

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Highways and Transport Committee**
held on Thursday, 20th November, 2025 in The Capesthorne Room - Town
Hall, Macclesfield, SK10 1EA

PRESENT

Councillor M Goldsmith (Chair)

Councillors S Adams, C Browne, R Chadwick, P Coan, A Coiley, H Faddes,
A Gage, M Muldoon, M Sewart, D Clark and J Place

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Richard Chamberlain Public Path Orders Officer
Tom Moody, Director of Transport, and Infrastructure
Nicola Lewis-Smith, Public Rights of Way Manager
Steve Reading, Finance Manager (Place and Corporate Services)
Karen Shuker, Democratic Services Officer
Mandy Withington, Solicitor

Prior to the commencement of the business meeting, the Chair expressed appreciation for the dedicated efforts of the Highways staff in responding to the recent Storm Claudia.

The Chair highlighted that it was Road Safety Week, which was organised by the charity Brake, focusing on safe vehicles which was timely due to the recent weather.

It was noted that Councillor R Fletcher had joined the Highways and Transport committee since the September meeting.

23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors L Braithwaite, A Burton and R Fletcher.

Councillors D Clark and J Place were present as substitutes.

24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

25 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2025 be approved as a correct record.

26 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no public speakers.

27 SECOND FINANCIAL REVIEW 25/26

The Committee considered the report which set out the Second Financial Review 2025/26 position based on income, expenditure, and known commitments as at the end of August 2025. It also identified actions that were being taken to address adverse variances to urgently address the Council's financial sustainability.

The Second Financial Review 2025/26 reported a forecasted revenue outturn position as an adverse variance of £2.345m, after the application of planned use of Exceptional Financial Support) of £25.261m.

The Committee noted that the Highways and Transport second financial review position was a forecast overspend of £0.008m reflecting an improvement since FR1 of £0.106m. This was against a budget of £17.151m at FR2.

Mitigations in place included Transport Policy which was £0.193m underspent due to vacancies, and Highways income was forecast to be £0.250m better than budget, both of which were helping address pressures.

Supplementary Capital estimates and Capital Budget Virements made up to £500,000 included Highways and Maintenance Minor Works and Future High Street Funding – Southern Gateway.

The Highways and Transport committee were being asked to approve the Supplementary Capital Estimates in respect of Acton Village and Future High Street Funding – Southern Gateway.

The revised service committee report format was welcomed by members.

RESOLVED (Unanimously)

The Highways and Transport Committee

1. Noted the overall Council's Financial position as described within the Executive Summary – Council Financial Position.

2. Scrutinised the latest revenue forecast for the Highways and Transport Directorate, review progress on the delivery of the MTFS approved budget policy change items (Table 3), the RAG ratings and to understand the actions to be taken to address any adverse variances from the approved budget.

3. Noted the overall in-year forecast capital spending for Highways and Transport Directorate of £70.016m against a revised MTFS budget of £66.626m in Tables 4 and 5 of the report.

4. Noted the Delegated Decisions made for Supplementary Capital estimates and Capital Budget Virements up to £500,000 in Table 6 of the report.

5. Approved the Supplementary Capital Estimate above £500,000 up to and including £1,000,000 in Table 7 of the report.

6. Noted the Capital Budget Reductions in Table 8 of the report.

7. Noted the available reserves position as per Table 9 of the report.

28 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY CONSULTATION 2026/27 - 2029/30

The Committee received an update on the development of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2026–2030.

The report outlined key updates to financial assumptions, including revised growth allocations for Adult Social Care and Children's Services, the introduction of a 5% vacancy factor across staffing budgets, above inflation increases in fees and charges, and the reprofiling of transformation pump priming budgets funded through capital receipts. Additional service budget adjustments and contingency for inflation were also highlighted.

Members noted that the Council continued to face significant financial challenges, with a forecasted budget gap of £18.2m for 2026/27, reduced from £33.3m following recent refinements.

The committee considered the list of Highways and Transport budget savings proposals that contained in Annex 1 of the report.

A question was raised in respect of how areas for the Street Lighting Dimming/Switching Down budget saving would be identified and concerns around safety issues. In response officers assured members that extensive consultation would take place and the project would only be taken forward following capital investment.

