

Corporate Policy Committee

Agenda

Date:	Wednesday, 6th August, 2025
Time:	5.30 pm
Venue:	The Capesthorne Room - Town Hall, Macclesfield SK10 1EA

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 foot of each report.

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

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

1. Apologies for Absence

To note any apologies for absence from Members.

2. Declarations of Interest

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

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

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 June 2025.

For requests for further information

Contact: Nikki Bishop

Tel: 01270 275863

E-Mail: CheshireEastDemocraticServices@cheshireeast.gov.uk

4. **Public Speaking/Open Session**

In accordance with paragraph 2.24 of the Committee Procedure Rules and Appendix on Public Speaking, set out in the [Constitution](#), 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 to speak; 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. **Transformation Plan and Improvement Update** (Pages 13 - 26)

To receive an update on the Transformation Plan.

6. **Task and Finish Group: Harassment, Intimidation and Abuse of Councillors - Final Report** (Pages 27 - 108)

To receive the final report of the Task and Finish Group.

7. **Director of Public Health Annual Report 2024: Commercial Determinants of Health** (Pages 109 - 144)

To consider the Annual report.

8. **Knutsford BID Proposal** (Pages 145 - 174)

To consider the report which provides an update on the Knutsford BID proposal.

9. **Work Programme** (Pages 175 - 180)

To consider the Work Programme and determine any required amendments.

Membership: Councillors D Clark, J Clowes, L Crane, T Dean, M Goldsmith, M Gorman (Vice-Chair), D Jefferay, N Mannion (Chair), C O'Leary, J Rhodes, J Saunders and F Wilson

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Policy Committee**
held on Thursday, 12th June, 2025 in the Council Chamber, Municipal
Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe CW1 2BJ

PRESENT

Councillor N Mannion (Chair)
Councillor M Gorman (Vice-Chair)

Councillors D Clark, J Clowes, L Crane, T Dean, S Gardiner, M Goldsmith,
D Jefferay, C O'Leary, J Rhodes, J Saunders and R Vernon

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Ashley Hughes, Executive Director Resources and Section 151 Officer
Karen Wheeler, Corporate Improvement Director
Sal Khan, Interim Director of Finance and Deputy Chief Finance Officer
Janet Witkowski, Acting Governance Compliance and Monitoring Officer
Rachel Graves, Democratic Services Officer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor F Wilson and Councillor
R Vernon attended as a substitute.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In relation to Item 13 – Appointment of Independent Remuneration Panel,
Councillor S Gardiner declared that he knew one of the appointees and
stated that he would leave the meeting for this item and take no part in the
decision.

In relation to Item 13 – Appointment of Independent Remuneration Panel,
Councillor D Clark declared that she knew one of the appointees and
stated that she would leave the meeting for this item and take no part in
the decision.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 March be approved as a
correct record.

4 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no public speakers.

5 FINAL OUTTURN 2024/25

The Committee received the report which set out the Final Outturn for 2024-25. Members considered the financial challenges being experienced by the Council and recognised the important activities aimed at minimising the impact on council services.

It was noted that the Corporate Services directorate had an underspend of £2.2 million due to vacancy management, underspends in ICT, savings and additional income.

With regards to Reserves, it was noted that there was a proposal to set up a new reserve to support transformation and improvement activities and concerns were raised about the lack of clarity on the reasons for the earmarked reserve, the total cost and expected savings from the Transformation Programme.

During debate, an amendment was proposed and seconded to:

“Delete Recommendation 3, insert the following and renumber:

3. instruct officers to bring a report for decision to the next meeting of Corporate Policy Committee setting out the justification for the proposed movement in reserves, including specific and costed proposals for the inclusion of an second reserve of up to £5.3m for the Transformation Programme (which is in addition to the £3.5m reserve approved by Council at its meeting in February 2025).
4. agree that any further changes in planned expenditure on the Transformation Programme, whether capital, revenue or via reserves, should be full justified and set out in a published report and receive prior approved by Corporate Policy Committee.”

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared lost.

RESOLVED (unanimously): 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 content of Annex 1 to the report.

- 4 recommend to Council approval of the Supplementary Revenue Estimate Request for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £1,000,000 as set out in Annex 1 to the report at Section 3, Table 1)

RESOLVED (by majority): That the Committee

- 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 reserves.

6 Q4 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2024/2025

The Committee considered the report which provided an overview of organisational performance against the priorities and vision set out within the Council's 2024/25 Corporate Plan during Quarter 4 of 2024-25.

It was noted that of the sixty-six priority actions, 48 were on track and 6 had been fully completed. The remaining twelve actions were either amber or red and the report detailed the reasons and mitigating actions being taken.

The Committee commented on the vacancy rate which was 17.4% and were informed that workforce efficiency improvement was a key part of the transformation programme which would help reduce the vacancy rate. Concerns were raised about the retention of foster carers and that the same retention strategies used for staff should also applied to foster carers.

It was noted that in Adult Social Care the use of agency staff and staff turnover were down but despite this there was a 12% budget variance. In response it was stated that this increase was due to the increased demand for care services, which was a statutory responsibility for the Council.

Reference was made to the Middlewich Eastern Bypass project and that its status had changed to red due to lack of clarity from the government on funding. It was suggested that the action should be amended to reflect its dependency on external approval.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the report.

7 CHESHIRE EAST DELIVERY PLAN 2025-26

The Committee considered the report on the Cheshire East Delivery Plan 2025-26.

The Delivery Plan supported the commitments in the Cheshire East Plan 2025-26 and included a set of key performance indicators to measure progress.

Concerns were raised about the timing of the approval of the Delivery Plan with the development of the Corporate Improvement Plan and the receipt of the Non-Statutory Best Value Notice. It was noted that the Assurance Panel had recommended the prioritising and sequencing of plans to ensure effective performance management.

It was proposed and seconded that the Cheshire East Delivery Plan 2025-26 be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee so that it could be presented along the Corporate Improvement Plan for approval and adoption.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Committee defer consideration of the Cheshire East Delivery Plan 2025-26 until the next meeting of the Committee so that the Delivery Plan can be considered alongside the Corporate Improvement Plan.

8 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE AND IMPROVEMENT UPDATE

The Committee considered the report which provided an update on the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan, revisit report and non-statutory Best Value Notice.

In relation to the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan, it was highlighted that 51 of the 73 actions had been completed and that 4 of the 18 recommendations from the Peer Challenge had been implemented. There had been significant progress in senior officer recruitment, improved financial reporting and development of the Cheshire East Plan. The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Revisit had acknowledged progress was being made but had highlighted the inconsistent pace and the need for clearer outcomes.

An overarching Corporate Improvement Plan was being developed, which would supersede the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan, and would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee for approval.

It was noted that the Assurance Panel would be issuing a formal letter to Council in July 2025 and clarification was sought that the letter would be from the Chair of the Panel and not involve any Cheshire East members or officers on the Panel.

Concerns were raised about the delay in the review of the Council's decision-making framework and the importance of making changes sooner rather than later to ensure better decision making and efficient scrutiny.

RESOLVED (unanimously): That the Committee

- 1 note the progress in delivering the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan.

- 2 note the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge revisit report and Best Value Notice at Appendices 2 and 3 to the report.
- 3 agree the approach and timeline for developing an overarching Corporate Improvement Plan, as set out in paragraph 15 of the report, including agreement of the Plan at the Committee's meeting in August 2025.

9 FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS OF COUNCIL SERVICES FOR LIBRARIES SHARED SERVICES AND CHESHIRE RURAL TOURING ARTS

The Committee considered the recommendations of the Shared Services Joint Committee at its meeting on 25 April 2025 in relation to the future arrangements for Libraries Shared Services and Cheshire Rural Touring Arts.

It was proposed that the Libraries Shared Services move from the shared service model to a managed service and the Cheshire Rural Touring Arts move to strategic partnership arrangement, in accordance with the decision of the Shared Services Joint Committee in June 2022.

A friendly amendment was proposed and accepted in relation to recommendation 3 to include the wording "in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Policy Committee".

RESOLVED (unanimously): That the Committee

- 1 approve the changes to the shared services in accordance with the Shared Services Review, as set out in the report of the Shared Services Joint Committee of 17 June 2022.
- 2 approve the proposed managed service and strategic partnership arrangements and principle of the revised Administration Agreement.
- 3 delegate authority to the Executive Director Place and Executive Director Resources (S151), in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Policy Committee, to jointly implement the final transition to the separate arrangements including completion of the necessary legal agreements with Cheshire West and Chester Council.

10 ANNUAL COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT 2024-25

The Committee received the report which provided a summary and analysis of complaints and compliments received by the Council during 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025.

It was noted that the Council had received 4,314 complaints in 2024/25, which was an increase of 41% on the previous year, and 935 compliments compared to 824 in 2023/24. The main reason for the increase in complaints related to the introduction of the garden waste subscription, stricter bin replacement policies and changes in adult social care charging policies.

The Committee referred to the report presentation and it was suggested that in future it should be a shorter, clearer report with narrative summaries and data tables rather than the use of pie charts. The Committee also stressed the importance of highlighting compliments, as in adult social care these had outnumber complaints.

Members suggested that if there was significant spike in the number of complaints for a service area or large financial payments made, then these should be reported to the relevant service committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the report.

11 DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING - INTERIM MEASURES

Consideration was given to the adoption of the ANSA Drugs and Alcohol Testing policy for new starters, on a random and 'for cause' basis for all identified operations roles within Environmental Services and Operations for employees appointed under Cheshire East Terms and Conditions until a corporate decision had been taken on the approach to continued Drug and Alcohol Testing.

It was reported that this would be an interim arrangement whilst the corporate approach to continued Drug and Alcohol testing was developed in consultation with trade unions and that the policy would be brought to the Corporate Policy Committee for consideration and approval at a future meeting.

RESOLVED (unanimously): That the Committee

- 1 adopt the ANSA Drug and Alcohol Testing policy for new starters, on a random and 'for cause' basis for all identified operational roles within Environmental Services and Operations and, after the date of transfer, Transport and Infrastructure, as listed in paragraph 20 of the report, for employees appointed under Cheshire East Terms and Conditions, until a corporate decision has been taken on the approach to continued Drug and Alcohol Testing.
- 2 note that a proposal for the corporate approach to continued Drug and Alcohol Testing will be developed, in consultation with trade unions, and brought to Corporate Policy Committee for

consideration and with recommendations for approval at a future meeting.

12 CONSTITUTION OFFICER SCHEMES OF DELEGATION

The Committee considered the report on the new officer schemes of delegation.

The revised and expanded officer schemes of delegation were aimed at improving clarity, consistency, and accountability in decision-making across council departments.

Concerns were raised about the lack of uniformity and that some of the schemes were too vague, listing multiple delegates without clarity. In response it was stated that each scheme had been developed by the respective Executive Director and senior management and the variations reflected the unique structure and needs of each service area.

It was noted that the reference in the adults' services section to children's commissioning would be removed as this no longer applied.

It was reported that organisational charts would be included for clarity on reporting lines and responsibilities and that ongoing reviews and updates would take place especially as leadership or structures changes.

Councillors M Goldsmith and J Rhodes left the meeting during the consideration of this item and did not return.

RESOLVED (unanimously): That the Committee

- 1 approve in principle the new draft officer Schemes of Delegation, as set out in Appendices A to G to the report.
- 2 recommend to Full Council approval and adoption of the new officer Schemes of Delegation, as set out in Appendices A to G to the report, to be incorporated into the Constitution at Chapter 2 Part 5 to replace the existing schemes and the revocation of all former officer schemes of delegation, including local or service specific schemes.
- 3 Delegate authority to the Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer to make any further minor amendments required prior to Full Council, if necessary, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Policy Committee.

13 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

Having previously declared an interest, Councillors D Clark and S Gardiner left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Consideration was given to the report which invited the Committee to approve the appointment of three individuals to the Independent Remuneration Panel for a four-year term of officer.

Councillor J Saunders left the meeting during the consideration of this item and did not return.

RESOLVED (unanimously): That the Committee

- 1 re-appoint Mandy Ramsden and Jacquie Grinham to the Independent Remuneration Panel for a period of four years, to commence immediately until 2029.
- 2 appoint Dylan Edward (known as Eddie) Watkins to the Independent Remuneration Panel for a period of four years, to commence immediately until 2029.
- 3 approve the appointment of Mandy Ramsden to the position of Chair of the Panel for a period of four years, to commence immediately until 2029.
- 4 Agree that an allowance, to be determined by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Group Leaders, be paid to the Chair in recognition of their role.

14 APPOINTMENTS TO SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS, PANELS, BOARDS AND JOINT COMMITTEES

The Committee considered a report on the appointment of and appointments to sub-committees, working groups, panels, boards and joint committees for the 2025-26 municipal year.

In relation to the Electoral and Polling District Review Sub Committee, Councillor R Vernon, Labour Group Administrator, stated that the Labour group had previously withdrawn from the Sub Committee due to what they felt were flaws in the process, but reserved their right to nominate members if the Labour group decided to return to the Sub Committee.

Councillor D Jefferay stated that he had previously been on the Electoral and Polling District Review Sub Committee and would fill the independent group place on the Sub Committee.

RESOLVED (unanimously): That the Committee

- 1 agree the appointment of and appointments to sub-committees, working groups, panels, boards and joint committees for 2025-265, as set out in the report, as follows:

Constitution Working Group - 6 members (2:2:2:0)

Cllr S Gardiner	Cllr L Crane	Cllr A Moran
Cllr C O'Leary	Cllr K Edwards	Cllr M Warren

Staffing Appeals Sub Committee – pool of 10 members (4:4:2:0)

Cllr R Bailey	Cllr L Crane	Cllr N Cook
Cllr E Hall	Cllr D Clark	Cllr E Gilman
Cllr J Pratt	Cllr G Smith	
Cllr L Wardlaw	Cllr F Wilson	

General Appeals Sub Committee – pool of 10 members (4:4:2:0)

Cllr T Dean	Cllr S Bennett-Wake	Cllr E Gilman
Cllr S Edgar	Cllr H Faddes	Cllr G Marshall
Cllr J Pearson	Cllr B Puddicombe	
Cllr L Smetham	Cllr R Vernon	

Shared Services Joint Committee - 3 members (1:1:1:0)

Cllr P Redstone	Cllr J Rhodes	Cllr M Warren
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Electoral and Polling District Review Sub Committee
7 members (3:3:1:0)

Cllr S Gardiner		Cllr D Jefferay
Cllr C O'Leary		
Cllr J Pearson		

Joint Member Scrutiny Task Group - 3 members (1:1:1:0)

Cllr J Pearson	Cllr B Drake	Cllr L Anderson
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Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board

Cllr S Corcoran

Joint Extra Care Housing Management Board

Cllr N Mannion

Governance and Decision-Making Task and Finish Group

9 members (4:3:2:0)

Cllr M Beanland	Cllr L Braithwaite	Cllr M Gorman
Cllr S Gardiner	Cllr A Burton	Cllr M Warren
Cllr C O'Leary	Cllr F Wilson	
Cllr L Wardlaw		

- 2 approve the appointment of one individual to become a member of the Independent School Admission Appeals Panel and Independent Review Panel for Exclusion Reviews.
- 3 where appropriate, member nominations to the bodies be submitted to the Head of Democratic Services.

15 WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the Work Programme 2025-26.

16 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Finance Sub Committee held on 10 March 2025 and the General Appeals Sub Committee held on 4 March 2025 be received and noted.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 1.25 pm

Councillor N Mannion (Chair)

OPEN

Corporate Policy Committee

06 August 2025

Transformation Plan and Improvement Update

Report of: Karen Wheeler, Interim Assistant Chief Executive

Report Reference No: CPC/43/25-26

Ward(s) Affected: All

For Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report provides an update on the Council's Transformation Plan including revenue and capital expenditure, financial and non-financial benefits for 2024/25 and associated governance and decision-making arrangements.
- 2 The report sets out the governance and decision-making to date since agreement to develop the Plan in March 2024, progress on delivery in 2024/25 and the proposed frequency of reporting on progress moving forward.
- 3 The report proposes that the Corporate Improvement and Delivery Plan incorporates transformation activity so that there is a single overarching plan for the Council enabling transparent reporting and effective Member and stakeholder oversight of all significant transformation and improvement activity, assurance of progress, pace of delivery and benefit realisation.

Executive Summary

- 4 In March 2024, Corporate Policy Committee agreed an approach to transformation for the Council including the development of a Transformation Plan as a condition of Exceptional Financial Support from government. The report explained: "*The transformation programme will facilitate deeper and broader service redesign, supported where appropriate by the investment in enhanced digital*

capabilities, which will be required to contribute to the savings required for the next 5 years from 2024/25 to 2028/29 as set out in the MTFS.”

- 5 Following a competitive procurement process, Inner Circle Consulting (ICC) were appointed in April 2024 to provide additional capacity and expertise to progress the development of the Transformation Plan, and to support delivery of the transformation programme.
- 6 The Transformation Plan was submitted to government by the end of August 2024 deadline with the agreement of Corporate Policy Committee the same month. Since submission, Members have received informal briefings and updates contained within budget reporting and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), however, comprehensive and regular progress updates including revenue and capital expenditure, and the financial and non-financial benefits across the programmes have not been provided.
- 7 This report provides an update on the Transformation Plan including revenue and capital expenditure, financial and non-financial benefits for 2024/25 as well as associated governance and decision-making arrangements to date.
- 8 In June 2025, Corporate Policy Committee agreed to the development of a Corporate Improvement Plan to both meet the expectations within the non-statutory Best Value Notice received in May 2025 and significantly improve the Council’s own oversight and assurance of progress at the required pace. The Best Value Notice references delivery against the Council’s agreed Transformation Plan.
- 9 This report proposes that the development of an overarching Corporate Improvement and Delivery Plan also incorporates transformation activity so that there is a single plan for the Council enabling transparent reporting and effective Member and stakeholder oversight of all significant improvement activity, cost-benefit, outcomes for residents, assurance of progress and pace of delivery.
- 10 In 2024/25 the Council agreed a £3 million earmarked transformation reserve creation from general reserves approved by full Council in July 2024. This has been invested in capacity and expertise provided by ICC, an independent review of fees and charges as well as additional senior officer capacity through the Acting Director of Transformation role throughout 2024/25.
- 11 This has delivered the following outputs and benefits:
 - (a) Transformation Plan submitted to Government, August 2024

- (b) Programme and project management governance and reporting implemented from September 2024 including a Programme Management Office (PMO)
 - (c) Target Operating Model and service design principles developed November 2024 that provide a consistent framework to guide the transformation of the Council and its services
 - (d) Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy agreed by Corporate Policy Committee in March 2025
 - (e) Fees and charges review resulting in £0.821m delivered from 1 April 2025
 - (f) Savings included in the MTFS of over £24.4 million in 2025/26
 - (g) Business cases in development to realise these savings
- 12 Funding from reserves for transformation of £3.5m and £5.3m has been agreed by full Council in February and July 2025 respectively. Spend against this investment and the financial and non-financial benefits will be reported to Corporate Policy Committee in October as part of the financial reporting for quarter 1 2025/26.
- 13 Capital investment of £5m has been agreed for the digital programme in 2025/26 and a further almost £6m over the following two years as set out in the MTFS. Expenditure and financial and non-financial benefits will be reported in detail in October. The foundations have been laid in 2024/25 with the agreement of the AI Policy and approval to commission and award a contract for the deployment of an AI platform and framework at Corporate Policy Committee in March 2025. These are expected to generate significant financial benefits, contributing to the Council's approved budget and MTFS, with projected financial benefits of £40 to £60 million over a five-year period and £12-14 million per annum ongoing from year three onwards.
- 14 Financial commitments and savings identified within the Transformation Plan have been agreed through Corporate Policy Committee and full Council including within the budget setting process and agreement of the MTFS 2025-29. As detailed business cases are developed and where they result in a change in policy, service Committees will be engaged and invited to both scrutinise and agree the proposals. Member Task and Finish Groups may also be created to support policy shaping and inform final decision making. Service Committees will also be involved throughout the budget setting process for 2026/27 in the Autumn informing any savings proposals to come forward into the budget and MTFS. Any additional financial investment in transformation outside of the budget framework and envelopes already agreed would also require Member decision in line with the Constitution.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Note and comment on the delivery of the Transformation Plan in 2024/25 including expenditure, financial and non-financial benefits
2. Note that Service Committees will be the decision makers for relevant transformation business cases that propose a significant change in Council policy and inform the budget setting process with Corporate Policy Committee providing oversight and decision making for the overall transformation plan, budget and MTFS as set out in the Constitution
3. Agree that this Committee receives a progress update on delivery of the Transformation Plan, financial and non-financial benefits, for quarter 1 2025/26 alongside the first financial review (quarter 1) in October 2025
4. Agree that the approach to a new overarching Corporate Improvement and Delivery Plan includes transformation
5. Agree that the Corporate Improvement and Delivery Plan is a standing item for quarterly progress updates from October 2025 aligned to financial reporting going forward

Background

- 15 The report to Corporate Policy Committee in March 2024 called “*Cheshire East Approach to Transformation*” set out the financial position and need for transformation. It was recognised that the type of systemic changes that were needed for the Council to improve its services and become financially sustainable are complex and will take a number of years. The report set out the objectives for the transformation approach:
 - (a) Support the Council to address the 4-year funding gap of £100m as outlined in the MTFS.
 - (b) Invest in digital technologies to enable services to adopt technology for various activities and processes, thus enabling the Council to fully leverage technological opportunities to accelerate its processes.
 - (c) Develop an organisational workforce that is flexible ensuring all staff have the necessary skills to work effectively within a transformed Council.
- 16 Under the Chief Executive’s delegated authority to take all necessary steps to implement a whole organisation transformation programme as agreed in March 2024, Inner Circle Consulting (ICC) were appointed in April 2024 following a competitive procurement process. Five suppliers were invited to take part in the process with three going forward to the

final presentation stage following initial scoring. The final stage focused on resources, knowledge transfer, mobilisation and benchmarking capabilities.

- 17 ICC were appointed to provide additional capacity and expertise and to meet the timescales set by Government as part of the Council's application for Exceptional Financial Support. ICC, alongside additional and existing Council capacity, at strategic and practical levels, supported the Council to progress Phase 1, developing the Transformation Plan, and Phase 2, to support delivery of aspects of the transformation programme, including some resource to support the creation of a Programme Management Office (PMO).

Transformation Plan and Exceptional Financial Support (Phase1)

- 18 The Council received a grant award from the LGA of £105,000 to support the development of the Transformation Plan. An initial diagnostic was undertaken by ICC to identify transformation opportunities. ICC then supported the Council to deliver phase 1, running from May to September 2024, working with officers to develop the Transformation Plan. With approval from the Corporate Policy Committee, the plan was submitted on time to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in August 2024. Exceptional Financial Support was secured on that basis.

Transformation Mobilisation (Phase 2)

- 19 Working with the Council, ICC set up structured programme and project governance to oversee delivery of the Transformation Plan from September 2025, with a regular pattern of Transformation Board meetings chaired by the Chief Executive and at a programme/ directorate level to review progress, identify risks and dependencies.
- 20 A joint (ICC and Council) corporate Programme Management Office (PMO) was established to ensure the governance worked effectively. In addition, the PMO developed a standardised set of tools and templates to provide greater consistency in the Council's approach to programme and project management addressing a recommendation within the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge report.
- 21 In October 2024, this phase continued to build the foundations for the Council's transformation with the next level of detail in the plans being progressed. Development of the business cases for the identified programmes of work in the Transformation Plan began.
- 22 The new target operating model for the Council was developed through staff and Member engagement in August and September, finalised in November 2024 to sit alongside the Cheshire East Plan

2025-29. Operating models set out how organisations shape themselves to deliver their strategies and plans. The service design principles were developed to guide the Council as it transforms itself and reshapes in line with the operating model to deliver the priorities in the Cheshire East Plan e.g. resident-centred, digital first, collaborative.

- 23 The structure of the transformation programmes are aligned to the operating model under the themes Access to Services, Enabling Communities, Service Delivery and Corporate Core as set out [in the end of year report for the Transformation Plan](#). The end of year report was shared with all Members in May 2025 and is included at Appendix 1. A summary description of the transformation focus in each of these key areas is included in Appendix 2 of this report.
- 24 As the business cases and the more detailed planning took place to develop the programmes and projects the savings opportunities were further defined based on the range identified in the Plan of £59-91m. The revised opportunities were set out in the budget for 2025/26 and reflected in the MTFS within service areas and for cross-cutting whole Council proposals. The savings allocations for 2025/26 are:

Savings Targets 2025/26	£m
Access to Service & Corporate Core (Crosscutting programmes including Digital/Workforce/3rd Party Spend/Fees & Charges)	£13.452
Adult Social Care (Prevent, Reduce, Enable/Learning Disabilities/ Commissioning/Preparing for Adulthood/ Partnership Case Review)	£7.000
Children's (Right Child Right Home/ 16-25 Accommodation/ Commissioning/Birth to Thrive)	£3.788
Place (Asset Management Strategy/Economic Growth/Waste/Advertising)	£0.175
Total	£24.415

- 25 The fees and charges review completed in 2024/25, resulted in an initial identification of a potential increase in income of £0.750m for 2025/26. However, this was increased to £0.821m when it was agreed with service leads.
- 26 An investment of £3m in transformation was agreed by full Council in July 2024. The funding and expenditure are set out in the table below for 2024/25 ad 2025/26. Staff costs relate to Cheshire East Council additional capacity including the acting Director of Transformation role. Wherever possible the Council has tried to resource projects and programmes through the use of internal staff at no additional expenditure to the Council.

- 27 For 2025/26, funding from reserves for transformation of £3.5m and £5.3m has been agreed by full Council in February and July 2025 respectively. Spend against this investment and the financial and non-financial benefits will be reported to Committee in October as part of the financial reporting for quarter 1 2025/26. This will be informed by work the newly formed Corporate Leadership Team and new interim Head of Transformation & Improvement are undertaking with ICC to update the latest position on spend and delivery to date, including capacity and capability challenges, as part of assuring delivery of the savings proposals going forward.

Transformation Funding 2024/25 & 2025/26	£m
Transformation Budget 2024/25	£3.105
Transformation reserve created July 2024	£3.000
LGA grant funding	£0.105
Transformation Costs 2024/25	£3.029
Inner Circle Consulting contract	£2.807
Fees & Charges consultancy costs	£0.050
Staff costs	£0.163
Staff engagement events	£0.009
Transformation Funding Allocation 2025/26	£8.800
Agreed funding in MTFS	£3.500
Agreed at Full Council in July 2025	£5.300
Transformation Funding Commitments 2025/26	£3.147
Inner Circle Consulting contract	£2.382
Staffing costs	£0.765

Consultation and Engagement

- 28 Engagement with officers and Members has taken place at various stages of developing the Transformation Plan and its programmes including at all staff events to inform the target operating model and workshops to inform the emerging detailed business cases.
- 29 Going forward, where any of the programmes, require a significant policy change and/or decision, those decisions will be taken through the appropriate Service Committees and Corporate Policy Committee as required. Regular, at least quarterly, Member briefings on transformation are now diarised and a forward plan is being created.
- 30 Significant expenditure will go through the appropriate decision making including as part of the budget setting process and development of the MTFS in line with the Constitution and Schemes of Delegation.

- 31 As part of the development of the Council's Communication and Engagement Strategy, views will be sought from Corporate Policy Committee on the potential for a Residents' Survey to further inform and measure the impact of transformation and improvement activity.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 32 The Transformation Plan was submitted to government in August 2024 with the agreement of Corporate Policy Committee. Since submission, Members have received informal briefings and updates contained within budget reporting and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), however, comprehensive and regular progress updates including revenue and capital expenditure, and the financial and non-financial benefits across the programmes have not been provided to Corporate Policy Committee.
- 33 This report provides an update on the Council's Transformation Plan including revenue and capital expenditure, financial and non-financial benefits for 2024/25 and associated governance and decision-making arrangements, and the proposed frequency of reporting on progress moving forward.
- 34 The report proposes that the Corporate Improvement and Delivery Plan incorporates transformation activity so that there is a single overarching plan for the Council enabling transparent reporting and effective Member and stakeholder oversight of all significant transformation and improvement activity, assurance of progress, pace of delivery and benefit realisation.

Other Options Considered

- 35 This is an update report – no other options were considered. An options appraisal was included in the Corporate Policy Committee report at the time of agreeing the Transformation Plan in March 2024.
- 36 Transformation activity could remain separate to the Council's emerging overarching Corporate Improvement and Delivery Plan, however, this would make oversight and assurance of delivery more challenging.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance

- 37 A Best Value notice was issued to the Council in May 2025 and is outside the statutory powers held by the Secretary of State under the Local Government Act 1999 to inspect or intervene in local authorities where there is evidence of best value failure and, separately, under section 230 of the Local Government Act 1972 to request information

from local authorities. However, a failure to demonstrate continuous improvement including delivery of the Transformation Plan may be judged to contribute to best value failure and the Secretary of State may consider using these powers as appropriate.

- 38 Under the Local Government Act 1999, all councils have a general Duty of Best Value to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.”.
- 39 The delivery of the Transformation Plan and individual programmes or activities will require individual consideration, decision making and reporting as well as scrutiny through Service Committees as well as Corporate Policy Committee and full Council as appropriate as part of the budget setting process. Ongoing officer oversight is achieved through the fortnightly Transformation & Improvement Board. It is also noted that the Assurance Panel will provide ongoing support and challenge to aid the delivery of the plan and inform the development of the overarching improvement plan.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 40 There are no direct financial implications within this report and recommendations. The Council’s investment in transformation is set out within the body of the report and has been contained within budget monitoring and MTFS decision making and quarterly update reporting. A detailed report on revenue and capital expenditure, financial and non-financial benefits of the transformation plan programmes will be reported to this Committee as part of the quarter 1 budget position in October 2025 and quarterly thereafter.

Human Resources

- 41 There are no direct implications from this report, however, the use of reserves will help to secure resources to support the implementation of the transformation programme and workforce is a key programme within the Transformation Plan.

Risk Management

- 42 The risk of a lack of progress and delivery of the Transformation Plan and Council’s wider improvement activity at the required pace could result in further measures and an escalation from MHCLG beyond the non-statutory Best Value Notice issued in May 2025. This is identified as a risk and will be added to the Strategic Risk Register. An overarching plan will help to inform the identification and management of corporate risks with risk assessments taking place for individual activities and projects where appropriate.

Impact on other Committees

- 43 There is no direct impact on other Committees, however, updates or decisions relating to transformation or improvement activity for specific service areas would be taken by the relevant committee where appropriate including policy changes and as part of the budget setting process.

Policy

- 44 The Cheshire East Plan 2025-29 includes a commitment to be an effective and enabling council with an emphasis on being financially sustainable, aided by council-wide service transformation and improvement. The Council understands the improvements it needs to make and has made progress in addressing the challenges with a focus on delivering value for money, continuous improvement and better outcomes for Cheshire East's residents.
- 45 A Corporate Improvement and Delivery Plan, including transformation, would support the overall vision and all commitments within the Cheshire East Plan 2025-29.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 46 There are no direct equality, diversity and inclusion implications. Programmes and projects within the Transformation Plan and a new overarching plan will help improve the culture and processes, systems and structures as part of the Council's overall transformation and improvement journey underpinning the delivery of the Cheshire East Plan 2025-29, enabling improved outcomes for all residents, businesses and communities. Equality impact assessments will be completed for individual projects.

Other Implications

- 47 N/A

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
Statutory Officer (or deputy):			
Ashley Hughes	S151 Officer	25/07/25	27/07/25

Janet Witkowski	Acting Monitoring Officer	25/07/25	28/07/25
<i>Legal and Finance</i>			
Sal Khan	Interim Director Finance/Deputy S151	25/07/25	29/07/25
<i>Other Consultees:</i>			
<i>Executive Directors/Directors</i>			
Chief Executive and Executive Directors	Corporate Leadership Team/ Transformation & Improvement Board	25/07/25	29/07/25

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Sam Pittam-Smith, Interim Head of Transformation and Improvement sam.pittam-smith@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Transformation End of Year Report Appendix 2 – Description of transformation key areas
Background Papers:	Agenda for Council on Tuesday, 27th February, 2024, 11.00 am Cheshire East Council Corporate Policy Committee, 21 March 2024, Cheshire East Approach to Transformation: Report Template Corporate Policy Committee, 21 August 2024, Submission of Transformation Plan: CEC Report Template Agenda for Council on Wednesday, 26th February, 2025, 11.00 am Cheshire East Council Agenda for Corporate Policy Committee on Thursday, 12th June, 2025, 10.30 am Cheshire East Council

	Full Council, 16 July 2025 – Funding for Phase 3 of the Transformation Programme: CEC Report Template-updated 4 April 2025
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Appendix 1: Transformation end of year report

[transformation-end-of-year-report.pdf](#)

Appendix 2: Description of the transformation for key areas:

Access To Services

We're working to make it quicker and easier for residents, businesses, and visitors to get things done with us—especially for everyday services like payments, applications, and requests. We've already made good progress by developing a Customer Experience Strategy, and the next step is to put that plan into action. We expect this to be signed off at Corporate Policy Committee in September.

Enabling Communities

We will work with local partners to support people earlier—before they reach a crisis point and need formal social care. This joined-up approach focuses on the whole person and aims to reduce the need for statutory services over the next two years. Our Enabling Communities work is a key part of this, helping to deliver better outcomes and reduce costs in both Adult and Children's Social Care.

Core Service Design

We are establishing a new way of designing our services based on best practice that puts residents first and supports our long-term goals. This includes scanning for new ideas, designing services in accordance with our agreed Cheshire East operating model and offering support and hands-on training through a 'mini-academy'. By building skills, resources and confidence across teams, we will empower staff to lead change and improve services that matter most to our communities.

Service Delivery - Adults

We have initiated projects to:

- Make sure residents get the right support from the right organisation.
- Help people stay independent and healthy for longer, reducing the need for formal care.
- Improve services and support for residents with learning disabilities.
- Use smart tools to help people live safely at home
- Make sure care services offer good value for money.

Service Delivery - Children's

We're running six projects aimed at improving the lives of children and families in Cheshire East. These focus on key areas like support for care leavers, early help services, complex needs, and how families access support. We're also looking at how we plan placements and commission services. The goal is to improve quality, make sure we meet our responsibilities, and save over £7 million by 2028/29.

Service Delivery - Place

We're working to grow our local economy and create more opportunities for everyone who lives and works here. To help make this happen, we're developing a new Growth Strategy, improving how we manage council-owned buildings and land, and updating our Asset Strategy. These changes are part of a wider transformation programme that will help us work more efficiently, make better use of public resources, and deliver even better value for our residents.

Corporate Core

We're working on several projects to improve how the council operates and manages resources.

These include:

- Reviewing paid-for services to help bring in more income.
- Getting better value from suppliers and contracts.
- Improving how we manage grants to support council priorities.
- Reducing travel costs and carbon emissions by reviewing how we use council vehicles.
- Upgrading internal systems to better support staff and services.
- Creating a standalone CEC digital service to better meet council needs and using digital tools to work smarter and improve services.

Workforce and Culture

- How we're organised: We're improving how teams are structured, how staff are paid, and how we support and measure the impact our people have.
- What we're gaining: These changes will help us save money, bring in income, and work more effectively in delivering services.
- How it feels to work here: We're building a positive culture with better policies, clearer expectations, and more development and training for staff.

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OPEN

Corporate Policy Committee

06 August 2025

Task and Finish Group: Harassment, Intimidation and Abuse of Councillors (Final Report)

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

Report Reference No: CPC/03/25-26

Ward(s) Affected: N/A

For Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report introduces the Harassment, Intimidation and Abuse of Councillors Task and Finish Group's Final Report on its findings, conclusions and recommendations following its review.

Executive Summary

- 2 The Corporate Policy Committee, at its meeting on [28 November 2024](#), recognised the increasing levels of harassment, intimidation and abuse being experienced by councillors.
- 3 A Task and Finish Group (T&F Group) was established by the Corporate Policy Committee to consider the issue, and the impact upon Cheshire East councillors in the course of their work. The T&F Group's role was to identify additional support that could be put in place to assist Members.
- 4 The T&F Group's report is appended. Section 7 of the T&F Group report makes a number of recommendations to the Corporate Policy Committee as set out below.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the findings of the Member Survey (Appendix 1).
2. Approve the Councillor Incident Reporting Form (non-emergencies) (Appendix 2).
3. Agree that the Head of Democratic Services be appointed as the Council's Nominated Officer for councillors dealing with harassment, abuse and intimidation and approve the supporting role description (Appendix 3).
4. Approve the Councillor Safety Protocol (Appendix 4) and note that this will be available on the Members Hub.
5. Agree that Cheshire East Council reaffirms its commitment and support to the principles of the LGA Debate Not Hate Public Statement.
6. Agree the role profile (Appendix 5) for the Member Champion: Councillor Safety and note that the Leader of the Council will appoint a Member to this role.
7. Agree that the proposed training, as set out in paragraph 6.12.7 of the T&F Group report, be added to the Member Training and Development Plan.
8. Agree that the principle of lone working devices being made available to those Members who wish to have one subject to the cost implications being considered and developed further by the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Policy Committee and Chair of the Task and Finish Group.
9. Subject to the resolution of recommendation 8, approve that the Acting Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer be given delegated authority to proceed with required procurement and contractual processes in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Policy Committee and the Chair of the Task and Finish Group.

Background

The Corporate Policy Committee at its meeting on 28 November 2024 agreed:

- 5 *'that a piece of work on harassment of councillors should be undertaken with an update reported back to Corporate Policy Committee in approx. six months. Members referred to a report recently prepared by the Local Government Association on this matter which would assist in exploring options available'.*
- 6 Following the meeting of the Corporate Policy Committee, it was agreed that this topic should be an area of scrutiny that would be undertaken by a Task and Finish Group.
- 7 Membership of the T&F Group comprised of Councillors:

- Fiona Wilson (Chair of the T&F Group), Emma Hall (Vice Chair of the T&F Group), Judy Snowball, Hannah Moss and Nicola Cook.
- 8 Throughout the review, the T&F Group agreed a number of objectives, as set out below:
- a. Identify Member concerns in relation to harassment, intimidation and abuse of councillors in the course of their work as an Elected Member.
 - b. Investigate actions taken by other local authorities and partner agencies (including Cheshire Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner) and the external support available.
 - c. Identify how risks could be mitigated and how Members could be supported in the event of harassment, intimidation and abuse.
 - d. Create a local protocol setting out the procedure, should a councillor feel they are being harassed, abused or intimidated.
 - e. Identify how the Council can promote a culture of “zero tolerance” in relation to harassment, intimidation and abuse of councillors.
- 9 The T&F Group was established in January 2025 and concluded its work in June 2025. A wide range of evidence was considered from a number of internal and external officers/partners, as summarised in the T&F Group’s final report.

Consultation and Engagement

- 10 There has been consultation and engagement with internal officers and external colleagues, including Cheshire Police and the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner on the T&F Group’s Final Report.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 11 Any recommendations resulting from the review of T&F Group into harassment, intimidation and abuse of councillors must be considered by the Corporate Policy Committee.
- 12 The T&F Group was established to consider the increasing levels of harassment, intimidation and abuse of councillors and the support provided to Members. The T&F Group’s findings and recommendations seek to ensure that Member wellbeing is taken seriously by the Council and the Council takes all possible steps to protect and support Elected Members.

Other Options Considered

13

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	Elected Members continue to feel at risk in their roles as levels of harassment, intimidation and abuse continue.	<p>If the issue of harassment, intimidation and abuse of councillors continues this may prevent future potential candidates from standing in future elections.</p> <p>Keeping Elected Members safe is essential to upholding the integrity and effectiveness of democratic governance. Ensuring their safety allows them to perform their duties without fear of intimidation, harassment, or harm, which is vital for maintaining open, transparent, and accountable leadership.</p>

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance

- 14 The Council is expected to provide support for the safety of its Elected Members. In adopting the above recommendations, the Council is ensuring that the support is in place. Failure to take steps to protect members could result in criticism against the Council.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

Lone working devices

- 15 The costs of the lone-working devices is subject to the number of Elected Members that wish to have one. It is proposed that, subject to committee approval, that Members are asked to confirm via a survey if they require a lone-working device. For 82 devices this could be in the region of £15,280 for a two-year period. For 41 devices this could be in the region of £7,640 for a two-year period, and for 20 devices this could be in the region of £3,954 for a two-year period.
- 16 There is no revenue budget available to meet the costs of lone working devices to Elected Members. If the principle is agreed, a budget pressure would be placed on the Council budget and would require an adjustment to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Cost implications would need to be further developed and considered by the S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Policy Committee and the Chair of the Task and Finish Group.

- 17 Full Council has set its budget for 2025/26. As the costs outlined for lone-working devices do not have a budget, the additional expenditure must be contained within budgets in the costs of democracy, or alternative solutions that mitigate the identified lone working risks developed through the Council's Digital Programme that leverage technologies already budgeted for.
- 18 No Committee has the authority to overspend its budget, as set out in the Constitution.

Training

- 19 In relation to the training courses referred to within the T&F Group report, the Healthier Debate training course has already been included in the 'Member Training and Development Plan' which was considered and approved by the Audit and Governance Committee on 28 July 2025.
- 20 The 'Conflict De-escalation training' is however not included in the proposed Member Training and Development Plan considered by the Audit and Governance Committee. If approved by the committee, a one-off pressure of up to £7,560 would be placed on the Council budget for 2025-26, and this would require an adjustment to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 21 The costs of four Elected Members completing the 'Mental Health First Aider' course are approx. £565 (approx. £141 per person). This training is not included in the Member Training and Development Plan and would form a pressure on the 2025/26 budget. Additional costs would only be incurred as and when a Member who had qualified needed to be replaced, and a new Member trained.

Human Resources

- 22 Although this is not a staffing matter per se, all Elected Members can access the Council's Employee Assistance Programme. This is included in our current provision and any Elected Member wishing to access support can do so. Contact details for the programme can be obtained from HR and within the proposed Councillor Safety Protocol.

Risk Management

- 23 If the issue of harassment, intimidation and abuse of councillors continues to grow and is left unaddressed by the Council, it risks councillors resigning from their positions and may prevent future potential candidates from standing in future elections.

Impact on other Committees

24 There are no direct implications for other committees.

Policy

25

Commitment 2: Improving health and wellbeing	Commitment 3: An effective and enabling council
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 26 The Member Survey results highlighted that 41% of female respondents reported feeling personally at risk when fulfilling their roles as Elected Members, compared to 4% of male respondents. Additionally, 55% of female Members reported experiencing abuse, intimidation, or harassment, versus 42% of males.
- 27 These disparities are echoed in broader national data published by the Local Government Association in their findings from the [2025 Debate Not Hate Survey results](#). The results show that women and councillors with disabilities are more likely than men to leave their roles due to harassment, bullying, and intimidation. These trends highlight the need for targeted support to ensure a safer environment for all councillors.

Other Implications

28 There are no other implications.

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy):</i>			
Ashley Hughes	S151 Officer	24/06/25	02/07/25
Brian Reed	On behalf of the Monitoring Officer	30/06/25	02/07/25
<i>Legal and Finance</i>			
Steve Reading	Finance Manager	16/06/25	24/06/25
Louise Price	Principal Lawyer	16/06/25	23/06/25

<i>Other Consultees:</i>			
Karen Grave	Director of People and Customer Experience	24/06/25	02/07/25
Michael Moore	Head of Communications	24/06/25	30/06/25
Corporate Leadership Team (CLT)		09/07/25	For information.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services Brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Task and Finish Group Final Report Appendix 1: Member Survey Results Appendix 2: Incident Reporting Form Appendix 3: Role Profile: Nominated Officer Appendix 4: Councillor Safety Protocol Appendix 5: Role Profile – Member Champion Councillor Safety
Background Papers:	None.

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Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation of Councillors: Task and Finish Group – Final Report

Open

Fair

Green

OFFICIAL

1. Chair's Foreword

It has been my responsibility to chair the Task and Finish Group established to scrutinise the growing issue of harassment, abuse and intimidation faced by Elected Members of Cheshire East Council. This report is the culmination of months of dedicated work, collaboration, and consultation, and I am pleased to present its findings and recommendations to the Corporate Policy Committee.

The decision to form this group stemmed from a shared recognition across the Corporate Policy Committee and the council's Elected Members that unacceptable behaviours directed at councillors are becoming increasingly common, undermining democratic engagement and, in some cases, threatening the safety and wellbeing of those who serve their communities. Our work was driven by a clear aim: to understand the scale and nature of the problem and to identify practical, meaningful steps to support and protect our Members.

Through a comprehensive Member survey, we heard directly from councillors about their experiences. Some of the findings from the survey are alarming — over a third had considered stepping down due to abuse, and a significant majority had experienced harassment, particularly online. These findings emphasised the urgency of our work and the need for a robust, coordinated response.

The group engaged with a wide range of stakeholders, including Cheshire Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner, council officers, and external safety experts. We examined best practices from other authorities and aligned our work with the Local Government Association's "Debate Not Hate" campaign. Our recommendations include the introduction of a formal incident reporting process, the appointment of a Nominated Officer for councillor safety, the development of a comprehensive Councillor Safety Protocol, and the provision of lone working devices and targeted training. We also propose the creation of a Member Champion for Councillor Safety, an advocate to ensure these issues remain visible and prioritised. Importantly, we have sought to embed a culture of zero tolerance towards abuse and intimidation, recognising that councillor wellbeing was fundamental to a healthy, functioning democracy.

I would like to thank my fellow Task and Finish Group Members for their commitment and insight, and the officers who supported our work with professionalism and care. I hope this report serves not only as a call to action but also as a foundation for lasting change, ensuring that all councillors can serve their communities with confidence, dignity and safety.



Councillor Fiona Wilson

Chair of the Harassment, Intimidation and Abuse of Councillors Task and Finish Group

2.0 Introduction, Background and Membership

- 2.1 The Corporate Policy Committee, at its meeting on [28 November 2024](#), recognised the increasing levels of harassment, intimidation and abuse being experienced by councillors. While debate and expressing different views is part of a healthy representative democracy, Members agreed that these unacceptable behaviours undermined the key democratic principles of free speech, debate and engagement, and sometimes posed a risk to councillors' safety. The Corporate Policy Committee agreed that:
- 2.2 *'a piece of work on harassment of councillors should be undertaken with an update reported back to Corporate Policy Committee in approx. six months. Members referred to a [report](#) recently prepared by the Local Government Association on this matter which would assist in exploring options available'.*
- 2.3 Following the meeting of the Corporate Policy Committee, it was agreed that this should be an area of scrutiny that should be undertaken by a Task and Finish Group (T&F Group). It was proposed that the T&F Group be established, and this was formally ratified by the Corporate Policy Committee on 6 February 2025.
- 2.4 Councillors are local leaders and champions, bridging the gap between residents and local government. Becoming and serving as a councillor is a huge privilege and responsibility, but it also means councillors are very visible and often easily accessible to residents. A pressing concern facing those in public office is the increasing levels of intimidation, harassment and abuse they can experience.
- 2.5 The T&F Group, as set out below, was established and initiated its work in January 2025. The T&F Group sought to review the levels of harassment, abuse and intimidation of Cheshire East Members and identify support that could be provided.



Councillor Fiona Wilson (Chair)



Left to right: Councillors N Cook, E Hall (Vice Chair), H Moss, J Snowball.

Supported by:

Katie Small, Democratic Services Manager
Nikki Bishop, Democratic Services Officer

3.0 Terms of Reference: Aim of the Review

- 3.1 To review the increasing levels of harassment, intimidation and abuse faced by Elected Members in the course of their work and identify what support could be put in place for assisting Elected Members.

4.0 Objectives

- 4.1 During the review, the T&F Group determined that it would seek to:

- Objective 1: Identify Member concerns in relation to harassment, intimidation and abuse in the course of their work as an Elected Member.
- Objective 2: Investigate actions taken by other local authorities and partner agencies (including Cheshire Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner) and the external support available.
- Objective 3: Identify how risks could be mitigated and how Members could be supported in the event of harassment, intimidation and abuse.

- Objective 4: Create a local protocol setting out a procedure, should a councillor feel they are being harassed, abused or intimidated.
- Objective 5: Identify how the Council can promote a culture of zero tolerance in relation to harassment, intimidation and abuse of councillors.

5.0 Methodology

5.1 Timeline of meetings, key activity and witnesses.

28 January 2025	The T&F Group met to undertake the initial review to agree its objectives and scope.
14 February 2025	Survey circulated to all Cheshire East Members to identify member concerns / types of harassment, abuse and intimidation.
17 March 2025	<p>The T&F Group met to review the findings of the member survey circulated on Friday 14 February 2025 to all Elected Members.</p> <p>The Group also met with the Senior Member Development Officer (Cheshire East Council) to explore training options (both the current offer for Members and options for further training).</p> <p>The Group also discussed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Member Incident Reporting Form and process. - Proposed recommendation to Corporate Policy to reaffirm the Council's support to the LGA Debate Not Hate Public Statement. - Role description for Member Champion: Councillor Safety. - Proposal to appoint a Nominated Officer to support Elected Members dealing with harassment, abuse and intimidation.
23 April 2025	<p>The T&F Group met with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cheshire Police, including the 'Force Elected Official Advisor for Cheshire'. - Police and Crime Commissioner - Head of Democratic Services (proposed Nominated Officer) <p>At this meeting, the T&F Group also explored lone working and options available for Members.</p>
15 May 2025	<p>The group met with and considered evidence and reports from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Senior Member Development and Training Officer - A protection technology provider that specialises in lone working devices to receive a demonstration on lone working devices.

3 July 2025	Chair of the T&F Group met with Democratic Services to develop the final report to Corporate Policy Committee.
3 July – 11 July 2025	The T&F Group reviewed and agreed the final report.
6 August 2025	The report to be presented to the Corporate Policy Committee.

6.0 Findings

6.1 The generally accepted [definitions](#) of harassment, intimidation and abuse are set out below (*taken from the Local Government Association (LGA) website*).

- **Abuse** - Words and/or behaviour that constitute abuse or mistreatment can include, but is not limited to, physical abuse, bullying, emotional abuse, unsolicited abusive communication, and harassment. It may be one-off or repeated.
- **Intimidation** - Words and/or behaviour intended or likely to block, influence, or deter participation in public debate or causing alarm or distress, which could lead to an individual wanting to withdraw from public life. It may be one-off or repeated behaviour.
- **Harassment** - The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 indicates that someone's actions amount to harassment when they make the victim feel distressed, humiliated, threatened or fearful of further violence. The main goal of harassment is to persuade victims either not to do something that they are entitled or required to do or to do something that they are not obliged to do.

6.2 LGA Debate Not Hate Campaign

6.2.1 The Local Government Association (LGA) launched a 'Debate Not Hate' [campaign](#), to help encourage civility in public life. The LGA produced a [report](#) with recommendations which range from legislative changes to protect councillors' privacy to creating a longer-term culture change to de-normalise abuse of politicians and other high-profile individuals. Whilst most of the recommendations arising were for the LGA and/or central government, the T&F Group considered the recommendation set out for local authorities, below:

6.2.2 **Recommendation 1:** *Councils and relevant partners should take more responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of councillors. Proactive steps should be taken to prevent abuse and intimidation towards councillors and take similar steps to handling cases. Councils should work with agencies to support councillors' mental health and address risks and threats directed at councillors.*

6.2.3 The LGA Debate Not Hate: ending abuse in public life for councillors' [publication](#) outlined how councils could better support councillors in handling incidents of

abuse, harassment and intimidation and identified a series of key principles for local authorities, which was supported by the T&F Group:

- 1.Zero-tolerance approach to abuse:** Establish and enforce a strict policy that clearly outlines expectations for interactions and promotes respectful debate.
- 2.Clarity of process and responsibility:** Clearly define the process for raising concerns and assign responsible individuals within the council to provide support to councillors.
- 3.Relationships with local police:** Proactively develop strong relationships with the police to enhance coordination and foster mutual understanding of abuse affecting councillors and the role of police in addressing it.
- 4.Tailored risk assessments:** Consider individual councillors' needs and proactively identify risks through dynamic and periodic risk assessments.
- 5. Prioritise councillor wellbeing:** Recognise and consider how your council can support councillor wellbeing and address the negative impacts of personal attacks and hurtful commentaries.

6.3 Member Survey

- 6.3.1 The T&F Group first met in January 2025 to agree its terms of reference and key objectives. The Group agreed that a starting point for its work would be to assess and review the current levels/types/frequency of harassment, abuse and intimidation. A member survey circulated to all Elected Members on 14 February 2025 was well responded to, with 55 out of 82 Elected Members completing (67% completion rate).
- 6.3.2 The full report with the survey results can be found at Appendix 1. However, the key responses noted by the T&F Group are noted below.
 - **35%** of respondents had considered **leaving their role as a Councillor** because of incidents of abuse, intimidation or harassment.
 - **43%** of respondents felt the **volume of abuse, intimidation and harassment** had **increased in the last 12 months**.
 - Over half of Councillors, **53%**, felt **council arrangements for protecting them personally were ineffective**.
 - **82%** of members had **experienced harassment, abuse and intimidation via social media**.
- 6.3.3 The T&F Group agreed that the findings of the survey provided further assurance of the need for further support. The T&F Group was disappointed and concerned to learn that a number of councillors had considered leaving their role due to harassment, abuse and intimidation and was motivated to identify a framework of

support that could be put in place to assist Members. The work of the T&F Group subsequently focussed upon achieving the objectives as set out earlier in this report and addressing the issues set out in the member survey results.

6.3.4 The disparities of the survey results are echoed in broader national data published by the Local Government Association in their findings from the 2025 Debate Not Hate Survey results. The results show that women and councillors with disabilities are more likely than men to leave their roles due to harassment, bullying, and intimidation. These trends highlight the need for targeted support to ensure a safer environment for all councillors. The full results of the LGA survey can be found [here](#), but the key highlights are summarised below.

- 56% of respondents had decided not to stand or are currently unsure about standing at the next elections. Of those, 26% reported that the possibility of abuse and/or intimidation had influenced their position on whether to stand.
- 21% of respondents had reported an incident of abuse or intimidation to the police, yet 30% of those felt the policing response had not addressed their concern at all.
- 72% of respondents reported experiencing abuse or intimidation due to their role as councillors in the last 12 months. Similarly, this was higher amongst women (78%).
- 73% reported feeling personally at risk when fulfilling their role as a councillor, which remained consistent with last year's LGA survey.

6.4 Incident Reporting

6.4.1 The T&F Group identified, at an early stage in the process, that there was no formal procedure for logging and monitoring incidents of harassment, abuse and intimidation of councillors, internally. Based on the findings of the member survey, which highlighted that nearly half of respondents felt that the volume of harassment, abuse and intimidation had increased over the last 12 months, it was anticipated by the T&F Group that this figure could increase further as the use of social media and new online platforms continued to grow.

6.4.2 The member survey results also identified that some Members felt that the increase of harassment, abuse and intimidation was sometimes the result of public frustration relating to decision-making of the local authority. The T&F Group acknowledged this and the difficult decisions that the local authority and its committees had made and would continue to make over the next municipal year, and beyond, as the financial pressures facing the authority continued.

6.4.3 The T&F Group agreed that introducing a formal recording and monitoring process of incidents of harassment, abuse and intimidation of Members was important. It was noted that 53% of councillors who completed the survey felt that the council's arrangements for supporting Members were ineffective. The

introduction of the incident reporting form would seek to ensure that the council was aware of incidents and understood the issues facing councillors and assist officers in developing guidance, support and strategies to further support Members.

- 6.4.4 Councillors who felt that the council's arrangements were ineffective reported a lack of awareness of the procedure for reporting incidents and a lack of feedback when incidents had been reported. Being aware of incidents and being able to monitor incidents to inform future decisions around the safety of councillors was a key priority for the T&F Group, and the Incident Reporting Form (Appendix 2) was developed in response to these concerns. The form was developed in consultation with the council's Health and Safety Team and colleagues from Cheshire Police who endorsed the final form that is presented to the Corporate Policy Committee for approval. The T&F Group agreed that the Incident Reporting Form should be used for non-emergency incidents, and that any emergency matters should be reported immediately to the Police. The internal Incident Reporting Form would not replace the need to report incidents to the Police.
- 6.4.5 The T&F Group recommend to the Corporate Policy Committee that the Incident Reporting Form (non-emergencies) (Appendix 2) be formally adopted, and that incident reports are subsequently logged on the council's incident reporting system.
- 6.4.6 The T&F Group considered what process should be followed upon completion of an incident form, agreeing that it was essential that the impacted councillor remained 'in control' throughout the process. It was agreed that, in the first instance, completed incident forms would be shared with the Council's Head of Democratic Services (proposed Nominated Officer as set out in paragraph 6.5) to review.
- 6.4.7 The Head of Democratic Services would review the incident details, and where appropriate/necessary, consult with officers such as the Monitoring Officer and potentially the Cheshire Constabulary Force Elected Official Advisor (FEOA – as set out in paragraph 6.6.4) on more serious and/or repeat incidents. The Head of Democratic Services would identify what support could be provided and outline potential next steps for the impacted councillor to consider. No action would be taken without the impacted councillor being consulted, and in agreement with the proposed course of action.
- 6.4.8 The T&F Group agreed that the action that would be taken would vary on a case-by-case basis, depending on the nature of the incident, the seriousness of it and the wishes of the impacted councillor. However, the formal recording of incidents sought to increase the council's awareness of the risks and impact of harassment, abuse and intimidation of councillors and allow officers to monitor and review key themes/trends to support more informed decision-making around the safety of councillors. Key themes/trends would be discussed in regular liaison meetings between the FEOA and Cheshire East Nominated Officer. This would also

respond positively to the LGA's recommendation for improved '*clarity of process*' for raising concerns.

6.5 Responsible Officer (Nominated Officer for councillors dealing with harassment, abuse and/or intimidation)

- 6.5.1 The T&F Group considered the findings from the member survey which suggested that councillors felt that there was a lack of awareness of who to contact, internally, when faced with harassment, abuse and intimidation in the course of their work as an Elected Member. The LGA Debate Not Hate Guiding Principle 2, set out above (paragraph 6.2.3) recommended that local authorities assigned responsible individuals within the council to support councillors in order to improve both clarity and responsibility across the council.
- 6.5.2 It was clear to the T&F Group that the most appropriate officer to act as the 'Nominated Officer' for councillors dealing with harassment, abuse and/or intimidation would be the Head of Democratic Services – this also followed the same approach taken by other local authorities who had appointed a responsible officer – often referred to as the 'Nominated Officer'. The T&F Group agreed that the Head of Democratic Services was already a key contact for councillors providing advice, support and guidance on a wide range of issues and this naturally complemented their role working closely with Members.
- 6.5.3 Appointing the 'Nominated Officer' was felt by the T&F Group to provide Members with a clear understanding of who they should contact when faced with harassment, abuse and intimidation. The T&F Group developed a short role profile, setting out the responsibilities of the Nominated Officer (Appendix 3) which they recommend that the Corporate Policy Committee approve.

6.6 Partnership working with Cheshire Police

- 6.6.1 The T&F Group identified inconsistencies in the responses to abuse, harassment and intimidation of councillors, reported to Cheshire Police. The member survey results identified that:

“Police did not appear to treat incidents seriously”.

“The response was effective on some occasions but not on others”.

- 6.6.2 The LGA Debate Not Hate Campaign also identified that police forces should work to improve the consistency of responses to abuse of and threats made against councillors and take a risk-based approach that accounts for the specific risks that councillors face, as they do with other high-risk individuals, such as MPs.
- 6.6.3 In response to the above, the T&F Group met with the Police and Crime Commissioner, a representative from Cheshire Police and the Force Elected Official Advisor (FEOA) for Cheshire. The T&F Group referred to the government's '[Defending Democracy Policing Protocol](#)' and sought clarity on the

role of the FEOAs. It was agreed amongst all present at the meeting that councillors held a unique position and that issues of harassment, abuse and intimidation needed to be treated seriously.

- 6.6.4 The FEAO role included a dedicated named police officer contact for raising concerns and liaising on security concerns related to elected officials, including local councillors and candidates. The T&F Group was pleased to learn that Cheshire Police had appointed a FOEA, details of which can be found in the proposed Councillor Safety Protocol (Appendix 4, as referred to in Paragraph 6.7.2).
- 6.6.5 The T&F Group raised concerns in relation to the inconsistent approach that members felt was taken when incidents were reported to the police and sought clarity on the approach that should be taken when an incident occurred and what Members could expect in response.
- 6.6.6 Clarity upon the process which Members should follow was provided for the T&F Group, this detail is set out clearly in the proposed Councillor Safety Protocol (Appendix 4). The key messages from police colleagues are summarised below:
- Elected Members needed to continue to report incidents of harassment, abuse and intimidation regardless of the outcome of previous incident reporting.
 - Continued reporting of incidents could potentially change the approach and level of action that could be taken against potential offenders.
 - It was also highlighted that, particularly in relation to online abuse, Members should ensure that they collected as much evidence as possible – this could be in the form of screenshots, to assist with police investigations.
 - Police colleagues also suggested that when reporting incidents to Cheshire Police, Elected Members needed to clearly highlight that they were an Elected Member and that they felt the harassment, abuse and intimidation was a direct result of their democratic role.
- 6.6.7 Members of the T&F Group took the opportunity to raise concerns in relation to occasions when the response from the police had not been satisfactory, particularly when Members had been advised to consider stepping-down from their role as an Elected Member when faced with abuse, intimidation and harassment. It was agreed by the T&F Group and all police colleagues present at the meeting that this was not acceptable, and that this advice should not be given in response to councillors dealing with harassment, abuse and intimidation. Police colleagues committed to addressing this through their regular Operation Ford communications shared across the force.
- 6.6.8 Members of the T&F Group highlighted the difficulties some Members faced when reporting incidents to the police and these matters not being formally investigated as they did not reach the required 'threshold' or 'criteria' required. Members agreed that clarity on this area would be helpful for all Elected Members. Subsequently, the T&F Group agreed that briefings with the Force Elected Official Advisor from Cheshire Police would be beneficial and timely. These briefings have since been arranged and were held regularly throughout

May 2025 with reminders circulated to all Elected Members through the regular Members Bulletin. The T&F Group noted that not all Members were able to attend the sessions, and it is therefore proposed that additional briefings be arranged for those Members who had not yet met with the FEOA. Briefings with the FEOA would also form part of the Member Induction process.

- 6.6.9 The Group agreed that it was essential that the relationship between Cheshire Police and the Council continued to develop, and that the importance of councillor safety remained a priority. It was acknowledged that the use of social media was growing rapidly and fundamentally altering user behaviours. Understanding and keeping up with these changing behaviours was critical to ensuring that Elected Members were well prepared, and supported, in dealing with difficult and complex matters impacting them, particularly online. The T&F Group subsequently agreed that the proposed internal Nominated Officer and Force Elected Official Advisor should meet regularly to discuss the issue of harassment, abuse and intimidation of Elected Members to ensure strategies, protocols and support were adequate and continued to meet the needs of Elected Members. The T&F Group proposed that the Member Champion – Cllr Safety (paragraph 6.10) also attended these meetings. The above responds positively to the LGA Guiding Principle 3: ***‘Relationships with local police: Proactively develop strong relationships with the police to enhance coordination and foster mutual understanding of abuse affecting councillors and the role of police in addressing it’.***
- 6.6.10 The T&F Group sought clarity of the types of incidents that should be reported to the police. Police colleagues advised that reporting of incidents would ultimately fall to the individual involved/impacted. Offences of harassment, abuse and intimidation were emotive incidents, different individuals would react in different ways, and sometimes the same individual could react differently on some occasions than others. It was agreed, as a general rule, that the individual should consider how the incident made them feel and consider the motives of the potential offender. For example, a local resident making repeated queries about a local decision or policy and asking a number of questions about it from a genuine perspective, but becoming frustrated due to the outcome, this is significantly different to an individual repeatedly contacting a councillor for more spurious reasons and/or to make the councillor feel uncomfortable, which could involve sending regular abusive communications. In summary, councillors are encouraged to report any incident which makes them feel uncomfortable and/or concerned to the police.
- 6.7 Taking steps to support Cheshire East Members and developing a zero-tolerance approach to harassment, abuse and intimidation of councillors.**
- 6.7.1 The T&F Group agreed that the role of a councillor was rewarding, complex and challenging and that it was important that councillors had the right training, guidance and support. Evidence considered by the T&F Group highlighted a lack of understanding on steps that should be taken when an incident occurs, there was also a lack of understanding around the internal and external support available. The member survey results reported the following:

“There was a lack of clarity about the reporting protocol. Councillors stated there was a lack of awareness about existing procedures and protocols for protection”.

- 6.7.2 A Councillor Safety Protocol (Appendix 4) has been developed by the T&F Group in recognition of the increasing issue of harassment, abuse and intimidation faced by councillors. The purpose of the protocol is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Members. The protocol outlines preventative measures and procedures to address potential risks, and help decrease the likelihood of experiencing harassment, abuse and intimidation, ultimately allowing Members to carry out their duties more effectively and confidently. The Cheshire Police FEOA had been consulted upon and inputted into the final protocol.
- 6.7.3 The protocol aims to bring together a wide range of information, contacts and guidance into one document for councillors and sets out a number of helpful internal and external resources. It is proposed that the Corporate Policy Committee agree the Councillor Safety Protocol and that this be made available on the Members Hub and be integrated into the induction process.
- 6.7.4 The T&F Group hoped that members would find that the proposed protocol empowered them to take proactive steps to protect themselves and respond appropriately when faced with harassment, abuse and intimidation and that adoption of the protocol fostered a culture of safety and respect within the local authority by setting clear expectations for behaviour and providing mechanisms for addressing safety concerns. This responds positively to the LGA recommendation that *“local authorities adopt a zero-tolerance approach to abuse”* and achieves the T&F Groups Objective 4 *“to create a local protocol setting out a procedure, should a councillor feel they are being harassed, abused or intimidated”*.
- 6.7.5 It was acknowledged by the T&F Group that this protocol would be an evolving piece of work that would need to be regularly reviewed. Many factors including, technology advancement, online habits and interactions changes, new social media platforms emerging and changes to legislation would dictate that the protocol would need to evolve to address future emerging risks and issues.

6.8 Impact on mental health and support for councillors

- 6.8.1 The T&F Group was concerned with the response from the member survey that suggested that:

“35% of respondents had considered leaving their role as a Councillor because of incidents of abuse, intimidation or harassment”.

“The stress and abuse faced by Councillors have had a significant impact on their mental health, leading some to consider resigning”.

- 6.8.2 The T&F Group considered what support was available and could be made available for councillors who were struggling with experiences of harassment, abuse and intimidation and was pleased to learn that the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for staff, was accessible for councillors to use, free of charge. This also came at no additional cost to the council. The proposed safety protocol

sets out how Members can access the EAP system. The T&F Group agreed that this should be included in the protocol to raise awareness of this valuable support available for Members.

- 6.8.3 The EAP system was provided by Vita Health Group and is free to use, providing a confidential assistance service to help manage, reduce and overcome the impact of life issues which individuals may experience from time to time, both within work and their personal life.

6.9 LGA Debate Not Hate: Public Statement

- 6.9.1 The T&F Group considered in detail the work of the LGA Debate Not Hate Campaign, including the 'Debate Not Hate Public Statement' which called upon on local authorities, government and relevant partners including police and social media companies, to come together through a government convened working group to produce and implement an action plan that addressed the abuse and intimidation of Elected Members and candidates and ensured the safety of Members whilst fulfilling their democratic roles.
- 6.9.2 Councillors, MPs and local authorities were asked to sign the LGA's public statement. Over 800 councillors and 65 plus local authorities had signed up to the public statement to date. Full Council, in October 2022, supported a [Notice of Motion](#) which proposed that Cheshire East Council should sign the Public Statement.
- 6.9.3 The T&F Group agreed that the Corporate Policy Committee should reaffirm its continued support and commitment to the principles of the [public statement](#) to voice its support to the proposed establishment of the government-led working group to work towards raising public awareness of the role of councillors in their communities, encourage healthy debate and improve the responses and support for local politicians facing abuse and intimidation. Via the Members Bulletin, all councillors had been encouraged to sign the public statement individually.

6.10 Member Champion: Councillor Safety

- 6.10.1 When reviewing steps taken by other local authorities in raising the profile and awareness of harassment, abuse and intimidation of councillors, some local authorities had appointed a Member Champion for Councillor Safety. This was something that the T&F Group strongly agreed should be adopted by the council as part of its work to develop a framework to support Members and increase the awareness of both the levels and impact of harassment of Elected Members.
- 6.10.2 The T&F Group considered what the role of the Champion would be and agreed a role description, as set out in Appendix 5 for the Corporate Policy Committee to consider.
- 6.10.3 It was agreed that this role would be key in raising the profile of councillor safety issues and advocating for better engagement with key partners, including Cheshire Police. The adoption of the Member Champion role would seek to ensure that Members were more informed and had a key Member to contact in relation to their safety.

- 6.10.4 The T&F Group agreed that appointing an Elected Member Champion for Councillor Safety would provide a visible and dedicated advocate for the wellbeing and protection of Councillors. This role would ensure that safety concerns were consistently represented at a strategic level, helping to embed a culture of zero tolerance toward harassment and abuse of Elected Members.

6.11 Lone Working

- 6.11.1 Cheshire East Council has 82 councillors, representing 52 Wards, across the Borough. The nature of the councillor role means that councillors often carry out activities alone, sometimes in environments that may be unfamiliar to them. Working alone can make a councillor vulnerable to, and increase the likelihood of, violent or aggressive incidents.
- 6.11.2 The Member Survey results indicated that harassment, abuse and intimidation had risen in the last 12 months and was anticipated to increase further. Whilst online abuse was acknowledged as a growing issue for Members throughout the survey, some Members had also experienced face-face abuse, which had on occasions involved individuals visiting Elected Members homes and subsequently becoming abusive. The T&F Group was motivated to identify measures to improve lone working for Members that would give Members the confidence to fulfil their role with more ease and focus.
- 6.11.3 The T&F Group met with representatives from a large people protection organisation to receive more information and a demonstration on the use of personal safety devices, similar to those used by some employees across the council.
- 6.11.4 The T&F Group agreed that the lone-working personal safety devices provided a number of benefits, as summarised below.
- Discreet and easy to access in an emergency device.
 - 24/7 emergency alert functions that would help councillors.
 - 24/7 alarm receiving centre allowing two-way chat.
 - Long battery life with real time location Wi-Fi and GPS tracking.
 - Allow councillors to have peace of mind and a sense of reassurance.
 - “Check in” feature that allowed councillors to record short messages – providing information about their location and activity to inform any subsequent alerts.
 - Conversations could be recorded when activated, allowing emergency services to assess what level of response was needed. The recording could also provide valuable evidence if action was required.
- 6.11.5 The T&F Group recommends that the Corporate Policy Committee agree to the principle of making lone working devices available to Members who wished to have one, subject to a further consideration of the financial implications/options available being developed further by the Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer, in consultation

with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Policy Committee and Chair of the Task and Finish Group.

6.11.6 The T&F Group acknowledged that not every Member would feel the need to carry a security device with them but for those that did it would provide significant reassurance and peace of mind. This would further support the T&F Group objective to promote a culture of zero-tolerance of harassment, abuse and intimidation of Members.

6.11.7 The T&G Group propose that, subject to Corporate Policy Committee approval of the principle of lone working devices being available for Members, officers seek clarity via a Member survey on the number of Elected Members wishing to have a personal-safety device. At this point, clarity on the procurement processes and costs could be further developed in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Policy Committee and the Chair of the T&F Group.

Devices	Approx costs for 2-year contract (in the region of)	Approx costs for 4-year contract (in the region of)
82	£15k	£24k
41	£7.5k	£12k
20	£4k	£4k

6.12 Training for Councillors

6.12.1 The T&F Group met with the Senior Member Training and Development Officer to understand existing and future training opportunities for Members to help Members pre-empt, navigate and deescalate tensions when challenging issues created passionate responses in the community.

6.12.2 The T&F Group considered a wide range of training, both internal and external and recommend the following to the Corporate Policy Committee, to approve.

6.12.3 The T&F Group noted that a refreshed Member Training and Development Plan was considered and approved by the Audit and Governance Committee at its meeting in July 2025. The T&F Group strongly supported the proposed plan, and the training opportunities identified for Members.

6.12.4 Alongside the refreshed Member Training and Development Plan, the T&F Group considered further opportunities that would equip Members with the skills and knowledge to better prepare themselves when dealing with incidents of harassment, abuse and intimidation.

6.12.5 To manage budgets effectively, the T&F Group advocated the use of the online resources, workbooks and e-learning provided by the LGA and the council's Learning Lounge. It was proposed that links to the LGA courses on facilitation and conflict resolution, handling intimidation, stress management and personal resilience be included on the Councillor Hub and that emotional intelligence, neuro-diversity and

sexual harassment e-learning modules be added to the induction programme for Members hosted on the Learning Lounge.

6.12.6 Whilst being mindful of the financial position of the council, the T&F Group considered that some external support was essential to be able to provide a comprehensive package of support. The T&F Group therefore propose that the Corporate Policy Committee approve the training, as set out below, which together with the online resources above, would be added to the Member Training and Development Plan. The financial implications are set out within the officer covering report.

6.12.7

	Type of training	Approx. costs
1	<p>Conflict De-escalation (external training)</p> <p>(covering personal safety skills for councillors, help equip Members with the right skills to handle harassment, abuse and intimidation).</p>	£7,560 (this covers four 90-minute sessions).
2.	<p>Healthier Debate (external training)</p> <p>(aims of the course are to empower people to build relationship and support colleagues in having open and honest conversations. Themes covered: successful listening, empathy, understanding other perspectives and having confidence to challenge appropriately from own perspective).</p>	<p>£5,500 for two sessions.</p> <p>Note: this is already included in the Member Training and Development Plan, however the inclusion of this training is strongly supported by the T&F Group. This training is highlighted for information and does not require approval from the Corporate Policy Committee.</p>
3.	<p>Mental Health First Aider Training (external training)</p> <p>The T&F Group propose that 1 Elected Member from each Political Group (1 Cons: 1 Lab: 1 Ind: 1 NGI) is nominated to complete this external training.</p> <p>Training an Elected Member as a Mental Health First Aider provides a vital peer support resource within the council, helping to foster a culture of openness, empathy, and early intervention. This role enables the trained Member to recognise signs of mental distress among colleagues, offer initial support, and guide individuals toward appropriate</p>	<p>£141.33 per person (£565.32 for four places – typically a 2-day course)</p> <p>Costs for training new Members would only be incurred as and when one of the nominated four trained Members needed to be replaced.</p>

	professional help. It also signals the council's commitment to mental health and wellbeing, reducing stigma and encouraging others to seek support when needed.	
4.	E-Leaning Courses: Emotional Intelligence / Neurodiversity / Sexual Harassment (internal training)	No costs. This resource already exists. The T&F Group recommend that this be made available for Elected Members.

7.0 Recommendations

That the Corporate Policy Committee:

1. Note the findings of the Member Survey (Appendix 1).
2. Approve the Councillor Incident Reporting Form (non-emergencies) (Appendix 2)
3. Agree that the Head of Democratic Services be appointed as the Council's Nominated Officer for councillors dealing with harassment, abuse and intimidation and approve the supporting role description (Appendix 3).
4. Approve the Councillor Safety Protocol (Appendix 4) and note that this will be made available on the Members Hub.
5. Agree that Cheshire East Council reaffirms its commitment and support to the principles of the LGA Debate Not Hate Public Statement.
6. Agree the role profile (Appendix 5) for the Member Champion: Councillor Safety and note that the Leader of the Council will appoint a Member to this role.
7. Agree that the proposed training set out in paragraph 6.12.7 of this report be approved and added to the Member Training and Development Plan.
8. Agree that the principle of lone working devices being made available to those Members who wish to have one subject to the cost implications being considered and developed further by the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Policy Committee and the Chair of the Task and Finish Group.
9. Subject to the resolution of recommendation 8, approve that the Acting Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer be given delegated authority to proceed with required procurement and contractual processes in

consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Policy Committee and the Chair of the Task and Finish Group.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 The T&F felt that endorsement of the recommendations outlined in the report were vital to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of Elected Members within Cheshire East Council. By addressing the growing concerns around harassment, intimidation, and abuse, the council would demonstrate a proactive commitment to fostering a respectful and secure environment for its Members. Implementation of these measures—including improved reporting mechanisms, dedicated support roles, safety protocols, and targeted training, would not only protect current Members but also encourage future participation in local democracy. These actions reflect the council's broader values of inclusion, accountability, and effective governance.

9.0 Background Documents

- 9.1 Key documents referenced during the review or to assist in the forming of this final report have been hyperlinked through the report.

10.0 Additional Information / Contact Information

- 10.1 Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following:

Councillor Fiona Wilson – Task and Finish Group Chair
Fiona.wilson@cheshireeast.gov.uk

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Members Abuse, Intimidation and Harassment Survey 2025



Research and Consultation | Chesh



Executive Summary

Introduction

The purpose of the survey was to gather feedback from Cheshire East Councillors to feed into a Task and Finish Group review on the levels of abuse, intimidation and harassment faced by elected Members in the course of their work, with a view to identifying what support can be put in place to assist Councillors if needed.

The survey was conducted between 14 and 28 February 2025, and in total 55 Councillors responded to the survey, giving a 67% response rate.

Experiences of abuse, harassment and intimidation

76% of respondents rarely or never felt at risk personally when fulfilling their roles as Councillors, while 24% frequently or occasionally felt at risk.

Female respondents were more likely to feel at risk personally when fulfilling their roles as Councillors either frequently or occasionally (41% female Vs 4% male).

13% of respondents frequently experience abuse, intimidation or harassment in their role as Councillors, with a further 36% occasionally experiencing this.

35% of respondents had considered leaving their role as a Councillor because of incidents of abuse, intimidation or harassment.

Increasing levels of harassment

43% of respondents felt the volume of abuse, intimidation or harassment had increased in the last 12 months, with reasons given for why it had increased including:

- Social media toxicity
- Public frustration with council decisions, financial cuts, and service provision
- Political negativity and criticism, particularly from those with opposing views
- A lack of consequences for being abusive

Format of the harassment

The most common mediums through which abuse, intimidation and harassment was received were:

- Social media (82% had experienced via this medium)
- In person (62%)

- Email (51%)

The most common ways of experiencing abuse, intimidation and harassment were:

- Campaigns to discredit them (55% had experienced this)
- Receiving unwanted, repeated communications (45%)
- Personal information placed on public website or forum (34%)

22% of respondents had experienced a threat of violence in their role as a Councillor, while 6% had experienced a threat of death.

Protection for Councillors

18% of respondents felt the council's arrangements for protecting them personally in their roles as Councillors was effective, while 53% felt council arrangement were ineffective.

Reasons given for why Councillors felt the council's arrangements for protecting them were not effective included:

- A lack of protection
- Publishing of their personal information
- Lack of awareness of procedures
- Lack of feedback when reporting issues

Reporting and preventing harassment

49% of those who had experienced abuse, intimidation of harassment as a Councillor reported it to their group leader or political party, while 40% had reported it to council officers, and 33% to the police.

On a scale of 1 to 5, 27% of respondents gave a response of 5 (very effective) or 4 as to the effectiveness of the advice they received upon reporting it, while 24% gave a response of 1 (very ineffective) or 2.

On a scale of 1 to 5, 38% of respondents gave a response of 5 (very well prepared) or 4 as to how well prepared they are to handle incidents of abuse, intimidation or harassment. 15% gave a response of 1 (not well prepared at all) or 2.

92% of respondents were aware their home address could be withheld from the Cheshire East Council website, and of these, 50% had requested for their home address to be withheld from it.

Final comments

The final question of the survey asked respondents if they have any final comments to make in relation to this survey for the Task and Finish Group to consider – Responses have been summarised below:

- Social media concerns
- Improve the working environment for and between Councillors
- Privacy concerns for Councillors
- Toxic political debate must be tackled
- Some Councillors do not experience harassment

Conclusions

While a majority of Councillors responding to the survey rarely feel at risk while performing their duties, it is clear that a significant proportion do feel at risk.

That 35% have considered leaving their role as a Councillor due to abuse, intimidation or harassment suggests there is an issue that needs to be addressed.

It is also concerning that:

- Female Councillors are significantly more likely to feel at risk frequently or occasionally as compared to male Councillors
- Levels of abuse, intimidation or harassment appear to be increasing

Over half of Councillors, 53%, feel council arrangements for protecting them personally are ineffective – something again which probably needs addressing.

The main areas for improvement seem to be around:

- Tackling social media dialogue
- Improving the working relationship between Councillors
- Addressing privacy concerns of Councillors
- Tackling toxic political debate

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Report produced 10 March 2025 by Ben Buckley of the Research and Consultation Team, Cheshire East Council. Email RandC@cheshireeast.gov.uk for further information.

Introduction

Purpose of the survey

The purpose of this survey was to gather feedback from Cheshire East Councillors to feed into a Task and Finish Group to review the levels of abuse, intimidation and harassment faced by elected Members in the course of their work, with a view to identifying what support can be put in place to assist Councillors if needed.

The Cheshire East Members Abuse, Intimidation and Harassment Survey 2025 was conducted between 14 and 28 February 2025.

Survey methodology and response

All 82 Cheshire East Council Members were invited to complete the survey by email on 14 November 2025, with a reminder to complete the survey sent out on 25 February 2025.

In total, 55 Members responded to the survey, giving a 67% response rate.

About Councillors

Of the 55 Councillors answering the survey, 33 had been serving for more than 5 years, while 19 had been serving for between 1 to 2 years.

How long have you been serving as a Councillor?	Count	Percent
Less than one year	1	2%
1 to <2 years	19	35%
2 to <5 years	2	4%
5 years or more	33	60%
Valid responses	55	

53% of survey respondents were female, 47% were male.

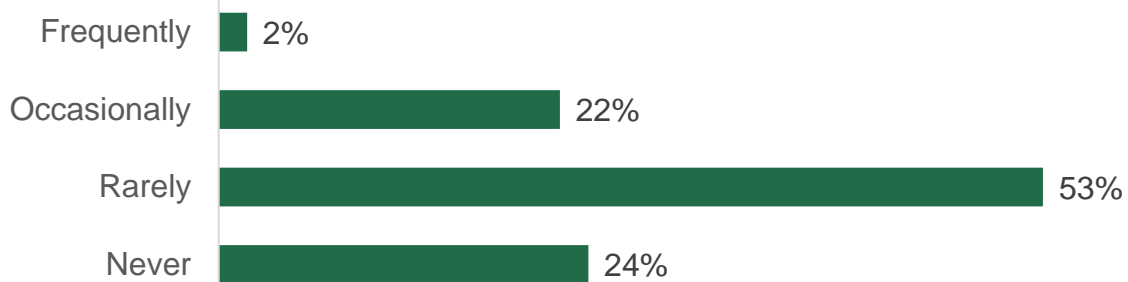
Which of the following best describes you?	Count	Percent
Female	29	53%
Male	26	47%
Valid responses	55	

Experiences of abuse, harassment and intimidation

Feeling at risk

76% of respondents rarely or never felt at risk personally when fulfilling their roles as Councillors. 24% of respondents felt frequently or occasionally at risk.

How often, if at all do you feel at risk personally when fulfilling your role as a Councillor?



Number of responses = 55

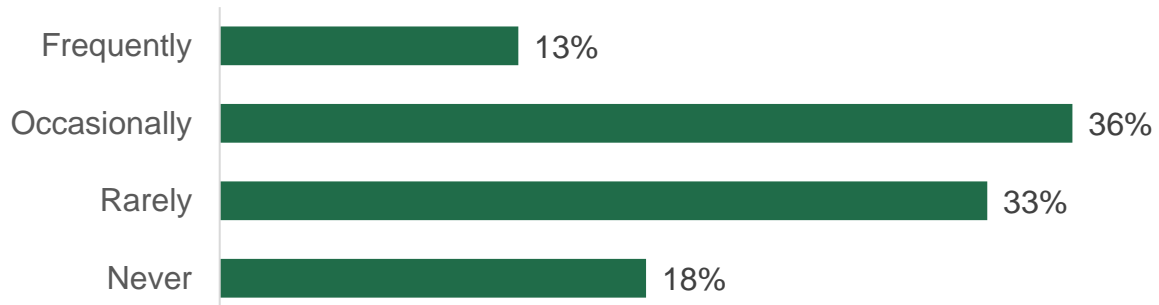
Female respondents were more likely to feel at risk personally when fulfilling their roles as Councillors either frequently or occasionally (41% female Vs 4% male).

How often, if at all do you feel at risk personally when fulfilling your role as a Councillor?	Female	Male
Frequently	0%	4%
Occasionally	41%	0%
Rarely	41%	65%
Never	17%	31%
Valid responses	29	26

Experiences of harassment

13% of respondents frequently experience abuse, intimidation or harassment in their role as Councillors, with a further 36% occasionally experiencing this.

How often, if at all have you experienced abuse, intimidation or harassment in your role as a Councillor?



Number of responses = 55

Female respondents were slightly more likely to experience abuse, intimidation or harassment in their role as Councillors either frequently or occasionally (55% female Vs 42% male).

How often, if at all have you experienced abuse, intimidation or harassment in your role as a councillor?	Female	Male
Frequently	10%	15%
Occasionally	45%	27%
Rarely	31%	35%
Never	14%	23%
Valid responses	29	26

Impacts of harassment

On a scale of 1 to 5, 35% of respondents gave a response of 5 (very concerned) or 4 about their level of concern of the impact on their family of abuse, intimidation or harassment.

On a scale on 1 to 5, where 1 is "not at all concerned" and 5 is "very concerned", how concerned are you about the impact on your family of abuse, intimidation or harassment?



Number of responses = 55

35% of respondents had considered leaving their role as a Councillor because of incidents of abuse, intimidation or harassment.

Have you ever considered leaving your role as a Councillor because of incidents of abuse, intimidation or harassment?

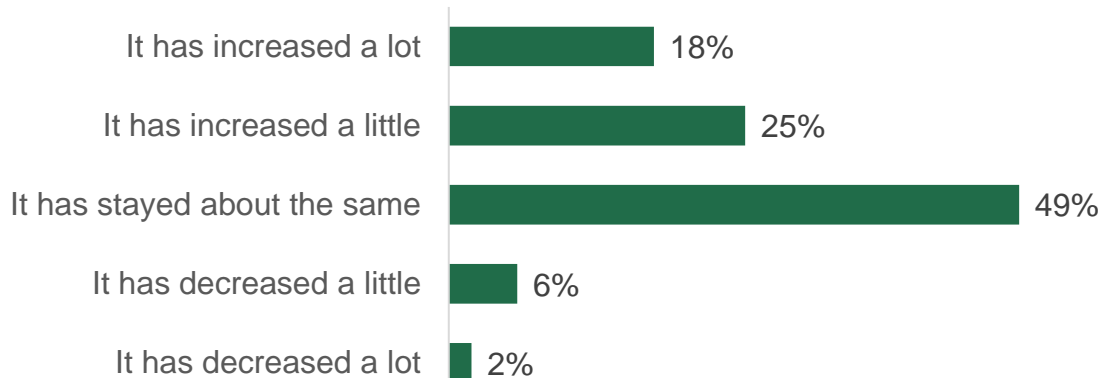


Number of responses = 55

Increasing levels of harassment

43% of respondents felt the volume of abuse, intimidation or harassment had increased in the last 12 months.

And thinking about the last 12 months, how has the volume of abuse, harassment and intimidation you have received in your role as a Councillor changed?



Number of responses = 51

Respondents who felt the level of abuse had increased in the last 12 months were asked to explain why they felt that was the case. Responses have been summarised below:

- **Social media** (10 comments) – Increased use of social media and social media toxicity has led to more online abuse, misinformation, and emboldened individuals to express hostility without facing consequences.
- **Public frustration with council decisions, financial cuts and services** (8 comments) – Difficult decisions, financial cuts, resident frustration with lack of basic services, and public frustration with council inefficiency have led to unpopularity and frustration among residents, resulting in increased verbal abuse and confrontation towards Councillors.
- **Political negativity and criticism** (8 comments) – The rise of alternative political views and the influence of national and international political figures such as Trump and Musk have contributed to a more hostile environment. Becoming a Councillor has seen a significant increase in 'casual' abuse directed at our integrity, intelligence, and motives by people not previously known.
- **Intimidation and harassment** (4 comments) – Councillors have experienced intimidation and harassment from fellow Councillors, residents, and even council officers. Councillors face harassment through coordinated campaigns, complaints, and public confrontations.

- **Mental health impact** (3 comments) – The stress and abuse faced by Councillors have had a significant impact on their mental health, leading some to consider resigning.
- **Lack of consequences for being abusive** (2 comments) – There are no consequences for those who abuse and harass Councillors. Some in positions of authority within political groups incite others to do the same.
- **Misinformation** (1 comment) – There is an increasing willingness from people to criticise and make false statements about Councillors on social media.
- **Lack of support** (1 comment) – There is a lack of support from authorities in addressing harassment.

Format of the harassment

How the harassment occurs

The most common mediums through which abuse, intimidation and harassment was received were:

- Social media (82% had experienced via this medium)
- In person (62%)
- Email (51%)

Thinking about the abuse, intimidation or harassment you have experienced in your role as a Councillor, how has this been received?	Count	Percent
Social media	37	82%
In person (face to face)	28	62%
Email	23	51%
Phone call	9	20%
Other	7	16%
By post	5	11%
Communicated via a third party	5	11%
Text message	4	9%
WhatsApp	3	7%
Voicemail	1	2%
	45	

The most common ways of experiencing abuse, intimidation and harassment were:

- Campaigns to discredit them (55% had experienced this)
- Receiving unwanted, repeated communications (45%)
- Personal information placed on public website or forum (34%)

Thinking about the abuse, intimidation or harassment you have experienced in your role as a Councillor, how has this manifested itself?	Count	Percent
Campaign to discredit you	24	55%
Receiving unwanted, repeated communications	20	45%
Personal information placed on public website or forum	15	34%
Other	12	27%
Privacy being invaded at home or in a private place	10	23%
A person repeatedly or unexpectedly appearing at events or places you attend	6	14%
Damage to your home, car or other property	4	9%

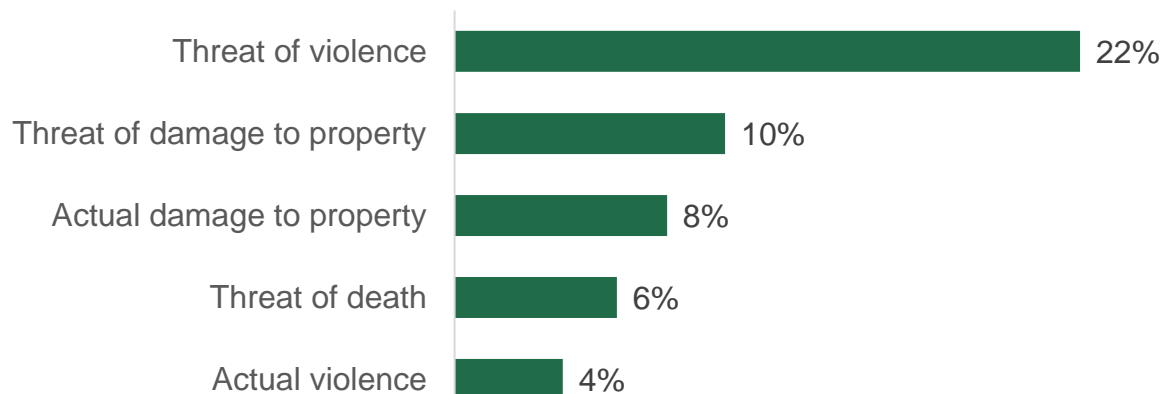
Physical attacks	3	7%
Being followed or stalked	3	7%
Sexual assault	1	2%
Protest at your home	1	2%
Racial abuse	1	2%
Malicious or dangerous items being sent to you	1	2%
A person sending you unwanted gifts	0	0%
44		

Threats and actual harassment

22% of respondents had experienced a threat of violence in their role as a Councillor.

6% had experienced a threat of death, while 4% had experienced actual violence in their role as a Councillor.

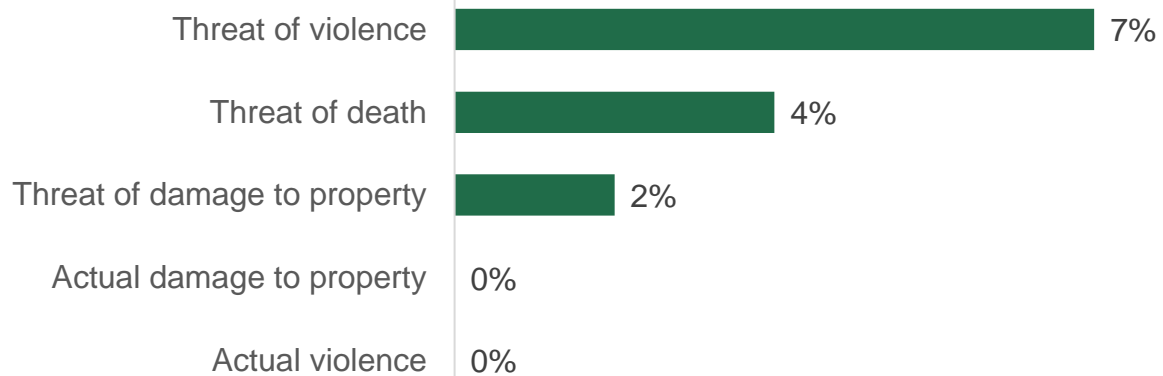
Due to your role as a Councillor, have you ever experienced any of the following?



Number of responses between 52 and 54

7% of respondents reported that people close to them had experienced threat of violence due to their roles as Councillors.

Due to your role as a Councillor, has a person closely connected with you ever experienced any of the following?



Number of responses between 53 and 55

26% of respondents reported that a member of the public had attended their home in a way that they considered intimidatory or inappropriate.

In your role as Councillor, have you ever had a member of the public do any of the following in a way that you considered intimidatory or inappropriate?

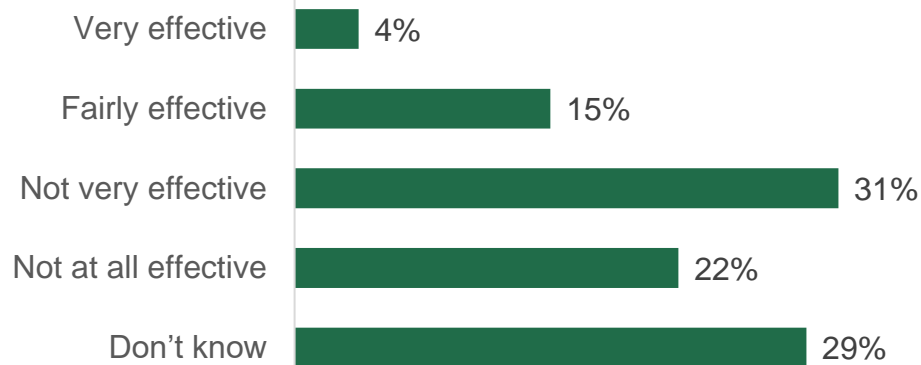


Number of responses between 51 and 53

Protection for Councillors

18% of respondents felt the council's arrangements for protecting them personally in their roles as Councillors was effective, while 53% felt council arrangements were ineffective.

How effective or not do you think Cheshire East Council's arrangements are for protecting you personally as you fulfil your role as a Councillor?



Number of responses = 55

Respondents who felt the council's arrangements for protecting them were not effective were asked to explain why they felt that was the case. Responses have been summarised below:

- **Lack of protection** (6 comments) – Concerns about the absence of clear responsibility for protection issues, and the lack of direct protection measures from the council for Councillors.
- **Publishing of personal information** (6 comments) – Concern about public availability of Councillors' personal details, such as home addresses, which can lead to harassment.
- **Lack of awareness of procedures** (4 comments) – Councillors stated there was a lack of awareness about existing procedures and protocols for protection, and insufficient understanding of the impact of abuse and harassment on Councillors.
- **Lack of feedback when reporting issues** (2 comments) – Complaints about the lack of feedback or response after reporting issues.
- **Security concerns** (3 comments) – Concerns about inadequate security measures at meetings and in council buildings.

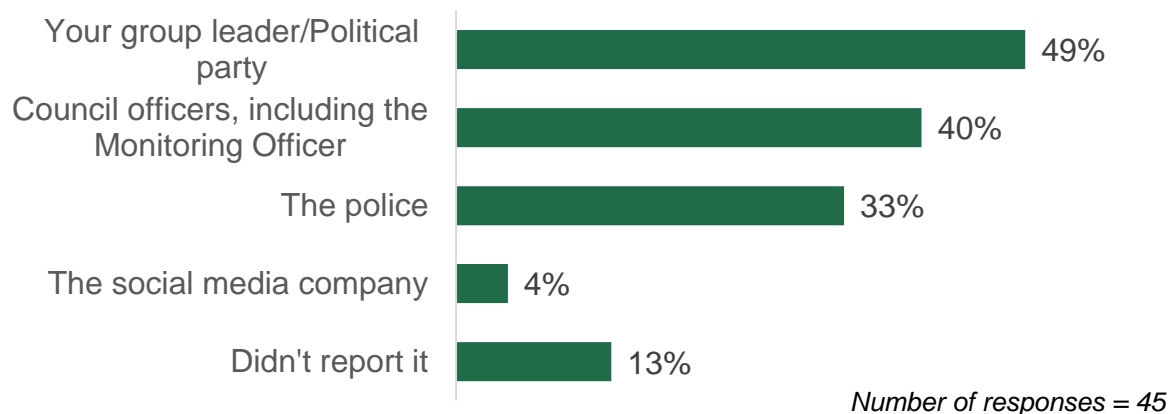
- **Online abuse concerns** (2 comments) – Concerns related to the amount of online abuse from the public and the need for measures to block such abuse.

Reporting harassment

49% of those who had experienced abuse, intimidation or harassment as a Councillor reported it to their group leader or political party.

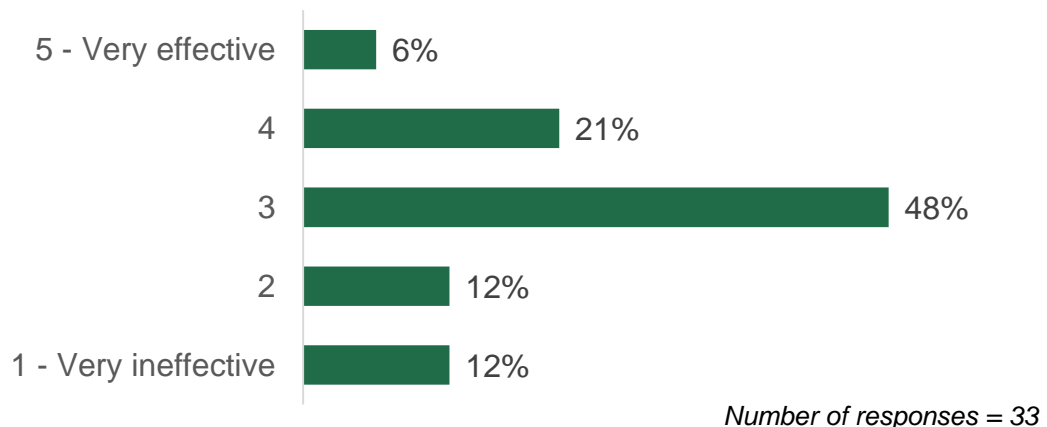
40% reported it to council officers, while 33% reported it to the police.

Thinking about the abuse, intimidation or harassment you have experienced in your role as a Councillor, to which of the following, if any, did you report it to when it happened?



On a scale of 1 to 5, 27% of respondents gave a response of 5 (very effective) or 4 as to the effectiveness of the advice they received upon reporting it. 24% gave a response of 1 (very ineffective) or 2.

On a scale on 1 to 5, where 1 is "very ineffective" and 5 is "very effective", how would you describe the effectiveness of the advice you received upon reporting your incident of abuse, intimidation or harassment?



Respondents were asked to explain why they felt the advice they had received upon reporting harassment was effective or not. Responses have been summarised below.

Positive responses included:

- **Positive feedback about council officers** (1 comment) – Council officers provided really good advice.
- **Good police support** (1 comment) – Support from specially trained police officers was good.

Negative responses included:

- **Police response dissatisfaction** (3 comment) – Police did not appear to treat incidents seriously. The police response to a reported physical assault was considered weak.
- **Negative feedback about social media operators** (2 comments) – Reporting harassment to social media operators was considered a waste of time, all that was received was an acknowledgement to the complaint, nothing more.
- **Lack of expertise or capacity at CEC** (1 comment) – Concerns about Cheshire East Council's expertise or capacity to deal with issues.
- **The reporting protocol is unclear** (1 comment) – Lack of clarity about the reporting protocol.
- **Long investigation time** (1 comment) – Investigations take a long time, allowing those involved to feel they have escaped justice.

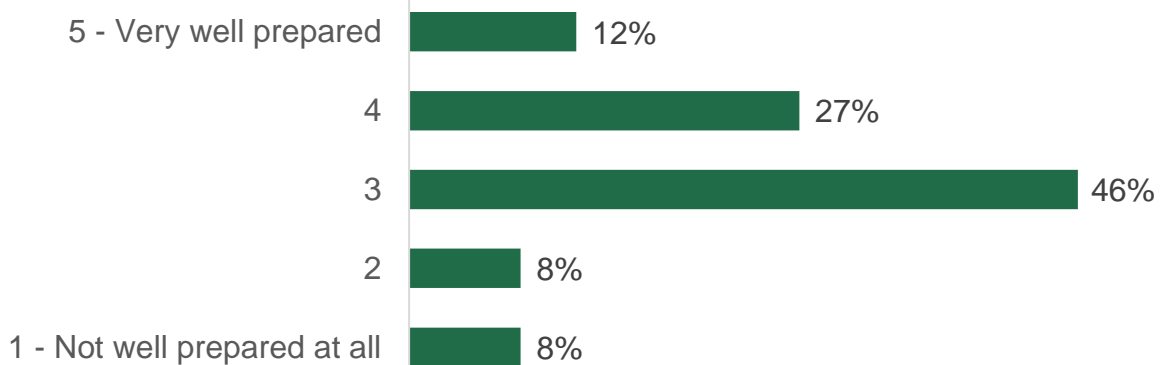
Other responses included:

- **Resilience required for Councillors** (1 comment) – Councillors need to be more resilient than ordinary members of the public.
- **CCTV footage retention** (1 comment) – Concerns about CCTV footage only being kept for 21 days and the need for early reporting.
- **Intimidation and embarrassment** (1 comment) – Reporting is hard due to intimidation and embarrassment.
- **Inconsistent responses** (1 comment) – The response was effective on some occasions but not on others.

Preventing harassment

On a scale of 1 to 5, 38% of respondents gave a response of 5 (very well prepared) or 4 as to how well prepared they are to handle incidents of abuse, intimidation or harassment. 15% gave a response of 1 (not well prepared at all) or 2.

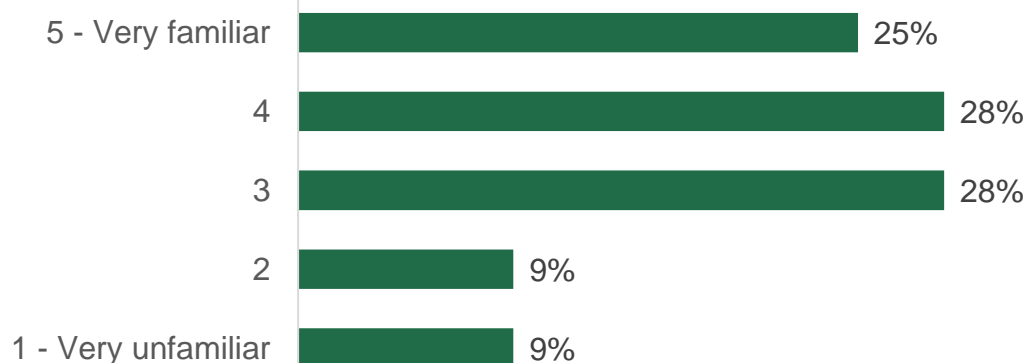
On a scale on 1 to 5, where 1 is "not well prepared at all" and 5 is "very well prepared", how well prepared would you say you are to handle incidents of abuse, intimidation or harassment?



Number of responses = 52

On a scale of 1 to 5, 53% of respondents gave a response of 5 (very familiar) or 4 as to how they rate their familiarity with settings on social media. 19% gave a response of 1 (very unfamiliar) or 2.

On a scale on 1 to 5, where 1 is "very unfamiliar" and 5 is "very familiar", how would you rate your familiarity with settings on the social media or social networking platforms that you use?



Number of responses = 53

92% of respondents were aware their home address could be withheld from the Cheshire East Council website, and of these, 50% had requested for their home address to be withheld from it.

In your role as Councillor, have you ever requested that your home address be withheld from the Cheshire East website?



Number of responses = 48

Final comments

The final question of the survey asked respondents if they have any final comments to make in relation to this survey for the Task and Finish Group to consider.

Responses have been summarised below.

Social media concerns (9 comments):

- Several Councillors avoid using social media to avoid abuse, harassment, intimidation and hostility, and to protect their families and protect their mental health (4 comments).
- Comments and posts by Councillors on social media are sometimes problematic (1 comment).
- Councillors should think before they talk or act and avoid getting drawn into social media activities (1 comment).
- The council should provide more support and protection for Councillors using social media (1 comment).
- Concern about social media becoming more right-wing and racist (1 comment).
- Online communication should be treated in the same way as verbal threats and intimidation (1 comment).

Improve the working environment for Councillors (7 comments):

- Relationships between different Councillors need improving, some Councillors undermine the council by spreading hatred. Suggestion for all political parties to sign up to a “Debate Not Hate” charter to promote respectful debate (3 comments).
- Concern about female Councillors experiencing abuse that male Councillors do not (1 comment).
- Less experienced or confident Councillors may feel intimidated and fearful (1 comment).
- Victimisation of any Councillor should not be tolerated and should be reported as soon as possible (1 comment).
- The impact on the families of Councillors, who worry about their safety, should not be underestimated (1 comment).

Privacy concerns for Councillors (6 comments):

- Private addresses of Councillors should automatically be kept private, unless Councillors opt-in to have them made public (1 comment).
- All Councillor addresses should be removed from the public record to protect elected members (1 comment).
- Some Councillors have been told they are not allowed to hide their address on the council website (1 comment).

- Removing addresses from the website may not be effective on its own; there is a need for stronger monitoring officer processes (1 comment).
- Councillors should be provided with work mobile phones, so that political and personal lives can easily be separated (1 comment).
- Unaware of any protection arrangements by CEC (1 comment).

Tackling toxic political debate (5 comments):

- Toxic attacks from a small but vocal group of individuals can deter people from representing their neighbourhoods, affecting democracy (1 comment).
- Stronger action should be taken to tackle and shame the appalling behaviour of a small minority (1 comment).
- Disappointment that the survey was necessary due to increasing abuse and harassment (1 comment).
- Hopeful that the Task Group's findings will improve understanding and democracy (1 comment).
- Call for robust plans instead of the same ubiquitous responses (1 comment).

Comments that some Councillors do not experience harassment (3 comments):

- Some Councillors do not experience bullying or intimidation in their wards, and have never felt threatened in any way (3 comments).

Conclusions

While a majority of Councillors responding to the survey rarely feel at risk while performing their duties, it is clear that a significant proportion do feel at risk.

That 35% have considered leaving their role as a Councillor due to abuse, intimidation or harassment suggests there is an issue that needs to be addressed.

It is also concerning that:

- Female Councillors are significantly more likely to feel at risk frequently or occasionally as compared to male Councillors
- Levels of abuse, intimidation or harassment appear to be increasing

Over half of Councillors, 53%, feel council arrangements for protecting them personally are ineffective – something again which probably needs addressing.

The main areas for improvement seem to be around:

- Tackling social media dialogue
- Improving the working relationship between Councillors
- Addressing privacy concerns of Councillors
- Tackling toxic political debate

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Councillor Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation Non-Emergency Reporting Form

If you have experienced harassment, abuse and intimidation in connection with your role as an elected member for Cheshire East Council, you can tell us about your experience by completing this incident report. You can do this anonymously if you wish.

Once this form has been completed, it will be shared with the Head of Democratic Services to review and identify what appropriate action, if necessary, should be taken. The Head of Democratic Services will, before any action is taken, discuss the proposed next steps with the impacted councillor.

It is important to note that this form does not replace the need to report matters directly to the Police. For serious incidents, you should contact the Police immediately.

The purpose of this form is to ensure that Cheshire East, internally, is capturing details of incidents so that these can be monitored and where appropriate, action taken to resolve/prevent issues. All incidents of harassment, abuse and intimidation should also be reported to Cheshire Police prior to completing this form.

SECTION 1: PERSONAL DETAILS		
Name:	Not mandatory	
Email:	Not mandatory	
I am the <input type="checkbox"/> Victim / Recipient of the behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> Witness / active bystander <input type="checkbox"/> Advocate reporting on behalf of the victim or witness		
I am.. <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say	Not mandatory	
Political affiliation <input type="checkbox"/> Conservative <input type="checkbox"/> Labour <input type="checkbox"/> Independent <input type="checkbox"/> Non-grouped Independent <input type="checkbox"/> Other please state:....	Not mandatory	
SECTION 2: DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT		
When did the incident occur	(date) and (time)	
Where did the incident happen?	(location/address)	

Nature of the incident: <input type="checkbox"/> VERBAL in person (threat, abuse) <input type="checkbox"/> PHYSICAL (theft, physical attack, anti-social behaviour) <input type="checkbox"/> ONLINE (online via social media abuse, threat, harassment) Please provide further details of the nature of the incident:		
Did the incident involve any of the following select all that are appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Age related discrimination or harassment, abuse or harassment <input type="checkbox"/> Disability discrimination or harassment <input type="checkbox"/> Gender Identity discrimination, harassment, or abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Race discrimination, harassment or abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Religion or belief based discrimination, harassment or abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation harassment, abuse or intimidation <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual harassment <input type="checkbox"/> Sex discrimination or bias <input type="checkbox"/> Stalking <input type="checkbox"/> Breach of private and family life <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying <input type="checkbox"/> Political affiliation discrimination, harassment, abuse or intimidation <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal, visual or written abuse or threats of violence <input type="checkbox"/> Other – please specify		
Please describe what happened and who was involved?		
If the incident occurred virtually – such as Online Social Media Platforms / Instant Messaging (WhatsApp, X, Text Message, Facebook, Voicemail) please		

state the platform in which the incident occurred? <input type="checkbox"/> X <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook <input type="checkbox"/> Text Message <input type="checkbox"/> Voicemail <input type="checkbox"/> WhatsApp <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please state.		
Nature of the injuries sustained and how did this incident affect you (physical / emotional)	(if physical please provide details of where the injuries were sustained)	
Weapon(s) involved: <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Please specify: 		
Was this a repeat incident involving the same assailant <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes		
Was the assailant known to you (for example, local resident within your ward, Cheshire East Cllrs, Town and Parish Cllr?) <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes		
Were there any witnesses at the time of the incident / do you have physical evidence of any threats/abuse. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Please provide details 		
Have you reported the incident to the Police <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please include Police reference number		

<p>If yes, please provide a summary of the action that the Police have/intend to take</p> <p>.....</p>		
<p>Is there any specific action you would like Cheshire East to take?</p> <p>.....</p>		
<p>Would you like a copy of this incident form to be sent to your Group Leader/Administrator</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>		

Nominated Officer – Role Description

The LGA Debate Not Hate: ending abuse in public life for councillors publication outlines how Councils could better support councillors in handling incidents of abuse, harassment and intimidation and identified a series of key principles for local authorities including the following:

Clarity of process and responsibility: *Clearly define the process for raising concerns and assign responsible individuals within the council to provide support to councillors.*

The Nominated Officer is proposed to be the Head of Democratic Services, and the role involves the following:

- Being a first point of contact for Elected Members to raise concerns in relation to harassment, abuse and intimidation, internally.
- Providing advice and support for Elected Members concerned with incidents of harassment, abuse and intimidation.
- Supporting Elected Members in understanding how to report incidents to the Police, when necessary.
- Reviewing Incident Reporting Forms. Formally recording trends and issues, and monitoring. The Nominated Officer may seek advice from internal officers including the Monitoring Officer, when necessary, to identify what support/what steps should be taken in response to incidents of harassment, abuse and intimidation.
- The Nominated Officer will identify the options available to the Elected Member and meet with them in the first instance to review the options, ensuring that the Elected Member remains in control of the course of action to be taken.
- The Nominated Officer will, with the Elected Member's consent, liaise with the Cheshire Police Force Elected Official Advisor on matters that should be brought to the attention of the Police.

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Councillor Safety Protocol

1.0 Purpose and Introduction

- 1.1 This Protocol has been developed to support councillors in protecting themselves as a person in a public position and makes suggestions on how to respond to incidents of harassment, abuse and intimidation.
- 1.2 Councillors are local leaders and champions, bridging the gap between residents and local government. Becoming and serving as a councillor is a huge privilege and responsibility, but it also means councillors are very visible and often easily accessible to residents.
- 1.3 A pressing concern facing those in public office is the increasing levels of intimidation, harassment and abuse they can experience. While debate and expressing different views are part of a healthy representative democracy, these unacceptable behaviours undermine the key democratic principles of free speech, debate and engagement, and sometimes pose a risk to councillors' safety. Thankfully, serious incidents remain very rare. Councillors, their peers, political parties, council officers and, when necessary, the police, all have a role to play in addressing harassment, abuse, and intimidation.
- 1.4 In recognition of the impact of harassment, abuse and intimidation of councillors, the council has produced this Councillor Safety Protocol which is based on guidance issued by the Local Government Association (LGA) and steps taken by other local authorities across the country.
- 1.5 The Local Government Association's '[Councillors' guide to handling harassment](#)', abuse and intimidation also provides a series of practical guidance for councillors.

2.0 Definitions

2.1 Abuse

Words and/or behaviour that constitute abuse or mistreatment can include, but is not limited to, physical abuse, bullying, emotional abuse, unsolicited abusive communication, and harassment. It may be one-off or repeated.

2.2 Intimidation

Words and/or behaviour intended or likely to block, influence, or deter participation in public debate or causing alarm or distress, which could

lead to an individual wanting to withdraw from public life. It may be one-off or repeated behaviour.

2.3 Harassment

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 indicates that someone's actions amount to harassment when they make the victim feel distressed, humiliated, threatened or fearful of further violence. The main goal of harassment is to persuade victims either not to do something that they are entitled or required to do or to do something that they are not obliged to do.

[Definition of harassment, abuse and intimidation | Local Government Association](#)

3.0 Useful Contacts

3.1 There are a number of useful contacts for councillors, as listed below:

- Member Safety Champion: *TBC*
- Head of Democratic Services (Nominated Officer – Cllr Safety):
Brian Reed, brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk
- Force Elected Official Advisor, Cheshire Police:
Gareth.frith@cheshire.police.uk
- Cheshire East Democratic Services:
CheshireEastDemocraticServices@Cheshireeast.gov.uk

4.0 LGA Debate Not Hate Campaign

4.1 The Local Government Association (LGA) launched a 'Debate Not Hate' [campaign](#) to help encourage civility in public life. The LGA produced a [report](#) with recommendations which range from legislative changes to protect councillors' privacy to creating a longer-term culture change to de-normalise abuse of politicians and other high-profile individuals.

4.2 Many of the recommendations within the report relate to actions for the LGA and central government, however one recommendation was identified for local councils '*to take greater responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of councillors and take a proactive approach to preventing and handling abuse and intimidation against councillors*'.

4.3 The LGA also launched its third edition of the annual Debate Not Hate survey to all councillors in May-June 2025. The full report can be found [here](#), but a summary of the key findings are highlighted below.

- Almost three-quarters of respondents (73 per cent) reported feeling personally at risk when fulfilling their role as councillor, which remained consistent with last year's survey (74 per cent). This was higher among women (84 per cent), ethnic minorities (84 per cent), the LGBT+ community (85 per cent), and disabled respondents (85 per cent).
- Seventy-two per cent of respondents reported experiencing abuse or intimidation due to their role as councillors over the last 12 months. Similarly, this was higher among women (78 per cent), the LGBT+ community (85 per cent), and disabled respondents (86 per cent).
- A quarter of respondents (25 per cent) had experienced a threat of violence or a threat of death against themselves or someone close to them.
- A fifth of respondents (21 per cent) had reported an incident of abuse or intimidation to the police, yet 30 per cent of those felt the policing response had not addressed their concern at all. More than half of respondents (58 per cent) reported that their authority's arrangements for protecting them were very or fairly effective.
- More than half of respondents (56 per cent) have decided not to stand or are currently unsure about standing at the next elections. Of those, a quarter (26 per cent) reported that the possibility of abuse or intimidation had influenced their position on whether to stand; this was higher among female respondents, at 32 per cent, and among disabled respondents, at 37 per cent.

5.0 Member Code of Conduct

- 5.1 Councillors should be able to undertake their role as an Elected Member without being harassed, intimidated or abused by anyone.
- 5.2 The Council's [Member Code of Conduct](#), has been designed to protect the democratic role of councillors, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government.
- 5.3 The code seeks to assist councillors in modelling the behaviour that is expected of them, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against them. It is also to protect councillors, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and the specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct.

6.0 Lone Working

- 6.1 The Council has a [Lone Working Policy](#). Whilst this policy relates to staff, Elected Members may find this the guidance document useful in taking appropriate steps during lone working activities. Some key tips are highlighted below:
- Leave details of where you are going and how long you will be with a friend, relative or colleague.
 - Check that your mobile phone is charged and switched on.
 - Consider making regular check-in calls to a friend, relative or colleague, or ask them to call you at regular intervals.
 - Team up with a Councillor from your ward or a neighbouring ward to make visits.
 - If there are a number of risks associated with a particular visit you may wish to carry out a risk assessment and discuss or ask another Councillor or an Officer for their view on whether a visit should be undertaken.
- 6.2 *The council recognises that the role of councillors means they are often working alone and are aware of the risks that lone working can carry for elected members. Elected members have the option to request a personal-safety lone working device to help them feel more confident and able to undertake their democratic role with more ease. Please speak to the Council's Democratic Services team for additional information. (note that this is subject to the approval of the principle of lone working devices being made available to Elected Members).*

7.0 Nominated Officer: Councillor Safety

- 7.1 Supporting councillors dealing with harassment, abuse and intimidation is of utmost importance to the council.
- 7.2 The Council has identified a 'Nominated Officer – Councillor Safety' (e.g. Head of Democratic Services) to ensure that councillors have a point of contact for raising concerns in relation to incidents of harassment, abuse and intimidation.
- 7.3 The Nominated Officer will act as a "sounding board" for councillors, provide guidance/advice and liaise with the Force Elected Official Advisor - Cheshire Police (FEOA) in relation to serious incidents of harassment, abuse and intimidation.
- 7.4 The Nominated Officer will meet regularly with the FEOA and Member Champion: Councillor Safety to discuss the safety of councillors and any improvements that can be made to the support provided to councillors.

- 7.5 If you are experiencing harassment, abuse or intimidation you can reach out to the Nominated Officer – Councillor Safety, for support and/or guidance on how to deal with incidents and formally report them.

8.0 Member Champion: Councillor Safety

- 8.1 The “Member Champion: Councillor Safety” role was established to maintain strong strategic links with relevant partners leading to the implementation of stronger safety processes for Elected Members. The Champion also provides a point of escalation for councillors if/when incidents occur.
- 8.2 The Champion raises the profile of councillor safety issues and advocates for better two-way engagement. Councillors should be more informed about risks and mitigations as the Member Champion acts as a conduit to feed intelligence back to relevant officers.
- 8.3 The Champion will encourage councillors to prioritise their own safety and take on board any information and advice provided to them.
- 8.4 The Champion will ensure councillor safety remains a high priority and provide a conduit for strategic engagement with local partners including Cheshire Police, alongside the Council’s Nominated Officer.
- 8.5 If you are experiencing harassment, abuse or intimidation you can reach out to the Member Champion for support and/or guidance on how to deal with incidents and formally report them.

9.0 Incident Reporting – Cheshire East Council

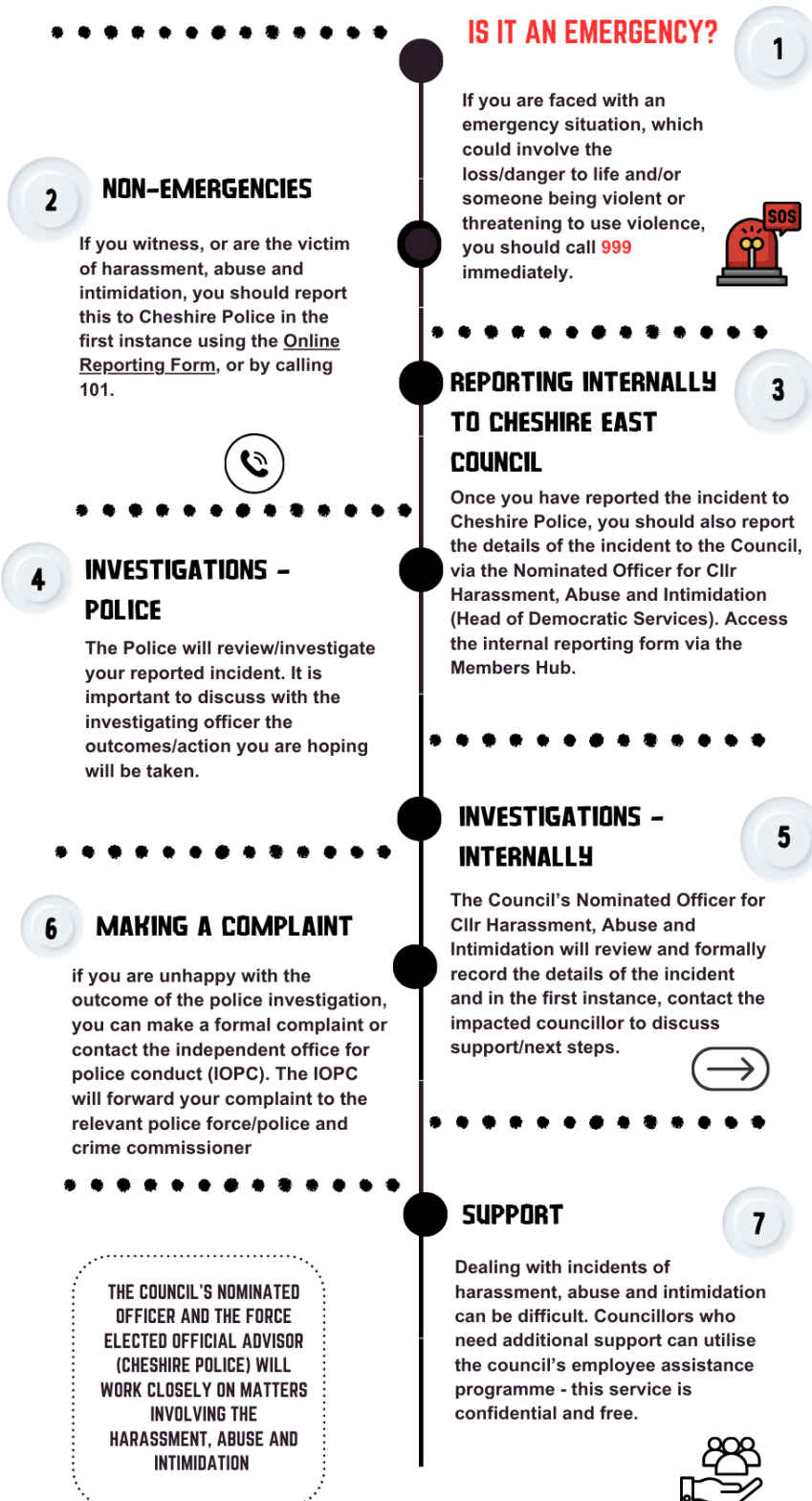
- 9.1 Councillors are encouraged to report incidents of abuse, harassment and intimidation to the ‘Nominated Officer – Councillor Safety’- even those considered minor that have had an impact upon them - to help track incidents and identify patterns of behaviour which may pass the threshold for police action. Reporting of incidents enables the Nominated Officer to decide if any action can be taken to prevent similar incidents reoccurring and to support the effected councillor. **It is important that all serious incidents of harassment, abuse and intimidation are also reported to the Police, and in emergencies, the impacted councillor calls 999 immediately.**
- 9.2 Councillors may also consider it advisable to warn ward colleagues of an unsafe situation that they have encountered so they are aware of the risk.

- 9.3 An incident report should be completed as soon as possible after an event, whilst memories are fresh and so that issues can be investigated and appropriate action taken. **Completing this form does not replace the need to report an incident formally to the Police.** If a councillor is unsure if the incident should be reported to the Police, this can be discussed further with the Nominated Officer and/or Member Champion for Councillor Safety. It is important to note that no action will be taken, internally, without a discussion with the impacted councillor.
- 9.4 The Incident Reporting Form – non emergencies (*link to be provided once approved by Corporate Policy Committee*) is available on the Members Hub.

10. Incident Reporting – Cheshire Police

- 10.1 Any concerns about behaviour or conduct which leaves you worried about your safety or that of any other individual can be reported to the Police. If you are concerned about your immediate safety this should be done by calling 999. You can report non-urgent concerns to your local force by calling 101 or you can report online using the [Police UK reporting form](#).
- 10.2 The police will take initial details about the incident/s from you and provide you with a crime reference number. They will then carry out an investigative assessment to determine whether the incident/s need to be investigated further. The systems and practices used to record these initial details vary between police forces, but this does not affect your legal rights. Further information about your rights and how the police should respond can be obtained from [Know Your Rights](#). You may be asked to provide further information and/or be interviewed as part of this (providing a statement).
- 10.3 Not all incident/s will result in an investigation and the decision to investigate is one made by the police based on a number of factors – a decision not to investigate does not mean the incident is not a crime. You should not be deterred from reporting future incident/s because of previous decisions.
- 10.4 It is essential that when an incident occurs, you gather as much evidence as possible (such as social media screenshots) which will assist the Police with any investigations.
- 10.5 The infographic below, developed in partnership with Cheshire Police, sets out, sets out the process Members should follow when reporting incidents of harassment, abuse and intimidation.

INCIDENT REPORTING GUIDANCE FOR CHESHIRE EAST MEMBERS



11. Personal Safety Guidance – The Basics

- 11.1 The relationship between councillors and their communities is at the heart of what being a councillor is all about. The face-to-face contact where constituents can share problems and concerns is vital to enhancing that relationship.
- 11.2 The guidance below sets out some of the basic personal safety measures that can be taken to prevent and to deal with those rare circumstances when councillors might find themselves in situations where they become anxious for their safety.

Car Safety and Parking

You need to take the same precautions as most car owners do:

- Have your keys in your hand or easily accessible.
- Consider whether an area will be dark and isolated at the time you expect to return to your car.
- Park under street lighting where possible.
- Lock the car doors when you get into the car.
- Take boxes/bags to the car when other people are around.
- Try to park on the left-hand side of the road facing the way you want to drive off.
- In a Cul de sac, do not park facing the dead end.
- Try to park in a space where you will not be blocked-in.

Dealing with Emotional Constituents

It is inevitable that some of the people you will meet will be angry or upset. You need to be prepared to handle all types of emotion. Councillors have to develop the quiet skill of being concerned about constituents' problems without being so involved that they become too emotional to be of help. Calmness in the face of what comes up will help you and your constituents. You may find that racist or offensive remarks are made. If they are directed at you - do not respond - this will only make the situation worse. Instead, bring the interview to an end as quickly as possible. If they are more general remarks, you should state that this is not acceptable and that you cannot continue the interview. Often this will elicit an apology. Otherwise ask the person to leave. However, you must use your own judgement and if you are alone and in a vulnerable situation do not put yourself at risk, no matter how angry the remarks make you.

Ward Surgeries

Where ward surgeries are held, the arrangements each Councillor makes will vary according to local circumstances and it will be a fortunate Councillor who can find premises for their surgery which meet every aspect of good practice and are also accessible to their constituents. What follows are suggestions about how to make a surgery safe and effective. Most Councillors will go through their entire service on the Council without experiencing any problems, but a little time given to preparation and planning can reduce the already small risk further.

The Basics

1. Do not hold surgeries alone in an otherwise empty building. Try to get someone to act as receptionist. This not only makes you safer but also makes it much easier to manage a busy surgery. If you are currently doing surgeries alone, discuss how this can be changed with fellow Councillors or Council Officers.
2. If you cannot avoid doing surgeries on your own, make sure you remember a few simple guidelines. The layout of the room should suit you, i.e. you should sit nearest to the door with the constituents seated on the other side of the table. Seating is best set out at an angle of 45 degrees (seating directly opposite can be confrontational).
3. If there is no separate waiting room, try to ensure that the waiting constituents are as far as possible away from those whom you are talking to.
4. Make sure there are no heavy items in the room that could be used as weapons.
5. Inform the Police when and where your surgeries are held.
6. If you are at the stage of looking for suitable premises in which to hold a surgery, try to get a space with as many as possible of the following features:
 - Council premises (e.g. community centres) during opening hours or other premises where there are many other people about.
 - Premises where the names of any visitors for Councillors are recorded.

- Premises where there is a comfortable waiting area.
- Try to ensure the surgery (interviewing) room:
- Is in view of the reception or public area.
- Is connected to the reception by an alarm and there is a procedure for dealing with call for assistance.
 - Has a vision panel in the door.
 - Has a swift means of escape and any visitors are not able to lock the door from the inside.

Personal Callers and Home Visits

Most Councillors seek to maintain a balance between their personal and public lives and do not want to encourage any callers at their private homes. Good publicity as to how to contact Councillors and details of ward surgeries reduces the chances of unwanted callers. Councillors may wish to consider whether their personal details (home address/contact number) should remain on the council website when incidents of harassment, abuse and intimidation occur.

Councillors do sometimes visit residents in their homes, especially those who are elderly, disabled or where they simply want to see for themselves the conditions that are the subject of complaints. It is for each Councillor to decide whether a particular visit should be made, especially if the person to be visited is unknown to the Councillor. Most Councillors trust their own instincts as to whether to meet someone alone. Sometimes the Councillor might prefer to be accompanied by a ward colleague or invite the person to a more public place. It is always advisable for you to keep a record of your whereabouts. If necessary, you can let the person whom you are visiting know there is such a record or that you are expected at another place by a certain time, etc., or make a call on your mobile phone during the visit.

Telephone Calls

As with telephone calls, Councillors on rare occasions can become the target of malicious anonymous letters. Any such letters should be given immediately to the Police and reported to the council's Democratic Services team via the incident report.

Malicious and Nuisance Telephone Calls

Councillors occasionally get the odd nuisance or abusive call. Although such calls are likely to be rare, you might become the target of a persistent, anonymous caller with a grudge against the Council. These calls need to be dealt with in accordance with Police advice:

- Keep the caller talking.
- Note any clues the caller may provide as to sex, age, accent, etc.
- Listen for any clues as to the caller's motive and intent.
- Write down the details immediately to assist police at a later stage.
- Listen for background noise that may provide valuable information (e.g. railway sounds, industrial noises, machinery, music, animals).
- Inform the Police.
- Inform the Council.

12. Personal Safety Apps

12.1 Some Members may not have opted to have a personal-safety lone working device. There are a number of different personal safety apps that councillors could download, free of charge, to their mobile devices. The most recommended app, Hollie Guard, is a personal alarm, deterrent and evidence catcher. Every 5 seconds that platform will update your precise location based on your speed and movement activity to identify where you are once an alert has been raised. When raising an alert, the app can automatically start your smartphone's camera and microphone to capture real-time evidence of the situation around you. Your emergency contacts can access this evidence real-time.

12.2 More information can be found here: [Hollie Guard – Personal Safety App](#).

13. General advice on dealing with abuse and intimidation

13.1 Abuse and intimidation can be triggered by particular events, like council decisions, elections, or a misunderstanding of the role and responsibilities of councils and councillors. Perpetrators can be anyone; they may be angry residents, disgruntled members of the public, or activists on a specific issue.

- 13.2 It is normal that individual councillors' resilience to abuse will vary. Some councillors report having an extremely high tolerance to abuse due to past experiences and length of service. However, there is no expectation that councillors should have to accept or tolerate abusive behaviour and not dealing these issues can increase risk to councillor's safety at a later date.
- 13.3 The LGA has developed a set of SHIELD principles. These principles provide councillors with a basic framework on which to base their engagement with the public to reduce the risks and handle incidents if they do occur. These principles can be found [here](#).

14. Online Social Media Safety Guidance and Tips

- 14.1 Social media offers many opportunities for councillors to constructively engage with their communities. Most of the time this is a positive experience. Social media helps you to build a profile, explain complex issues in plain English and to develop a two-way conversation. There are however some pitfalls to be aware of, and the guidance and tips below are produced to help Councillors avoid these and take every step possible to reduce incidents of abuse, harassment and intimidation online.
- 14.2 Code of Conduct
- 14.3 The [Code of Conduct](#) applies to councillors who are, or appear to be, acting in an official capacity, this includes online. As Councillors are aware, the Code does not apply to purely private matters, however, the public may perceive them as acting in an official capacity when it is not their intention. How councillors present their profile online will be important (eg whether or not expressly as a Councillor) but not necessarily conclusive.
- 14.4 Councillors may choose to have two separate accounts, one for private matters and the other for council activities. However, care would still need to be taken to avoid giving the impression of acting as a councillor when using the private account. For example, a discussion about council services or decision-making, even on a 'private' profile, could lead to the conclusion that the Code is engaged. Private profiles that carry a party-political slogan may be more likely to result in the Code being engaged even if council activity is not expressly mentioned.
- 14.5 The particular sections of the Code most likely to give rise to complaints are the requirements to treat others with respect, not to bring the office of Councillor into disrepute and prohibiting the disclosure of confidential information. You should also consider your position carefully as to

whether your online ‘followers’ or ‘friends’ are “close associates”, for the purpose of declaring interests and participation in meetings where their well-being or financial position would be affected.

14.6 Legal Considerations

14.7 The Council owes a duty of care to Members who are the target of such abuse or ‘trolling’, as a result of their being a democratically elected Councillor. There are legal limits, however, as to the action the council may take, in the public interest, where freedom of expression is misused or abused.

14.8 Action to restrict what others may publish should be taken rarely and only after careful consideration of the public interest. When considering this matter, the council should keep in mind the ‘Spitting Image’ test of the acceptable limits of political satire.

14.9 Moreover, Director of Public Prosecution guidance says that any action taken by the Council needs to be ‘necessary and proportionate’. It is also important to recognise that any attempt to remove offending material may spark negative publicity, with the Council criticised for ‘stifling free speech’ or seeking to silence opponents.

14.10 The Council must always be mindful and realistic about the likely impact of taking action – which may have the unintentional effect of re-energising those who post abusive messages on social media – and the need to act in the public interest in protecting the reputation of Cheshire East Council.

14.11 Social Media Etiquette

14.12 ‘Liking’, ‘sharing’ or ‘re-tweeting’ posts could be seen as an endorsement of them. There is no need to respond to everything, and unhelpful online arguments should be avoided.

14.13 Avoid posting about controversial events which may invite disagreement. Be professional, respectful and polite, even (or especially) when corresponding with those who do not return the courtesy. Always consider whether anything you write may be interpreted in a way you do not intend. Promptly admit to mistakes of fact and apologise.

14.14 Avoid using social media when you are tired, angry, upset or when your judgment may be impaired. Be aware that ‘trolling’ posts may be intended to bounce you into an unwise response to be used against you.

14.15 Think carefully about who to ‘follow’ or ‘befriend’ online and be cautious about accepting ‘friend’ requests from anyone under the age of 18. Online

‘friendships’ with council officers should be avoided as they may compromise the appearance of impartial advice.

14.16 Don’t forget to:

- Set a good example to others.
- Check facts before posting.
- Check what you are posting isn’t confidential.
- Gain permission before uploading photographs of others.
- Think before you share a post.
- Use humour wisely.
- Dismantle incorrect statements with facts.
- Avoid an immediate reaction whilst you consider your options.
- Contact the poster and ask them to remove their post.
- Request a retraction, correction or apology.
- Report the post to the site moderator.
- If it’s a website, contact the web host.
- Seek advice from the Council’s Nominated Officer: Councillor Safety (Head of Democratic Services).

14.17 Handling Social Media Abuse, harassment and intimidation

The most important determining factor in deciding how to respond to intimidation is the impact it is having on you. Regardless of what others may think, if it is having an effect on you, then that is sufficient enough for you to take action.

14.18 The Council should normally only take any action where a Member is clearly named in, or is easily identifiable from, the communication in question. The Council will not normally take any action where the target is simply ‘the Council’.

14.19 The Council will normally only take action if requested to do so by the targeted Member. However, where material is ‘hateful’ – in that it discriminates, or encourages discrimination, on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (under the Equality Act 2010) – the Council must consider whether it would be in the public interest to refer the material to the police, notwithstanding the wishes of the person targeted.

14.20 Where a member of the communications team, in the course of their normal work, comes across a tweet/post that is potentially defamatory or clearly meets the criteria of ‘abusive behaviour’ against an identifiable individual Members, that individual will be informed. The Governance,

Compliance and Monitoring Officer and Head of Democratic Services will also be informed.

14.21 With any abusive or offensive social media posts or tweets there are four options:

- Ignore the post.
- Reply directly to the post (not recommended as it tends to encourage have those who are posting).
- Use the post to inform Comms activity to divert attention away from the conversation/post.
- Report the post as offensive.

14.22 Any X/Facebook account holder can report 'threatening or abusive' social media behaviour to X/Facebook with a view to getting the offending account locked, suspended or specific tweets deleted.

- [How to report a Facebook post.](#)
- [How to block a profile / page on Facebook.](#)
- [How to block/report someone on WhatsApp](#)
- [How to report an abusive message on X.](#)
- [How to block a profile on X.](#)

14.23 A photo can provide personal information that you may not want shared on social media. It is advisable to only publish photos of family, friends and colleagues with your consent and theirs to ensure that photos do not reveal your home or places frequented with family such as schools or care homes. You can disable automatic location tagging so that you have to approve another user including you in their photographs.

- [Manage how others can tag you on Facebook.](#)
- [How to control what others see about you / tag you in on X.](#)

14.24 It can be overwhelming when multiple abusive messages are sent in close succession and this can escalate quickly. You are advised to keep a record of the abuse, inform the social media platform, and the police. If the messages are in response to your original post, you can remove the original post.

14.25 Any intimidation or abuse on social media may constitute a criminal offence. If you feel a post or interaction is intimidating or abusive, and if you feel intimidated, you can take action to report it to the police. Every situation will be different and needs a personal judgement about whether it is worthwhile to pursue the incident, ignore it or politely acknowledge.

- 14.26 Having a social media presence means that people can contact you at any time. It can mean that a reply is expected immediately which can create a sense of pressure. It is useful to set your own rules and limits for how you manage your social media presence, it is suggested that you add these to your page so those accessing information know when to expect responses if required.
- 14.27 The LGA has developed a [guide to tackling online abuse](#) which explores the growing problem of online abuse and attacks. This guide will support Members in knowing how to identify and effectively deal with online abuse.
- 14.28 [Here](#), Members will find a helpful LGA presentation which sets out some tips for handling harassment, abuse and intimidation. It includes steps Members can take to review their social-media privacy settings, screenshots of how to report abuse messages/posts on social media platforms such as WhatsApp and how to take screenshots on your phone/tablet.

15. Support for Councillors

- 15.1 Sometimes interactions with individuals or the public can be stressful, even if you are not directly threatened. Please therefore remember that the Council has a Confidential 'employee' assist programme ('EAP') that **Councillors can use**. Its free and around the clock.
- 15.2 How to access the service.
- By phone: 0800 111 6387 (free 24/7 helpline).
 - Or visit: my-eap.com and log-in using organisation code 'Cheshirewell'
 - Via live web chat: <https://www.vitahealthgroup.co.uk/corporate-health-services/webchat/>
available between 8am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday, and 8am to 5pm Saturday
- 15.3 Councillors are able to access support from 'Able Futures'. