation Programme (SHAP)	4
Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (Next Steps)	6
Fresh Start	9
Total Accommodation Units	170

#### Floating Support Services:

Service	Units
Floating Support (South)	52
Floating Support (North)	40
Total Floating Support Units	92

During 2024 / 2025, accommodation-based Housing Related Support Services supported a total of 460 households through its 161 accommodation units. The outcomes were as follows:

- 266 households achieved a positive long-term move-on.
- 118 households exited the service without securing a positive outcome.
- 76 households remained in the service at the end of the reporting period.

Ongoing monitoring will track the sustainability of accommodation six months post-exit. This data will be instrumental in demonstrating the effectiveness of Housing Related Support Services in reducing homelessness across Cheshire East.

To reduce reliance on Bed and Breakfast accommodation we will continue to develop the Housing Related Support offer to develop a robust floating and accommodation-based support offer to meet the changing needs of the residents of Cheshire East.



## Temporary accommodation provision

Cheshire East Council currently manages 16 units of temporary accommodation, including a main hostel in Macclesfield and dispersed properties across the borough. We aim to expand this provision to reduce reliance on hotels and Bed and Breakfast, and to better support individuals with complex needs.

### Current provision:

Location	Type of accommodation
Macclesfield	9-unit hostel (various sizes), 4-bed house, 2-bed bungalow, 2-bed house
Congleton	3-bed house
Crewe	3-bed house, 2-bed bungalow
Handforth	3-bed house

### Young people (18–25 Offer)

A new accommodation offer for 18–25-year-olds is being developed in partnership with Children's Services and housing providers. This includes a **Tenancy Sustainment and Independence Pack** and the creation of more semi-independent housing options with appropriate oversight and support.

### Strategic Commitment 3: What will we do to improve access to accommodation?

Task	What will be the outcome?
Support with the delivery and re-procurement of a pathways for domestic abuse survivors and perpetrators.	Increased positive prevention and relief outcomes for households experiencing domestic abuse.
Pilot and explore the benefits of a downsizing project with social housing providers to free up larger family homes to support the prevention and relief of homelessness.	More effective use of social housing with less homeless families.
Seize opportunities through the Renters' Rights Act to develop relationships with private landlords to increase access to affordable private rented accommodation.	Private landlords collaborating in accommodating more households in the sector.

Understand how the Supported Accommodation (Regulatory) Act can improve outcomes for people in supported accommodation to build in stability and good quality accommodation.	An improvement seen in property and support standards across Cheshire East.
Develop services to support people to retain their current home where there is a risk of homelessness.	The efficacy of floating support services is maximised, and alternative support services are mapped.
Develop specialist pathways for groups such as young people, homeless women, domestic abuse survivors and perpetrators, veterans, and single people.	Use of upstreaming has identified households at risk.
Explore the development of a Cuckooing protocol with safeguarding colleagues, police, landlords and mental health services.	Tenancy sustainment outcomes for people who are experiencing cuckooing are improved.

#### **Strategic Commitment 4: Enhance partnerships**

##### **Objective: To improve health and wellbeing outcomes for people experiencing homelessness**

This strategic commitment aims to reduce the negative health impacts associated with homelessness and housing instability. By strengthening partnerships across sectors, we seek to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for individuals who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or experiencing rough sleeping.

##### **Strategic alignment**

This work aligns with the vision of the **Cheshire East Council Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023–2028**, which aspires to enable residents to live longer, healthier lives with good mental and physical wellbeing, independence, and a strong connection to their communities.

The **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy** contributes to positive health and wellbeing outcomes by offering tailored accommodation and support options, alongside interventions such as step-down provision from supported accommodation. Partnerships with non-commissioned providers will be developed to increase access to housing for individuals with low or no support needs

## Key focus areas:

### Domestic abuse and housing

Domestic abuse affects individuals across all demographics and includes physical, emotional, coercive and controlling behaviours, and economic abuse. Children are now explicitly recognised as victims if they witness or experience abuse. Cheshire East Council has adopted the **Whole Housing Approach** and achieved **Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Platinum Accreditation**, demonstrating our commitment to supporting survivors. This includes:

- Early identification and intervention
- Reducing homelessness due to domestic abuse
- Supporting survivors to remain safely in their homes or retain tenancy status when re-locating
- Providing housing options for both victims and perpetrators, with a focus on accountability and behavioural change
- Continued dedicated support of the **Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)** process to ensure appropriate housing interventions

### Cared for and care experienced young people

The Housing Options Service is committed to supporting Cared for Children and care experienced young people. Following a 2024 Ofsted inspection, we are addressing identified areas for improvement through enhanced collaboration between Housing and Children's Services.

Young people leaving care are eligible for priority housing status until age 25. A dedicated Homeless Prevention Officer serves as their first point of contact, and tenancy-readiness programs are in place to support their transition to independent living.

Throughout the strategy we will be seeking innovative approaches to working with our care experienced young people to secure a pathway of accommodation and support, that leads to long-term settled accommodation which meets their needs and which is safe.

### Support for veterans

Cheshire East Council has a proud history of supporting the Armed Forces community through the **Armed Forces Covenant**. While many veterans transition successfully to civilian life, some face challenges including homelessness. Following a needs assessment and based on individual choice, veterans will be supported through:

- Access to supported housing.
- Tenancy sustainment services.
- Referrals to specialist services such as **Op Fortitude** (housing support) and **Op Courage** (mental health support).

### **Trauma-informed and psychologically informed care**

Trauma-informed approaches will be embedded in services, particularly for veterans and survivors of domestic abuse. Health and social care partners will lead efforts to improve health outcomes and reduce demand on health services. Accommodation providers will be encouraged to create **Psychologically Informed Environments**, including thoughtful design elements like lighting and colour schemes, in collaboration with service users and therapy services. This may be helpful for those experiencing neurodivergent difficulties.

### **Companion animal support**

Recognising the therapeutic value of companion animals, we will explore ways to accommodate individuals and their pets. We will explore partnerships with organisations offering veterinary care, foster services, and pet-friendly housing will be pursued to reduce barriers to accessing support.

### **People with mobility needs**

Access to suitable and accessible housing is an important protective factor in preventing and reducing homelessness. As the needs of a household changes or as our population ages, ensuring a strong relationship with our Housing Standards Team and our Occupational Therapy teams will ensure that housing is suitable and sustainable. This will be achieved by exploring better use of property adaptations and improving the allocation of already adapted homes.

### **Health service engagement**

Housing—whether temporary, supported, or permanent—must be safe, accessible, affordable, and suitable. We will assess and mitigate health risks associated with poor-quality or insecure housing in collaboration with the Housing Standards Team and environmental health teams. Regular inspections will ensure housing meets health and safety standards. Support will be provided to help people in temporary accommodation to access healthcare, including assistance with registering with GPs and attending appointments.

### **Community-centred and peer-led approaches**

We will explore peer-led models to improve health engagement among homeless individuals. Health peer advocates will help people understand their rights and navigate access to healthcare services.

#### **Strategic Commitment 4: What will we do to enhance partnerships to improve health and wellbeing outcomes?**

##### **Task**

Develop a strong and mutually beneficial relationship with charities and “By and For” organisations.

##### **What will be the outcome?**

People receive support from specialist charities which address their needs

Ensure our Domestic Abuse approach continues to meet national recognised standards and involves work with victims and perpetrators through the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance	People experiencing domestic abuse receive the support they need when the need it
Map local health services and establish strong links to manage hospital discharges to lift pressures on health services.	Decreased homelessness after hospital discharge through discharge planning.
Deliver services through a person-centred approach to ensure that we are addressing the root cause of homelessness where needs are complex.	Case studies and audits provide information allowing new approaches to homelessness
Explore the provision of psychologically informed environments.	Physical environment and social spaces are adapted to improve the space available to engage and support people in the service leading to continuing service engagement
Explore the provision of trauma informed care as it contributes to homelessness or is made worse by the experience of homelessness.	Trauma informed approaches are embedded in practice with Council Teams and contracted providers.
Work with providers to include provision for companion animals.	Mental health improvements, less street homelessness with people not having to choose between their pet and a bed for the night.
Services working with people at risk of becoming homeless or people experiencing homelessness consider the risks to health of poor quality, unsuitable, insecure and unaffordable accommodation.	Accommodation provides a healthy environment in which to thrive.
Households placed in temporary or supported accommodation are supported to access health care provision.	Temporary and commissioned supported accommodation meet relevant standards and residents connect with health care provision
Work with our partners to help improve the health and wellbeing of homeless people and identify those who are at risk of becoming homeless.	Personalised pathways are in place to enable access to tailored support and settled accommodation to break the link between homelessness and ill health.

Adapted properties and the need for adaptations are mapped and reviewed to enable better access to suitable and sustainable accommodation for people with mobility needs.

There is a reviewed process for the adaptation of homes to sustain accommodation, and the allocation of adapted properties is improved.

### **Governance of the strategy**

The level of success will be assessed through action plans which will measure progress, which will show us the improved outcomes of the strategy

Consultation will take place with Housing Options officers, Steering Group members partners, stakeholders, residents and service users to ensure the strategic commitments are robust. Thorough action plan reviews will be held bi-annually by the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group.

The success of the Strategy will be measured using the following key performance indicators (KPIs):

- More positive homelessness prevention outcomes
- More positive relief outcomes
- Less people sleeping outside, measuring monthly and single night trends
- A reduction in the time people spend sleeping outside
- Reduced instances of repeat rough sleeping
- Less reliance on Bed and Breakfast accommodation as Temporary Accommodation: measured as a ratio of those in Bed and Breakfast compared with supported / temporary accommodations

### **Appendices**

Homeless data – to follow

Equality Impact Assessment – to follow

Health Impact Assessment – to follow

OPEN

## **Economy and Growth Committee**

**Date: 09 September 2025**

### **Handforth Garden Village – Delivery Strategy Review**

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**Report of: Philip Cresswell, Executive Director - Place**

**Report Reference No: EG/21/25-26**

**Ward(s) Affected: Handforth**

**For Decision or Scrutiny: Decision**

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 This report updates Committee on progress made towards delivering Garden Village Handforth (GVH) since March 2025. It also seeks approvals to enable officers to progress with the delivery of the project to enable a start on site by September 2026 prior to the expiry of the existing hybrid planning permission and to make timely changes to the deliverability of the scheme.

#### **Executive Summary**

- 2 In March 2025 Committee delegated authority to the Executive Director - Place to negotiate and enter into an exclusivity agreement with MADE Partnership (MADE) to explore the principle of forming a joint venture partnership to lead the development of GVH. The Council and MADE entered into that exclusivity agreement on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2025.
- 3 As part of their due diligence, MADE have been examining all aspects of the project with a team of specialists who have considerable experience in delivering large scale residential and mixed-use schemes. They have identified, changes to the current site-wide masterplan and delivery strategy that have the potential to improve the efficiency and quality of the scheme as well as its deliverability and the commercial return to the Council.

- 4 The changes that have been identified would benefit the project and the Council. This report therefore seeks the decisions necessary for the Council to take full advantage of opportunities identified.
- 5 To ensure that the current outline planning permission is implemented before it expires (26 September 2026) and to maintain momentum on the wider scheme, authority is sought to proceed with elements of the detailed design and commencement of a first phase of the Initial Preparation and Infrastructure Works (IPIW).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Economy and Growth Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve:
  - i. Revisions to the Initial Preparation and Infrastructure Works (IPIW) contract and to amend the scope and/or phasing of the existing preliminary design work to reflect changes to the delivery strategy;
  - ii. To proceed with detailed design of the A34 corridor and associated work;
  - iii. To carry out early construction works on the A34 corridor under the Scape National Civil Engineering Framework;
  - iv. To commission Ringway Jacobs Ltd via the Council's Highways Service Contract to provide project management, commercial support, technical approval and site supervision inputs into the construction, detailed design, and rescoped preliminary design;
  - v. To continue the stabilisation and repair works to Dairy House Farm via a North West Construction Hub framework contract in line with the decision previously taken by Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2024 but allow the scope and/or phasing of works to be varied;
  - vi. Amendments to the terms, conditions and milestones in the Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF) agreements with Homes England to maximise the amount of the grant that is drawn down and applied to the project.
2. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place to take all actions necessary to implement the actions approved by this Committee in consultation with the Executive Director of Resources and the Director of Governance and Compliance.



## Background

### *Delivery strategy and proposed joint venture with MADE*

- 6 In accordance with the Committee decision taken in March 2025, the Council has entered into an Exclusivity Agreement with MADE on 5th August 2025.
- 7 MADE and its team of specialists are reviewing the Council's proposals for the Garden Village to determine whether they align with required standards related to quality, place-making, commercial viability, and deliverability. Once this assessment is complete, MADE will make a decision on joining a joint venture investment partnership with the Council as master developers. The due diligence process by MADE involves examining the approved scheme, delivery strategy, and financial model. The Council is also conducting due diligence on MADE and its proposed plans.
- 8 Before entering into the exclusivity period with MADE, the Council prioritised investment in core site infrastructure, including new road access from the A34, the establishment of a 'High Street', provision of a school site, and the principal elements of green infrastructure. The broader site infrastructure was to be delivered incrementally by third parties as individual parcels of land were sold to housing developers. This strategy was shaped by the financial limitations facing the Council, guidance aimed at ensuring timely delivery of key components, and the planning requirements. In contrast, MADE proposes to deliver substantial elements of the road and service infrastructure across the site upfront, creating fully serviced land parcels along with supporting strategic green infrastructure. This approach is supported by officers and it is anticipated to generate higher capital receipts for the investment partnership from house builders upon the sale of each land parcel.
- 9 MADE's approach involves a greater level of investment, with the expectation of generating increased land values that will benefit the Council. This strategy offers a more comprehensive and integrated framework for delivering infrastructure compared to the incremental method previously employed. Implementing a holistic approach will require modifications to the current development phasing through amendments to planning permission.
- 10 MADE has reviewed the allocation of land for specific purposes within the masterplan and assessed it against relevant criteria. Amongst other things, this review identified that the area designated for the new 'through school' does not meet current design standards, while the space allocated for shops along the high street could be better configured. Officers have considered MADE's methodology, and this

report proposes amendments to the approved plans to better reflect end user needs. The principal land uses within the allocation and planning consent remain unchanged by the delivery team and MADE; proposed adjustments aim to facilitate the delivery of residential land parcels, enhance commercial and technical elements of the development, and support place making. These changes are anticipated to benefit the Council as the primary landowner, regardless of the outcome of the joint venture.

- 11 Moving forward, the joint venture investment partnership is anticipated to serve as master developer, carrying out all necessary work to provide serviced development parcels for delivery of the Garden Village and construction of around 1500 homes. The Council and the investment partnership will not directly build homes within the village; this responsibility will fall to third-party housebuilders, who are expected to acquire land parcels at market rates.
- 12 Appendix 1 is a draft of the emerging land use budget plan. It shows:
  - a shorter 'High Street' to more closely align with anticipated occupier demand,
  - the school site, increased in size and relocated to achieve a more level site with an improved relationship to adjacent land uses,
  - restructured green infrastructure to create a central greenspace and better connected green routes for pedestrians and cyclists across the site.
- 13 The proposed modifications aim to enhance both the quality and deliverability of the garden village. Officers recommend pursuing these improvements regardless of whether the Council and MADE establish an investment partnership. Implementation will necessitate amendments to the site's planning consent, which introduces a degree of risk. However, preliminary consultations with key stakeholders suggest a generally positive reception. The proposals are scheduled to undergo more rigorous evaluation through a formal pre-application process with the Local Planning Authority (LPA).
- 14 Some existing contractual arrangements will need to be modified to reflect and implement these changes. These are summarised in the table below:

Description	Implications & Considerations	Authority
IPIW Current contract is limited to preliminary design		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to progress to commence development by Sept 2026 to retain planning permission.</li> <li>• Early standalone phase of construction work identified.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk of planning permission expiring if delayed.</li> <li>• Adjustments to contract scope and timing needed.</li> <li>• Exact scope of early works may be revised later subject to engagement with LPA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee approval is sought to move into detailed design and construction in relation to these early construction works.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying a holistic, site-wide approach to drainage, remediation, cut and fill, utilities and servicing.</li> <li>• Prioritise the A34 highway and junction improvements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid abortive costs on work that may not be taken forward.</li> <li>• Separating 'on-site' (inside the village) works from 'off-site' (highway) works and focus on the off-site.</li> <li>• This proposal is not aligned with the current contract scope.</li> <li>• Requirement to maximise HIF spend.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee approval is sought in this paper to enter into detailed design of A34 corridor works.</li> <li>• Delegated authority required to descope and amend contract to reflect future proposals.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ringway Jacobs Ltd provide technical assurance, project management and Quantity Surveyor inputs to contract through Highways Services contract.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New arrangements needed to support the changed IPIW scope, additional design and construction works.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delegated authority required from Committee to commission Ringway Jacobs Ltd, subject to demonstration of value for money under the terms of the framework contract.</li> </ul>
Dairy House Farm – Scope & Programme		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dairy House Farm repairs are a planning condition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MADE acknowledge the heritage significance of farmhouse but raise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delegated authority sought to vary scope of the works to be carried out.</li> </ul>

Description	Implications & Considerations	Authority
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Committee previously granted authority to proceed using HIF grant for repair works.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cost-benefit concerns and are exploring an enhanced commercial offering to ensure heritage assets can be retained insofar as possible.</li> <li>Concern that repaired buildings will be at risk of theft and vandalism.</li> <li>Reduced initial scope of works being explored.</li> <li>Listed Building Consent (which is linked to main GV planning permission) requires lawful commencement by 7 Dec 2025. This is in train.</li> </ul>	
<b>HIF – Cashflow and spend priorities</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HIF grant extended to March 2027 by Homes England.</li> <li>Changes by MADE may affect spending profile.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk of underspending HIF.</li> <li>Exploring suitable alternative activities for HIF such as utilities infrastructure as eligible cost and other opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delegated authority requested to renegotiate HIF contract if necessary.</li> </ul>

## Consultation and Engagement

15 The officer team have consulted with these groups:

- a. Handforth Garden Village Members Advisory Group has been briefed on the report issues.
- b. Minority landowners receive regular updates at meetings.
- c. Handforth Town Council is regularly informed about process and decisions.
- d. MADE gives its Board ongoing progress reports.

## Reasons for Recommendations

- 16 It is necessary to amend the scope of the IPIW contract to give effect to a delivery strategy that separates the on-site from the off-site works and seeks to deliver the on-site works comprehensively rather than incrementally. This involves ceasing some design work currently being undertaken on elements of the development that are likely to be changed or delivered differently. The investment partnership approach is a strong delivery option for the Council which has the potential to secure a positive outcome, both financially and in terms of producing a high quality development, whilst minimising financial risk.
- 17 Twin-tracking the current approved scheme with the emerging new proposals to manage the risks associated with implementing changes is not considered a worthwhile use of resources. The newer scheme is a significant qualitative improvement on the existing scheme and pursuing the current proposals in parallel would undermine work on the better proposals and would result in abortive costs.
- 18 In addition to the HIF grant (up to £21.7 million), it is estimated that up to £500,000 may be required by the Council for commercial, financial, and legal advice and/or amending specifications of existing contracts as part of its own due diligence work on the MADE proposal. This expenditure is unlikely qualify as eligible under HIF. The amount represents a fraction of the allocation outlined in the MTFs for this Scheme. Should the due diligence results in the establishment of an investment partnership, it could potentially reduce the requirement for additional CEC funding. Further approval processes may be necessary for this expenditure, either through delegated authority or Committee review if the spending is significant.

## Other Options Considered

- 19 Officers undertook a high-level options appraisal to consider the alternatives to entering an exclusivity agreement with MADE, which was presented to Committee in March 2025 ([CEC Report Template](#)).
- 20 Considering the risks inherent in the project, progressing with the scheme that currently holds planning permission—but does not incorporate the amendments arising from MADE 's due diligence — presents significant downsides. Doing so would not only incur abortive costs but also divert limited resources away from more promising opportunities. On balance, prioritising the new proposals reduces the risk of wasted expenditure and ensures that the Council's efforts are focused on delivering a higher-quality, more viable outcome.

## **Implications and Comments**

### *Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance*

- 21 The Scape Framework is a compliant procurement route and the A34 corridor works would be work conducted under the IPIW as amended revisions in accordance with the Scape Framework terms, will remain procurement compliant. Using the Scape National Civil Engineering Framework to procure early construction work on the A34 corridor is similarly a procurement compliant route, as is using the Highway Service Contract for project management and other services as listed above, and using the North West Construction Hub Framework for works at Dairy House Farm. Amendments to the terms, conditions and milestones in the Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF) agreements with Homes England will depend on ongoing discussions with HIF. Legal will support going forward by reviewing and advising on the terms of any Deed(s) of Variation that are needed to encapsulate any agreed changes.
- 22 The Council has entered into an exclusivity agreement with MADE, and whilst due diligence is being carried out prior to decision whether to enter into a joint venture agreement, it needs to be mindful that any actions taken prior to finalising terms with MADE should be in the best interests of the Council, evidence based and subject to separate due diligence, whether the proposed joint venture proceeds or not.
- 23 The current planning permission for the project expires in September 2026, and it is therefore necessary to commence development prior to this date so that the permission remains valid.
- 24 Any proposed alterations to the scheme may amendments to the planning permission. In applying to the Local Planning Authority for the required alterations, the Council needs to be mindful that it has entered into a draft s106 agreement for this site and any amendments to the scheme may also affect this. Specialist legal advice will be required.

### *Section 151 Officer/Finance*

- 25 The MTFs for 2025/26 to 2028/29 includes a budget of £57.9m for HGV alongside a separate allocation for Section 106 obligations of £6.8m. Spend to date is £12.2m of which £5.4m is funded by prudential borrowing. There is a further £8.8m of prudential borrowing earmarked within the £57.9m.

- 26 It is accepted that the current budget is not sufficient to complete the project in the way set forth under the planning agreement. Consequently, the project has been seeking to identify alternative ways of delivering the development. These include seeking a partner and investigating delivery models that may secure a commensurate return without the need for the Council providing all the funding. The work that is taking place with the MADE Partnership is evidence of this.
- 27 The outcome of the work with the MADE Partnership is not expected to be known for 12-18 months during which time the project is still required to meet significant milestones and hurdles. These do necessitate the need to continue spending and this remains challenging in the current financial climate.
- 28 The key milestones that members need to be aware of are that the full planning permission requires that the IPIW must start on site by September 2026, or the planning permission will expire; and the HIF funding is available until 31 March 2027.
- 29 Not all expenditure will be eligible to be claimed under HIF, so the Authority cannot rely upon the availability of grant fund to finance ongoing activity. Whilst some of the costs may ultimately be recoverable by Section 106 contributions or investment proceeds there will be a need for the Authority to forward fund this activity.
- 30 There are no detailed costings for some of the activities that are subject to the recommendations above. Obtaining costings invariably incurs further cost for the consultants tasked with establishing what they might be. Thus, there is an inherent risk in approving and delegating expenditure that could be viewed as open ended. Therefore, all delegations arising from the recommendations should include, at a minimum, the Executive Director of Resources as a consultee. It is also noted that a "Tier One" meeting exists for the project which should act as a conduit for providing reassurance around the budget and direction and speed of travel.
- 31 To date the approach taken by the project has been prudent in line with earlier Committee papers, moving forward incrementally and cautiously, reducing and removing risks wherever possible, mitigating and quantifying them when not. The intention remains that when approval is sought to proceed into full construction the Council is properly informed of the business case, and the cashflow, funding, and risks that underpin it.

- 32 It is noted that previous decisions made - including the requirements of the LPA to bring forward the scheme comprehensively and for the IPIW to be delivered before houses, together with the constraints of the HIF funding have together point to the stresses created by the Council taking the lead on the IPIW, with cost recovery for infrastructure and S106 obligations ultimately being realised from the sale of land parcels. It is also noted that an approach is required that efficiently uses the Council's finite capital resources because, at present, forecasts for both the total overall cost and the very high peak debt incurred before significant income is generated are problematic for the Council in the current fiscal environment.
- 33 The very significant complexities of the project, in relation to its multiple components and parties, the number of phases and overall duration of delivery, and consequently the difficulties of achieving cost certainty for financial planning purposes. This has proved to be even more challenging, given the Council's ongoing financial issues but it remains the case that sounder the foundation the project is set upon the higher the likelihood of an optimal outcome for the Council, whether that is by working in tandem with MADE or pursuing another delivery model.
- 34 Members are reminded that if a capital scheme does not progress to actual development, any preparatory costs incurred will be considered as 'abortive' and required to be written off to the Council's revenue account, in accordance with accounting regulations.

#### *Human Resources*

- 35 The scope and scale of work required for the delivery of the Garden Village far exceeds the capacity that can be provided by this small internal team and it needs to be boosted. No one in the in-house team has experience of acting in the capacity of master developer for a complex development of this nature.
- 36 Progressing with MADE Partnership through the due diligence process is occupying a significant part of the in-house officer resource but it is unlocking considerable additional expertise, experience and capacity which would more than compensate.

#### *Risk Management*

- 37 It has become clear that changes will need to be made to the scheme and delivery programme whether pursuing an investment partnership or progressing the scheme with the Council as master developer. Inevitably, this will require further permissions from regulators including



the LPA which cannot be guaranteed to be forthcoming and could lead to delays, cost increases and underspend of HIF. This would particularly be the case if an investment partnership with MADE is not progressed.

- 38 If a joint venture investment partnership is entered into the Council are placing reliance on MADE to formulate and crystallise a revised scheme that is capable of delivery within an appropriate timeframe and planning framework. Within the bounds of public procurement rules MADE are currently not contracted to deliver work on behalf of the Council, save for withdrawing from the exclusivity agreement, the Council has limited ability to directly influence their actions.
- 39 If MADE should hit an unforeseen stumbling block and withdraw from this project, the Council would need to revert to a different delivery option with potential cost and time implications for the project. That said, many of the suggestions from MADE are expected to be of benefit to the scheme.

#### *Impact on other Committees*

- 40 The project facilitates a large scale strategic housing development site which was allocated in the Local Plan. It is therefore of interest to Strategic Planning Board, which also considered and approved the hybrid planning permission.

#### *Policy*

- 41 The delivery of the garden village at Handforth has the potential to support the priorities of the [Corporate Plan](#) as follows:

##### **Aim 1: An open and enabling organisation**

The Corporate Plan encourages exploration of opportunities to bring more income into the borough. A joint venture with MADE Partnership has the potential to support this ambition.

##### **Aim 2: A Council which empowers and cares about people**

The ambition is for the Garden Village to be a socially inclusive development, following principles that are mindful of demographic challenges. By doing so, the project will ensure long-term sustainability and resilience, benefiting both current and future generations.

Over the next 18 months, there will be broad engagement to ensure that the views of Council, stakeholders and local communities are identified and inform the community infrastructure management plan for the site.

### **Aim 3: A thriving and sustainable place**

The Corporate Plan sets out an ambition to ensure Cheshire East is a great place for people to live, work and visit with welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods and thriving urban and rural economies. A joint venture with MADE Partnership has the potential to support this ambition if it leads to the delivery of the garden village.

#### *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*

- 42 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been prepared and approved for the garden village and is published on the Council's website - [Equality Impact Assessment Template](#). This will be reviewed and updated as required.

#### *Other Implications*

##### *Rural Communities*

- 43 This development is in the urban area and there are expected to be limited impacts on rural communities.

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

- 44 A new through school will be facilitated which will have a positive impact on children and young people.

##### *Public Health*

- 45 A new country park is being built as part of this development, alongside ongoing management regimes and stewardship of the totality of the development. This will provide valuable green space which will have a positive impact on the public health of residents of the garden village and its visitors and users of the space.

##### *Climate Change*

- 46 All housing on this site will be built to conform with current building regulations regardless of the delivery model. No gas boilers will be installed in any buildings and it is anticipated that all heat will be delivered to the buildings using a district heating network.

*Consultation*

<b>Name of Consultee</b>	<b>Post held</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date returned</b>
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy) :</i>			
Ashley Hughes	S151 Officer	27/08/25	29/08/25
Kevin O'Keefe	Acting Monitoring Officer	27/08/25	29/08/25
<i>Legal and Finance</i>			
Mandy Withington	Principal Lawyer (Place)	18/08/25	20/08/25
Aaron Lecroy	Finance		
<i>Other Consultees:</i>			
<i>Executive Directors/Directors</i>			
Philip Cresswell	Executive Director - Place	27/08/25	29/08/25

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Charles Jarvis <a href="mailto:Charles.jarvis@cheshireeast.gov.uk">Charles.jarvis@cheshireeast.gov.uk</a>
Appendices:	Appendix 1: Draft emerging land use budget plan
Background Papers:	<a href="#">Economy &amp; Growth Committee Report January 2024</a> <a href="#">Economy &amp; Growth Committee Report March 2025</a>

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# Land Use Budget Plan

WEAREIDP.COM ARCHITECTURE. URBAN DESIGN & MASTERPLANNING. LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE & ENVIRONMENT.

27 SPON STREET, COVENTRY, CV1 3BA  
T: +44 (0)24 7652 7600 E: info@idpgroup.com

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Do not scale.  
All dimensions to be checked on site and architect notified of any discrepancies prior to commencement.

Any and all elements relating to the fire safety of the project will require separate confirmation and approval by a fully accredited fire engineering consultant under separate client appointment.

Notes:  
The following drawing/document was used in the creation of this drawing:

Bellway Draft CAD Sketch - BHM182-SK02-Rev B

- KEY:
- Handforth Garden Village planning application boundary (122.52 Ha)
  - CMC Automotive business site boundary
  - Residential development 43.23 Ha / 106.82 Acres
  - Mixed use and residential 3.46 Ha / 8.56 Acres
  - Extra care 1.90 Ha / 4.70 Acres
  - Employment 1.42 Ha / 3.51 Acres
  - Primary and secondary schools 5.00 Ha / 12.36 Acres
  - Commercial and employment (Dairy House Farm) 1.03 Ha / 2.55 Acres
  - Existing gymnasium and health club site 3.87 Ha / 9.56 Acres
  - Employment (Former Ministry of Defence site) 5.12 Ha / 12.66 Acres
  - Public open space 48.74 Ha / 120.44 Acres
  - Central green - multi purpose community markets/events space (Included in public open space area calculation)
  - Existing vegetation (woodland, trees, hedgrows)
  - Proposed vegetation
  - Existing ponds
  - Proposed SuDS basins
  - Indicative primary movement routes
  - Indicative active travel routes
  - Proposed 'Garden Bridge' pedestrian/cycle bridge and walkway
  - Approximate location of reclaimed historical footpath between Dairy House Farm and Handforth Hall (1844 Tithe Map)
  - Dairy House Farmhouse (to be retained and restored)

C	Revised primary street route	26.08.25-TEE-TEE
B	Updated to revised sketch masterplan	22.07.25-TEE-TEE
A	Land use labelling updated	05.06.25-BDF-BDF
Rev:	Comment(s):	Date-Name-Check:

Drg No: C6159\_000\_08 Rev C

Client: MADE Partnership  
Project: Handforth Garden Village  
Title: Land Use Budget Plan

Scale: 1:3000 @ A1 Date: 27.05.25  
RIBA: Stage 0 Drn/Ch: TEE/BDF

Status: PRELIMINARY Pro. No: C6159





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## 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>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 necessary) approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements.	Executive Director Resources (S151)	No	No	Yes	No	Scrutiny
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

Report Reference	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item	Decision or Scrutiny
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
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 Council put a proposal for a Knutsford Business Improvement District (BID) to a postal ballot	Development and Regeneration Manager	Yes	No	No	TBC	Decision
<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	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/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
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

10 March 2026								
EG/12/24-25	Service Budgets 2025/26	To set out the allocation of approved budgets for 2025/26 for services under the Committee's remit, as determined by Finance Sub Committee	Executive Director Resources (S151)	No	No	Yes	No	Scrutiny

**OPEN: Report and Appendices 1 – 2**

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION: Appendices 3 & 4 by virtue of paragraph(s) 3, 5 and 7A of Part 1 Schedule 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.**

## **Economy and Growth Committee**

**Date: 09 September 2025**

### **Crewe Town Centre Regeneration Programme**

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

**Report Reference No: EG/20/25-26**

**Ward(s) Affected: Crewe Central**

**For Decision**

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 To provide an update on the regeneration of Crewe town centre, particularly projects delivered utilising Government funding.
- 2 To set out proposals for further town centre regeneration with a focus on residential-led development, subject to future decisions to be taken under delegation or by this committee.

#### **Executive Summary**

- 3 This report updates committee members on the recent and current Crewe town centre regeneration projects and identifies opportunities for future regeneration as part of a new vision for Crewe.
- 4 It identifies the changing role of town centres nationally and the strong interest in residential development, and explains a specific opportunity put forward by one developer in relation to some council-owned sites in Crewe town centre.
- 5 The report sets out an approach and recommendations to support work to start developing plans with for residential-led, mixed use development on these sites, and explore options for other council-owned sites in Crewe town centre.

- 6 The role of Crewe Town Board is identified and the need to review its current Terms of Reference.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Economy & Growth committee is recommended to:

1. direct the creation of a business case relating to a potential Crewe town centre development scheme, and if the business case is positive, delegate to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Economy & Growth Committee, the decision to recommend to the Finance Sub-Committee the creation of a supplementary revenue estimate of up to £275,000 for the revenue budget to develop scheme proposals, including a) internal staffing costs b) external professional advice regarding development, law, valuation, appraisal, procurement and social value, and; c) a direct contribution towards the costs to be incurred by the developer; and
2. subject to (1), seek approval from Finance Sub-Committee to approve either:
  - a) external grant funding in relation to delivery of development proposals including scheme delivery; or
  - b) the extension of flexible use of capital receipts and that this extension of £275,000 is added to the council's regular reporting on capital receipt generation to relevant committees to ensure appropriate oversight, scrutiny and grip, or;
3. subject to (2) delegate authority to the Director of Growth & Enterprise to enter into a pre-development agreement with a developer, through an appropriate procurement framework, to develop a masterplan and delivery plan for specific council-owned sites in Crewe town centre, i.e. land at Victoria St / Queensway / Delamere Street ('Royal Arcade'), Chester Street car park and Delamere Street car park;
4. note that this (3) would involve an exclusivity agreement for the developer up to the point that a development agreement may be entered into for the construction of a scheme comprising residential and commercial buildings and public realm, subject to further consideration and authorisation by this committee.
5. authorise the Director of Growth & Enterprise to enter into negotiations regarding potential disposal of other council-owned sites in Crewe town centre where the third party owns adjacent properties, subject to best consideration (Local Government Act 1972, s123);

6. authorise the Director of Growth & Enterprise to build upon the emerging 'Crewe vision' in progressing a regeneration and development framework for the urban area of Crewe.
7. delegate authority to the Executive Director – Place, in consultation with the Executive Director of Resources and the Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer, to enter into contracts/agreements and appoint contractors in relation to all of the above.
8. delegate authority to the Director of Growth & Enterprise to agree revisions to the current Terms of Reference of Crewe Town Board.

## Background

- 9 Like many town centres across the UK, Crewe town centre has experienced significant challenges, with competition from out-of-town retail schemes and online retail making a significant impact on its town centre offer.
- 10 In 2015-16 the council developed a Town Centre Regeneration Delivery Framework which focused diversification of the town centre away from a retail dependency utilising its own property assets. With success in securing over £40m funding from Government (Towns Fund, Future High Streets Fund, Local Growth Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund), as well as its own funding, many projects have been delivered that have made a major impact, including the Lifestyle Centre (2016) and Market Hall (2021), and others are now being constructed, such as The Dome Youth Zone and Cheshire Archive. Progress has been reported back to committee members on a regular basis, as well as to Crewe Town Board which oversees those projects being delivered by the support of Towns Fund grant. These developments are all uses that create activity, helping to sustain and increase footfall and dwell time. A summary of these projects and their current position is provided in Appendix 1.
- 11 Previous plans for the town centre included the redevelopment of the former Royal Arcade scheme, which comprised the former bus station and a retail block along Queensway/Victoria Street. These were demolished in 2021 as part of the planned Peveril Securities Ltd (PSL) development - a leisure-led, mixed-use scheme. The first phase of that scheme, funded by the council, was the new bus station and multi-storey car park (MSCP), providing 389 additional parking capacity to compensate for the loss of spaces at other car parks, including Lyceum

Square and Oak Street car parks. Currently, development in Crewe town centre have led to a net increase of 233 parking places.

- 12 However, due to major changes in the economy and the leisure sector post-pandemic, exacerbated by the decision to stop HS2 north of Birmingham, PSL could not proceed due to lack of commercial viability.
- 13 This was seen by many as another failed scheme, following on from the collapse of a larger retail-led scheme developed with Modus by the former Crewe & Nantwich Borough Council in 2009, when that developer fell into receivership during the global economic crash.
- 14 The undeveloped area of land that now sits next to the new bus station and MSCP is still owned by the council. After the second phase of the previous development scheme fell away, the council secured grant funding to develop a 'meanwhile' (temporary) use for the site. This project (known as Royal Arcade Meanwhile) is the subject of a live planning application and, if approved, will be delivered by March 2026 and remain in use for 3-5 years, before it is redeveloped.
- 15 Crewe is typical of many mid-sized towns, in needing to consider its position and long-term future when most commercial investment is focused on large cities.
- 16 Crewe is challenged, with most of its wards being the most deprived in the borough, and amongst the most deprived nationally. However, Crewe has a diverse and growing population which is attractive to many people, given its great connectivity and affordable housing options. It also has major opportunities to build upon the £1.2bn new health community at Leighton and the continued growth of key employers such as Bentley, Radius, AO, Assurant and Likewise. The council continues to have dialogue with senior policymakers regarding the potential to increase rail capacity and speed between Crewe and larger cities, and these will influence plans for *Crewe 360*, the council's emerging plans for the area around its station.
- 17 With the potential of a Combined Authority for Cheshire & Warrington being established, there is a possibility of securing funding to support further regeneration in Crewe, which is established as being one of the sub-region's spatial priorities. In association with this, there is also potential for additional grant funding to be made available by Government for 'quick wins.'
- 18 The council's ambition is to build upon these opportunities, and the success of its previous regeneration plans, by developing Crewe into being the best small city by 2050. This vision, whilst not formalised, has been tested with partners across the local community and it has struck a

chord, capturing the essence of the town's motto *semper contendo* – 'ever pressing forward.'

- 19 In order to provide a firm foundation for secure new investment and external funding for projects, the council and other key stakeholders now need to refresh previous plans and establish a new 'regeneration and development framework' – not just for the town centre, but for the urban area of Crewe as a whole. This will capture wider developments, including the £1.2bn+ health and care neighbourhood at Leighton and around Crewe station with its potential as a 360° hub, and ensure synergy between investments with alignment to the shared vision.
- 20 In relation to the Royal Arcade site, whilst delivering short-term plans for its use, the council has had informal dialogue with several parties regarding its longer-term redevelopment. These have predominantly been residential-led schemes, but in all cases identified a significant viability gap that would need to be addressed through public investment. The council's current financial position prevents it from investing in this way, although officers have been engaged with Government to develop an approach that uses other public funding.
- 21 Over recent months, the council has engaged with a well-known developer of residential-led mixed use schemes in places with similar economic challenges as Crewe. Their operational model is built on close collaboration with local councils to move tailored projects from initial concept and design through to construction and subsequent long-term management, such that they retain an interest in maintaining the quality of the property and environment and with a strong emphasis on delivering positive social impact. Critically, they have established a very strong relationship with Homes England, the government's housing and regeneration agency, which is a key funder of such schemes.
- 22 The developer is proposing a unique, tailored model for Crewe, which addresses the current financial constraints the council is facing. They have developed, at their own cost and risk, initial plans for a significant redevelopment scheme in Crewe town centre. They have also undertaken a high-level development appraisal (viability assessment). Despite the challenges this presents they are confident that they can deliver a scheme in Crewe that will transform it, with at least 300 residential units of different forms (e.g. single-storey apartments, town houses, etc), with active ground floor uses, suitable for retail, restaurants/cafes, offices or other complementary uses, potentially including some public sector functions such as health and learning.
- 23 Their development would strike a balance between public and private space, forming a central element in a transformed modern town centre. This will also involve the developer's ongoing stewardship of this core

part of the town centre, reflecting their long-term role in managing buildings and spaces, potentially including the establishment of a new social landlord (registered provider) to address social housing needs.

- 24 However, to assist in making a scheme viable, they require:
  - (a) early and close collaboration with the council, that reflects the financial and capacity challenges it faces, through a pre-development agreement to allow them to develop a masterplan, development appraisal and other technical studies which will inform a planning application and business case to secure funding for delivery of a scheme on three council sites. They also require exclusivity over negotiations relating to these sites, such that the council cannot dispose of these sites to another party.
  - (b) 'gap funding' to bridge the viability gap – the difference between the cost of design, construction and management, and the income likely to result from any completed development. It has been made clear that the council is unlikely to fund any of this gap itself, but the council will work alongside the developer to seek gap funding, e.g. from Homes England and, if established, a new Combined Authority.
  - (c) a larger scale of development land, which would be delivered in phases and designed to accommodate a wide range of housing needs, such as private-rented, social housing and extra-care housing. This means that, as well as the cleared Royal Arcade site, they would seek to incorporate the council-owned Delamere Street and Chester Street car park sites.
- 25 The car park sites referred to above previously featured in plans under the council's 'In Town Living' project, which sought to utilise these sites for two separate residential schemes. Due to issues around procurement and viability, these plans did not progress. However, officers expected that a further opportunity would arise as the residential market shifted. With developer demand for housing on privately-owned sites growing (proposals in the pipeline for Breeden House, Burford House, former Boots, Wellington House), this is evidently an opportune time to revisit the use of these sites alongside the Royal Arcade site.
- 26 The MSCP, with 389 parking spaces, was developed to provide capacity for when existing car parks are redeveloped. It should be sufficient to accommodate future demand in Crewe, including for a new residential population, although this will be subject to the nature of future development, including consideration of low car or car-free dwellings, as part of the planning process. A further capacity assessment as part of any planning application or contractual



agreement will provide assurance that town centre development is supported by sufficient parking capacity as part of an overall transport and movement strategy for the central area. If development extends to encompass Delamere Street car park (112 short stay spaces) and Chester Street car park (127 long stay spaces), there may be need to review the operation of parking stock within the town centre, giving consideration to the balance between short and long-stay spaces, hours of car park operation and extending provision for charging of electric vehicles.

- 27 There may also be scope for the developer to extend their scheme to other sites within the town centre. It is likely that these would be through commercial negotiation between third parties, but the council may, in the future, wish to explore utilising its powers under the Compulsory Purchase Order legislation.
- 28 Appendix 3 (a Part 2 item) provides further information on the developer and provides an indicative image of their potential scheme.
- 29 The council has the ability to draw upon an existing capital programme item within the MTFS specifically relating to Crewe town centre regeneration; this identifies £1.323m forecast spend in 2025/26, which includes external grant funding to support the Royal Arcade Meanwhile project. Approximately £300k of this will be required, with the additional £275k referred to in the recommendations, to support the costs associated with developing the pre-development agreement.
- 30 In addition to the potential of the sites referred to above, there may be opportunities to progress redevelopment of other council-owned sites and properties in Crewe town centre. Where these are proposed by owners of adjacent sites, legislation allows the council to undertake a direct sale to facilitate redevelopment, subject to other factors such as best consideration, etc.
- 31 Crewe Town Board has played a key role in shaping regeneration plans and projects since it was first established in 2020. It is independent of Cheshire East Council, with a private sector chair and representatives from across the local community, including the council leader. It is supported by Cheshire East Council from a governance and reporting perspective, with officers attending each of its meetings. It has established Terms of Reference (Appendix 2) which are now subject to a periodic review.

## **Consultation and Engagement**

- 32 In collaboration with developers and their representatives, the council will undertake public and stakeholder engagement and consultation to ensure there are significant and timely opportunities for local members,

local residents, businesses, property owners and others to help shape the design and composition of development proposals.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 33 The recommendation to delegate authority to enter into a pre-development agreement is based on the council's understanding that the specific developer is uniquely placed to deliver a residential-led development in Crewe town centre that:
- (a) is based on their strong track record of delivery alongside local authority partners
  - (b) is transformative, with high quality design, construction and management of buildings and spaces;
  - (c) can evolve through a pre-development agreement where the costs and risks to the council are minimised;
  - (d) can be delivered with gap-funding from other public sector sources secured, or brokered, by them;
  - (e) managed on a long-term basis, such that they retain responsibility for maintaining the quality of the property and environment; and
  - (f) have a strong emphasis on delivering positive social impact through all stages of the development lifecycle;
- 34 For the developer to consider progressing with its plans for Crewe town centre, they require the council to give some initial commitment. This report seeks to allow officers to develop a business case, secure funding and enter into formal dialogue to enable them to undertake masterplanning, detailed development appraisals, funding applications, etc. This does not include giving authority for the developer to undertake a redevelopment, so it is entirely within the council's power not to proceed with the development, or to choose to develop the sites through another developer.
- 35 This stage of work constitutes a period of due diligence, whereby all parties are required to satisfy each other over the viability of a high-quality development. The developer will benefit from exclusivity during this period, where the council will not engage with other parties regarding the agreed sites.
- 36 Subsequent stages of delivery would only progress when both the developer and the council are satisfied that a high quality development scheme is viable (with gap funding) and satisfies legal and commercial considerations, such as agreeing a value for land assets it may sell or

lease to the developer. The council will then seek further authority from this committee to enter into a formal contractual arrangement with the developer to commence the development process.

- 37 The council intend to utilise the Pagabo construction/development framework to appoint a developer. This is a procurement framework used by public sector organisations in the UK to contract for construction projects. It provides a compliant and efficient way to procure works, services, and consultancy, offering options like direct award or competitive tendering. Pagabo frameworks focus on social value, ensuring projects deliver positive economic, social, and environmental benefits.
- 38 On a similar basis, the council has other property assets in Crewe town centre that may be of interest to developers that own sites adjacent to council assets. This report also seeks authority for officers to enter into dialogue regarding freehold or leasehold sale of such sites.
- 39 For clarity, the council would still require formal decisions to enter into a development agreement and/or commercial sale with a third party where the value is greater than £1m by reason of the same falling to be considered as a significant decision, and separate decisions would also need to be taken in relation to planning, closure of car parks, etc.
- 40 Other reasons related to these recommendations are commercially sensitive and are therefore included as a Part 2 item in Appendix 4.

### Other Options Considered

- 41 All options are at risk of global and national market volatility, but the Government's commitment to investing in significant housing growth represents a timely opportunity to move forward now.

Option	Impact	Risk
1) Do nothing	The Royal Arcade site would be likely to remain as a 'meanwhile' use site. Other sites would remain in their current form.	With lack of revenue funding to maintain the 'meanwhile' site, its condition would deteriorate.
2) Progress dialogue with a developer through the Pagabo framework	Potential to develop a comprehensive and impactful residential-led scheme with minimal council investment. This would	The scale of the developer's interest, their appetite for a large residential-led scheme, and their track record in securing gap-funding to address viability, represents a unique opportunity

(recommended option)	also secure more commercial uses on the ground floor, improved public realm and social value benefits.	for Crewe and is the primary rationale for utilisation of the Pagabo framework. However, gap-funding is not guaranteed and demand from residential and commercial occupiers may fall short, although the phased approach proposed would help mitigate this.
3) Seek to appoint a development partner through an open public procurement	This could be as impactful as (2) but, given the viability challenges, may not be attractive to a developer unless viability is underwritten by the council / other funders.	<p>This approach was utilised in appointing the developer for the leisure-led scheme. Whilst a development partner was appointed, the scheme was not delivered due to lack of commercial viability.</p> <p>Repeating this approach would almost certainly require the council securing tens of millions of pounds of grant funding to address the expected viability gap.</p> <p>This is both time and labour-intensive; it would require the allocation of additional staffing resources and consultancy support.</p> <p>Without sufficient additional budget for staff and consultancy support, there is a greater risk that such a procurement would take too long and result in failure.</p>
4) Sell council-owned sites to a third party.	This would be less likely to deliver a scheme in the near future.	This would remove most of the controls over the nature of a scheme, instead relying on the planning process to secure the best outcome. In reality, given the nature of the commercial and residential markets in Crewe, it is unlikely that any sale would result in redevelopment of the site without significant additional grant funding.

## Implications and Comments

### *Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance*

- 42 Local authorities usually allocate land for specific purposes under different statutory powers. They may have acquired the land pursuant to a statute which then regulates how the land must be allocated or managed (e.g., under the Public Health Act 1875) or they may have acquired land for general purposes. It will be necessary for Legal Services to investigate how the Council acquired any land involved with this scheme and if it was for a specific purpose.
  
- 43 S122 of the Local Government Act 1972 (LGA) and s232 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA) offer two mechanisms under which local authorities may appropriate land for planning purposes. The procedures are largely the same but for one crucial difference, whether or not the land is currently appropriated by the Council for planning purposes.
  
- 44 Appropriation simply means transferring the allocation of the land from one purpose to another.
  
- 45 If the local authority decides that it needs to transfer land from one purpose or function to another, perhaps for redevelopment then it may appropriate the land under s.122 LGA 1972, unless the land is currently already allocated for planning purposes, in which case s.232(6) TCPA states that s.232 TCPA must be used.
  
- 46 “Planning purposes” is not expressly defined but s.246 TCPA states any reference to appropriation of land for planning purposes is reference to the appropriation of it for the purposes for which land could be acquired under s.226 & s.227 TCPA. Therefore, “planning purposes” means an acquisition or appropriation which will facilitate the carrying out of development, re-development or improvement which is likely to contribute to the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area, or which is required in the interests of the proper planning of the area in which the land is situated.

### Appropriation Under Section 122 Local Government Act

- 47 S122 LGA 1972 provides that:  
  
 “The council may appropriate for any purpose for which the council is authorised by statute to acquire land by agreement any land which belongs to it and is no longer required for the purpose for which it is held immediately before the appropriation.”
  
- 48 The key procedural points are as follows:

- a) The land must already belong to the council
  - b) The land must be no longer required for the purpose for which it is currently appropriated; and
  - c) The purpose for which the council is appropriating must be authorised by statute.
- 49 It is important to note that it is a matter for the local authority to satisfy itself whether or not the land is still required for the purpose for which it is held immediately before the appropriation and its decision cannot be challenged in the absence of bad faith.
- 50 S122 LGA 1972 provides that the council may not appropriate land constituting or forming part of an 'open space' or land forming part of a common (unless it is a common or fuel or field garden allotment of less than 250 square yards) unless they:
- i. advertise their intention to do so for two consecutive weeks in a newspaper circulating in the local area; and
  - ii. consider any objections to the proposed appropriation which may be made to them.
- 51 'Open space' is defined by s.336(1) TCPA 1990 as "any land laid out as a public garden, or used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground" this impliedly includes de facto open space land not formally dedicated under the Open Spaces Act 1906.
- 52 The council generally has taken a wider view as to what constitutes open space. The land contained within public car parks may be deemed to be open space within the Councils wider view.
- 53 However, if appropriation of the land were to take place under the Local Government Act 1972, the land would still be subject to any third parties rights and/ or interests that exist or incidental to the land. A recent title review has established that the central carpark is burdened by restrictive covenants that the land can only be used for housing purposes, therefore the use of the land for any other purpose would be in breach of the covenants.
- 54 If the council were to develop the land for any of the options detailed in the report, there is a low risk that the council could be subject to an injunction by the person who has the benefit of the covenant; likelihood of any beneficiaries of those covenants being traces is negligible.

Appropriation Under Section 232 TCPA

55 S 232 TCPA 1990 provides that:

“Where any land had been acquired or appropriated by a local authority for planning purposes and is for the time being held by them for the purposes for which it was so acquired or appropriated, the authority may appropriate land for any purpose for which the council is authorised by statute to acquire land by agreement.”

56 The key procedural points are as follows:

- a) The land must already belong to the council and have been acquired or appropriated for planning purposes
- b) The land must be held by the council for purposes which it was appropriated; and
- c) The purpose for which the council is appropriating must be authorised by statute.

57 It is important to note that s.232(4) of the TCPA provides that the council must follow the same advertising requirements for ‘open space’ as above.

58 S 237 TCPA 1990 provides that the erection, construction or carrying out of any building work (by the council or a person deriving title from the council) on land which has been appropriated by a local authority for planning purposes is authorised if it is done in accordance with planning permission, notwithstanding that it interferes with certain private rights such as restrictive covenants and easements. The private rights are converted into a claim for compensation.

59 The decision to appropriate land is, like many administrative actions by public authorities, subject to challenge by judicial review. If private rights are to be overridden the council must be especially careful. The council must be able to demonstrate the purpose for the appropriation and that it has taken all the relevant considerations into account and not taken any irrelevant considerations into account.

60 To enable the council to demonstrate that the decision has been made properly and in accordance with Wednesbury reasonableness, the proposal to appropriate must be the subject of a comprehensive report and decision record or minute. The minutes should show that the land is not currently appropriated for planning purposes, and that the council intends to formally appropriate the land under s.122 LGA 1972 or that the land is currently held for planning purposes and that the council intends to appropriate the land for alternative planning purposes. If

s.122 LGA 1972 is being utilised the minutes must record the resolution that the land is no longer required for the purpose for which it is currently appropriated.

- 61 Advertisements in accordance with s.122(2A) LGA 1972 or s.232(4) TCPA 1990 in respect of open space must give clear information and refer to the intended appropriation. Further, the council's minutes must then record that any objections received have been duly considered.
- 62 Any decision related to the appropriation of land would need to be taken by full council.
- 63 If the decision is made to dispose of the land, then;
- (i) In accordance with section 123 of the local government act 1972, the council is under an obligation to obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable upon the disposal of its property.
  - (ii) There will be a requirement to review the terms when they are prepared to ensure any issues regarding best value, procurement, and or subsidy control are resolved. The terms will also need to reflect any easements and rights for both the land to be disposed of and that retained by the council. Issues may include rights to light/ air, open space and restrictions on building use or development.
- 64 The Localism Act 2011 introduced the general power of competence, which allows the council to do anything an individual can do, provided it is not prohibited by other legislation. These powers have replaced the previous well-being powers: however, the use of these powers must be in support of a reasonable and accountable decision made in line with the public law principles.
- 65 The council has a fiduciary duty at all times to the taxpayers and must fulfil this duty in a way that is accountable to local people.
- 66 If it is intended to enter into agreements to sell any land it will be necessary for the council to enter that it complies with the requirements of s123. Section 123(2) Local Government Act 1972 allows for a disposal at less than best price reasonably obtainable with the consent of the Secretary of State. The General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 allows for consent to be deemed to have been given in specified circumstances. These are; -
- 67 The local authority considers that the purpose for which the land is to be disposed is likely to contribute to the achievement of any one or more of the following objects in respect of the whole or any part of its area or all or any persons resident or present in its area:



- (a) the promotion or improvement of economic well-being
  - (b) the promotion or improvement of social well being
  - (c) the promotion or improvement of environmental well-being
- 68 the difference between the unrestricted value of the land to be disposed of and the consideration does not exceed £2 million.
- 69 It should be noted that the 2003 consent does not apply to all public bodies, it does not apply to land acquired or appropriated for planning purposes, it does not preclude judicial review of the decision to make a disposal at undervalue, and it does not remove the need to comply with subsidy control rules.
- 70 The council must therefore ensure that the disposal is not for an undervalue in excess of £2m and should satisfy itself if specific disposal consent is required from the Secretary of State.
- 71 If the council in future determines that it will be using its Compulsory Purchase power, it needs to ensure that it complies with the Guidance which indicated that compulsory purchase powers should only be used where there is a compelling case in the public interest that the benefits of the scheme outweigh the interference with private rights and interests. Compulsory purchase powers are only to be used as a last resort and the land proposed to be acquired should be the minimum considered to be reasonably required. The council must demonstrate that there are no impediments to implementation of the CPO. To do so, the council must provide substantive information as to the sources of funding available for the acquisition of the land the council must also show that the Scheme is unlikely to be blocked by any physical or legal impediments to implementation; including any need for planning permission or any other consent or licence.
- 72 Legal along with the council's Procurement team are reviewing the Pagabo construction/development framework to establish the basis upon which the council might proceed to directly award a pre-development agreement with a specific developer. That developer has supplied a copy of the Pagabo standard form pre-development agreement which it is understood would be used if proceeding as planned, from a review of this document it would appear to be cast on reasonable terms but instructions will be required in order to finalise this document on any key aspects that the council would require to see reflected in it.

### *Section 151 Officer/Finance*

- 73 The proposal to take forward and fund this scheme remains subject to the production of a satisfactory business case.
- 74 The Council's revenue funding position is challenging at this stage and options will need to be considered including the use of flexible capital receipts. That will be available if the Council can secure additional capital receipts and the potential calls against the receipts for transformation costs can be managed within the envelope available.
- 75 It is noted that officers are also looking to other sources of funding outside of the Council to support this project.
- 76 Within the Pagabo Developer Led Framework all Developers within the framework (core and reserves) can be directly awarded projects by all public sector bodies. This route would be used where the development can only proceed if a particular developer is appointed (for example, the developer has an interest in an adjoining site) or there is a specific reason not to run a further competition)
- 77 Direct Awards are permissible where:
- Officers of the Council have reviewed the Framework tender price and quality responses and the Framework template Project Agreement.
  - Having done that, Officers have been able to determine that a particular developer is best placed to deliver the development.

### *Human Resources*

- 78 There are no direct HR implications for this report. Alternative options to that recommended, would be likely to require additional staffing resources.

### *Risk Management*

- 79 The key risks associated with this report are summarised below:

*Risk 1:* That insufficient funding is identified to support the costs of developing the proposals, resulting in plans stalling or being terminated

*Mitigation 1:* The council is seeking to secure external grant funding, but is committing to underwrite its proportion of these costs, subject to a capped contribution to the developer.

*Risk 2:* That insufficient funding is identified to support the costs of bridging the viability gap for the proposed scheme, resulting in the scheme stalling or being terminated.

*Mitigation 2:* The council is working with the developer to secure external grant funding to deliver the scheme.

*Risk 3:* Planning and environmental factors require a development scheme to be fundamentally changed.

*Mitigation 3:* The potential developer has a track record in working alongside planning teams and utilities providers to deliver schemes that address any concerns whilst delivering schemes that are vibrant and viable.

*Risk 4:* A decision is not taken by committee at this stage resulting in the developer prioritising other towns/schemes ahead of this.

*Mitigation 4:* This report is framed as being the starting point for a proposed development and does not involve significant levels of reputational or financial risk to the council. Significant decisions regarding the use of its land assets and planning will be taken at a later date when more detailed information on the scheme will be available.

#### *Impact on other Committees*

- 80 The regeneration of Crewe town centre should have wide-ranging positive impacts, benefiting others including children, young people, adults and public health more broadly. Given the focus of the proposal on the local economy and growth, it is appropriate that this committee considers it, but the report has been considered by the Leadership Teams of other council directorates.
- 81 As plans are developed in more detail, it may be appropriate to seek approval from other committees.

#### *Regeneration and Planning Policy*

- 82 The Town Centre Regeneration Framework and ambitions for the wider Crewe Area (see 'All Change for Crewe: High Growth city, 2013), informed development of the Council's formal land use policy for the town which is set out in the Local Plan Strategy (LPS), primarily at policy LPS 1 'Central Crewe' which supports delivery of circa 400 new homes, commercial and retail development and improved connectivity. A more detailed approach to Crewe Town Centre is also provided via part two of the local plan, the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD), at Policy RET10: 'Crewe Town Centre' with a

focus on public realm improvement, better connectivity and new residential accommodation in the town centre.

- 83 These two core policies, alongside multiple other general but supportive policies in the development plan, set out the council's land use strategy for Crewe which strongly supports further residential development in the town.
- 84 Government has recently increased the housing requirement for Cheshire East which means many development sites will be proposed at the edges of settlements around Cheshire East, including at Crewe. In this context it is essential for the council to make best use of its own assets to demonstrate how a model which focuses on improved density, sustainability and quality can deliver the housing that our communities need whilst contributing to the five year supply for the borough and making best use of brownfield sites to bring direct investment, and jobs, into the town centre.

#### Policy: Cheshire East Plan

The Cheshire East Plan is the council's guiding vision of enabling prosperity and wellbeing for all in Cheshire East. The recommendations in this report contribute to the following commitments in the plan, as follows:

<b>Commitment 1: Unlocking prosperity for all</b>	<b>Commitment 2: Improving health and wellbeing</b>	<b>Commitment 3: An effective and enabling council</b>
1.4 Shared vision for Crewe delivers a masterplan for jobs, affordable homes and regeneration for the benefit of the whole borough.	2.6 Lasting solutions are delivered through strong and committed partnerships.	3.3 Innovative solutions are developed through a culture of collaboration across the council and with residents, businesses and partners.

#### *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*

- 85 This report contains no recommendations with direct and immediate implications related equality, diversity and inclusion. As the development proposals progress, full consideration to equalities, diversity and inclusion will be given including, where appropriate, an Equalities Impact Assessment, as well as a more detailed assessment as to the social impacts of any proposals.

*Other Implications*




- 86 This report contains no recommendations with direct and immediate implications for rural communities, children and young people, public health and climate change related to this report's recommendations. As the development proposals progress, full consideration to these will be given including engagement with relevant council services.



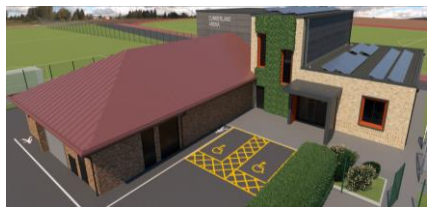
*Consultation*

<b>Name of Consultee</b>	<b>Post held</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date returned</b>
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy) :</i>			
Ashley Hughes	S151 Officer	09/07/25	18/08/25
Kevin O'Keefe	Acting Monitoring Officer	26/08/25	28/08/25
<i>Legal and Finance</i>			
Mandy Withington	Principal Lawyer (Commercial Property and Projects)	09/07/25	21/07/25
Adrian Leslie	Lawyer (Contracts & Procurement Team)	09/07/25	21/07/25
Steve Reading	Finance Manager (Place & Corporate Services)	09/07/25	28/07/25
<i>Other Consultees:</i>			
<i>Executive Directors/Directors</i>			
Phil Cresswell	Executive Director - Place	Click or tap to enter a date	28/08/25




<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development charles.jarvis@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1: Summary of current Crewe town centre regeneration projects.  Appendix 2: Crewe Town Board current Terms of Reference  Appendix 3: Background on developer and images of potential development scheme (not for publication).  Appendix 4: Additional Reasons for Recommendations (not for publication)
Background Papers:	None




Summary of recent/current Crewe town centre regeneration projects.




Project name and location	Description, timescale and delivery lead.	Image
Town Centre attractors		
<b>Repurposing Our High Streets Grant Scheme,</b>  <i>Across Crewe town centre</i>	Grant scheme targeted at supporting businesses/ organisations to take on vacant town centre premises, reducing vacancy and diversifying the town centre with more independent businesses. Operating now until December 2026. (Cheshire East Council)	
<b>Cheshire Archive &amp; public realm,</b>  <i>Memorial Square</i>	New public-facing building to accommodate part of the relocated historic Cheshire Archive with the associated facilities and public realm. Open Summer 2026. (Cheshire East Council with Cheshire West & Chester Council)	
<b>Office workspace &amp; co-working</b>  <i>Vernon Way / Heath Street</i>	Conversion of former council offices to provide attractive, flexible modern office space for small businesses and entrepreneurs, stimulating both economic growth and town centre footfall. Open now. (Cheshire East Council)	


Indoor Community spaces & places		
<b>Crewe Youth Club</b> <i>Mirion Street</i>	New boxing club on site of former Youth Club, providing some of the best training facilities in the UK. Open now. (Crewe Youth Club with South Cheshire Amateur Boxing Club)	
<b>The Dome YouthZone</b> <i>Oak Street</i>	Major new youth facility serving for all young people in the borough providing a range of activities and support services to help tackle deprivation and exclusion. Open Summer 2026. (OnSide Youth Zones)	
<b>Cumberland Arena</b> <i>Thomas Street</i>	Remodelled and extended sports building with additional studio space to meet growing demand, and spectator facilities. Open Spring 2026. (Cheshire East Council with Everybody Health & Leisure)	



Outdoor spaces & places		
<b>Ly<sup>2</sup> event space</b> <i>Lyceum Square</i>	<p>New outdoor event and activity space adjacent to Lyceum Theatre and Market Hall, with stages, giant screen, seating, exhibition space and bespoke seating and lighting. Opened Summer 2023. (Cheshire East Council)</p>	
<b>Civic &amp; Cultural Space</b> <i>Memorial Square</i>	<p>Demolition of former deck and undercroft car park to create a new public space and improved pedestrian linkages, including a new surface car park and courts entrance. Opened Spring 2025. (Cheshire East Council)</p>	
<b>Pocket Parks</b> <i>Eight existing Pocket Parks across Crewe</i>	<p>Major improvements to existing Pocket Parks to make them more attractive and better equipped spaces for local residents to spend time and enjoy physical activity. First parks completed Summer 2024, final parks to complete Spring 2026, (Cheshire East Council)</p>	

<p><b>Valley Brook Corridor</b></p> <p><i>Valley Brook and adjacent area</i></p>	<p>Improvement to existing pedestrian/cycle route along Valley Brook to enhance connections between different areas and encourage physical activity. To be delivered in phases from Autumn 2025- Autumn 2026 (Cheshire East Council)</p>	
<p><b>Jubilee Multi Use Games Area</b></p> <p><i>Adjacent to Jubilee Gardens and Jubilee House</i></p>	<p>Redevelopment of problematic public space to provide a managed multi-use outdoor facility for local people to practice physical activities. Open Spring 2026. (Cheshire East Council)</p>	
<p><b>Meanwhile @ Royal Arcade</b></p> <p><i>Victoria St – Queensway – Delamere Street</i></p>	<p>Temporary development of land adjacent to Crewe bus station and multi-storey car park to provide a new footpath, public space, including grassed areas and hardstanding with seating, recreation facilities space. Delivered in phases and to complete March 2026. (Cheshire East Council)</p>	

Better Quality Housing		
<b>Warm &amp; Healthy Homes</b>  <i>Chester Street and Victoria Street</i>	Targeted housing improvement programme to deliver repairs/improvements to energy-inefficient heritage properties. To complete by late 2026. (Cheshire East Council)	
Accessibility & Permeability		
<b>Flag Lane Link</b>	New road link improving east-west vehicular connectivity for cars and cyclists. Completed Summer 2024. (Cheshire East Council).	
<b>Southern Gateway</b>  <i>High Street – Forge Street</i>	New pedestrian and cycle link providing a more direct link between the town centre and the railway station / south Crewe, including the Lifestyle Centre and new YouthZone. Open August 2025. (Cheshire East Council)	

<p><b>Mill Street Corridor</b></p> <p><i>Railway Street – Mill Street – Vernon Way</i></p>	<p>Improved pedestrian and cycle link between Southern Gateway and the railway station / south Crewe, delivered in phases and to complete Summer 2026. (Cheshire East Council).</p>	
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## Appendix 2

**Crewe Town Board****Current Terms of Reference (subject to periodic review).****1. Key Objectives of the Crewe Town Board**

- 1.1. The Crewe Town Board will provide expertise, guidance and support to all key stakeholders (including Cheshire East Council and Crewe Town Council) to:
- Set a Vision and Strategy to secure the long term economic, physical, environmental, cultural and social development of Crewe.
  - Agree an action plan which includes the short and medium-term actions required to deliver the Vision and Strategy
  - Inform any key investment and funding decision to be taken by any individual stakeholder in the town

**2. Main responsibilities of the Crewe Town Board**

- Develop a long-term vision, strategy and plan for Crewe
- Review and advise on any partner strategies and plans that relate to economic, physical and social development in Crewe.
- Consider and advise on funding applications that support the key objectives of the Board
- Ensure all strategies/plans and investment proposals are aligned
- Influence new proposals so that they maximise their contribution to the key objectives of the Board.
- Influence the development and delivery of sub-regional and national policies and programmes that have a bearing on the key objectives.
- Promote and market the town to residents, partners, businesses, inward investors and visitors (existing and potential)
- Build and maintain strong effective relationships with key local, sub-regional and national stakeholders to help secure further investment and ensure a positive impression of the town.
- Ensure appropriate engagement arrangements are in place with all stakeholders
- Specifically, to ensure the voice of all groups is fed in to the vision and its strategy and delivery e.g. young people, vulnerable groups, BAME community.

**3. Scope**

- 3.1. The focus of the Board will be on the urban areas of Crewe. However, in some instances it may be appropriate to consider Crewe as having a wider economic geography extending across south Cheshire and/or the CW postcodes.
- 3.2. The Board's remit shall encompass the economic, physical, environmental and social development of Crewe. For purposes of clarity this should include the following:
- Physical development including buildings and infrastructure

- The retention and creation of jobs and increased productivity through Crewe's employers
- The skills, education, aptitudes and experiences of people that live or work in Crewe
- The physical built and green environment of Crewe
- The public health and broader welfare of Crewe's residents.

#### 4.0 Membership

- 4.1 The Board will comprise up to 17 members, reflecting the different types of stakeholders required to support effective working whilst representing the different interests of the town. These will include the MP for Crewe & Nantwich and representatives from Cheshire East Council, Crewe Town Council and Cheshire & Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership.
- 4.2 Organisations represented on the Board will determine and review their own appointments in accordance with their internal arrangements.
- 4.3 Individual members of the Board will be responsible for the induction of new members as appropriate.

#### 5.0 Chair and Vice Chair

- 5.1 The Chair and Vice-Chair will, unless otherwise agreed, be elected for a period of three years but this will be reviewed annually by the Board.
- 5.2 The annual review by the Board for the Chair and Vice Chair review will follow this process:
  - 5.2.1 The current Chair will email the Board on an annual review basis to ask if anyone wishes to put themselves forward as Chair or Vice Chair and if the current elected representatives are happy to continue in their roles.
  - 5.2.2 Should further nominations be received for either positions, this will result in an anonymous vote by the Board conducted by either the current Chair or Vice-Chair, dependant on the role being considered.
  - 5.2.3 The Chair or Vice-Chair will collate the votes and communicate the results.
  - 5.2.4 The Chair or Vice-Chair elected will take up their position upon announcement of the outcome.
- 5.3 The Chair should normally be a private sector representative.
- 5.4 The Vice-Chair may be from any sector.
- 5.5 In the event that the Chair resigns or is otherwise unable to continue in office, the Vice-Chair will perform the functions of the Chair until the Board has elected a new Chair.
- 5.6 Similarly, if the Vice-Chair is unable to continue in office, the Chair will prompt an election for a new Vice-Chair.

#### 6.0 Lead Authority and Accountable Body Arrangements

- 6.1 Cheshire East Council will be the Lead Authority and will carry out the role of Accountable Body for the Towns Fund.

## 7.0 Secretariat

- 7.1 Cheshire East Council will provide secretariat support for the meetings of the Board.
- 7.2 The Deputy Chief Executive of Cheshire East Council will act as Secretary of the Board for the purpose of co-ordinating advice to the Board.
- 7.3 The Head of Democratic Services and Governance of Cheshire East Council will be responsible for providing secretariat support for the Board.
- 7.4 Agendas and reports will be published at least five clear working days in advance of a meeting and sent to all members of the Board.
- 7.5 Agendas, reports and minutes will be published on the Council's website, and will be publicly accessible documents, subject to the requirements of confidentiality.

## 8.0 Board Meetings

- 8.1 To be quorate, two thirds of members must be present, of which two must be from the private sector. No decisions may be taken by the Board if a meeting is inquorate.
- 8.2 Substitute members at a meeting will not be permitted without the prior agreement of the Chair.
- 8.3 Meetings are to be held at least four times per year.
- 8.4 Minutes of the meeting will focus on actions rather than provide a record of all discussion points.
- 8.5 The board may invite appropriate organisations/individuals to give presentations on priority issues.
- 8.6 At every meeting, the chair will confirm: all decisions taken; actions agreed; and media messages.
- 8.7 Where a decision is required, the Board will try to reach a consensus view. Where this is not possible, there will be a vote. Each member of the Board will have one vote and matters will be determined by a simple majority of those present at the meeting. In the case of an equality of voting, the Chair shall have a second or casting vote.
- 8.8 A matter needing board approval can be considered by exception by correspondence if the matter is time critical. A majority of the board will have to approve the matter and copies of emails confirming the position and any comments will be kept by the Secretariat. The matter will then need to be formally ratified at the next board meeting and minuted.
- 8.9 The Board will make its governance structures, profiles on key stakeholders, meeting agendas and minutes (in accordance with the Local Government Act

1972) evidence and any supporting documents for Town Investment Plans publicly available (e.g. through the website of Cheshire East Council).

- 8.10 Where it is necessary for a matter to be dealt with in confidence, all relevant papers will be marked as confidential and shall not be disclosed outside the Board.

#### 9.0 Declarations of Interest and Conduct of Members of the Board

- 9.1 Members must declare a personal, pecuniary, prejudicial or other interest in any matter under discussion at a meeting and this must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- 9.2 Declaration includes stating the nature of the interest.
- 9.3 Where a pecuniary or prejudicial interest is declared, the member in question must absent themselves from the meeting for that item and take no part in the discussion or voting.
- 9.4 Elected members of Cheshire East Council who sit on the Board are bound by the Council's Member Code of Conduct.
- 9.5 The Board will establish a register of interests to be completed by all members of the Board. The register will be maintained by the Lead Authority.
- 9.6 All members of the Board are expected to adhere to the Nolan Principles: The Seven Principles of Public Life:
- Selflessness
  - Integrity
  - Objectivity
  - Accountability
  - Openness
  - Honesty
  - Leadership

#### 10.0 Changes to the Terms of Reference

- 10.1 These terms of reference will be reviewed annually or sooner if deemed appropriate.
- 10.2 Any changes to the terms of reference must be approved by a majority of the Board's membership.



## **Annex 1: Board structure and membership**

The number of positions on any board has to balance the need for operational efficiency in considering issues and taking decisions, with the need to be inclusive of a wider range of interests. Given that Crewe Town Board's remit is principally advisory, rather than decision-making, and that development of Crewe covers such a wide range of issues, the Board has been established with 15 'fixed' positions.

The Board comprises the following mix types of members:

**Sectoral (5)** - to address requirements of the Towns fund requirements and to ensure that key strategic decision-makers are well-placed to advise and act upon the advice of the Board.

**Thematic (7)** – to ensure that all key issues relating to Crewe's functioning as a 'place' are considered, with a key focus on how these impact on its people, with relevant professional inputs from a range of local organisations (may be public, private or voluntary sector).

**Skills-based (5)** – to ensure it is utilising the broader skills/knowledge of the local business community. This should include the Chair of the Board.

In addition, officers from relevant organisations will also be invited to attend Board meetings as advisers, where appropriate.

The Board therefore comprises

### **Category A - Sectoral**

1. Member of Parliament
2. Cheshire East Council: Elected Cabinet Member
3. Crewe Town Council: Leader
4. South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry
5. Cheshire & Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership

### **Category B – Thematic Representatives from**

6. Education & Skills
7. Environment, housing, infrastructure and transport
8. Healthcare
9. Sport and Leisure
10. Culture
11. Local community
12. Young people

### **Category C: - Business/Commercial**

Up to five individuals with skills from industry such as commercial operations, marketing, property, retail and hospitality.

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3, 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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