In response to a query regarding whether advertising income, which included bus stop advertising, would also include council-owned car parks, officers advised that a market engagement exercise had been undertaken with other authorities that already had advertising policies in place. Advertising companies had also been approached to gauge interest, and the scope would include a range of different council assets. It was further noted that a substantial procurement process would be required as part of the implementation.

A question was raised in respect of the proposed streetlight dimming and whether the calculations for the proposed 12-year payback period had considered potential changes in government policy—specifically, a future government that might reduce or remove green subsidies for electric options.

In response officers stated that the assumption was reasonably conservative, factoring in rising energy costs over a long period and subject to external influences on energy prices, the 12- 14year return on investment was considered reasonable and achievable.

An updated MTFS report would be brought to each service committee in January which would then be considered at Full Council in February.

RESOLVED:

That the Highways and Transport Committee

1. Noted the updated budget position for the period 2026/27 to 2029/30 as set out in Table 3 of the report.
2. Scrutinises and provided feedback on the list of Highways and Transport budget savings proposals that are contained in the budget consultation launched in November 2025 as contained in Annex 1 of the report.
3. Noted the conditions for successful budget delivery, as approved by Corporate Policy Committee on 30 October 2025, which are set out in paragraph 12 of the report.

29 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme.

The following was noted:

- Notice of Motion – Heritage signs – It was agreed that this would be scheduled for the April Committee
- Local Transport Grant - Delivery Programme had been added to the April committee
- Local Transport Plan – Approval- Delivery Programme had been added to the April committee.

Officers confirmed that all savings items would be included in the MTFS report scheduled for the January committee.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be noted.

Councillor J Place left the meeting and did not return.

30 TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 SECTION 257: PROPOSED DIVERSION OF PUBLIC FOOTPATH NO. 2 IN THE PARISH OF SOMERFORD (PART)

The committee considered a report which outlined an investigation into a proposed diversion of Public Footpath No.2 in the Parish of Somerford following receipt of an application from Anwyl Group Limited under the provisions of Section 257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The application received requested that the Council make an order under section 257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to divert part of Public Footpath No.2 in the Parish of Somerford as it is deemed necessary to allow the construction of a fenced children's play area.

Planning approval consent was approved on 20th December 2024.

The report summarised the consultations undertaken, including any objections received and considered the relevant legal tests. The report addressed both the public interest and the interests of affected landowners and described the proposed new route with reference to accompanying plans.

It was recommended that a Public Path Diversion Order was made under Section 257 of Town and Country Planning Act 1990 on the grounds that Cheshire East Borough Council ("the Council") was satisfied that the diversion was necessary to enable the approved development to take place.

The ward members, Somerford Parish Council, user groups, utility companies, and the council's Nature Conservation Officer have been consulted, with three submitted written responses received.

One objection had been received from Somerford Parish Council to the proposed diverted route through the estate's landscaped centre. The Parish Council stated that it would prefer a natural path along the southern and western development boundary.

Officers confirmed that this would require significant changes to the approved planning consent.

The committee considered the evidence set out within the report and agreed that a Public Path Diversion Order is made under section 257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for part of Public Footpath No. 2 in the Parish of Somerford as shown on Plan No. TCPA083 in the report on the grounds that Cheshire East Borough Council is satisfied that it is

necessary to do so to enable the construction of an approved development.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the Highways & Transport Committee

1. Approve that a Public Path Diversion Order is made under section 257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for part of Public Footpath No. 2 in the Parish of Somerford as shown on Plan No. TCPA083 on the grounds that Cheshire East Borough Council is satisfied that it is necessary to do so to enable the construction of an approved development.

2. Approve that public notice of the making of the Order be given and that, in the event no objections are received within the statutory notice period, the Order be confirmed in the exercise of the powers conferred on the Council by the said Act.

3. Note that should any objections be received, Cheshire East Borough Council will be responsible for the conduct of any hearing or Public Inquiry relating to the Order.

The meeting commenced at 10.30am and concluded at 11.03am

Councillor M Goldsmith (Chair)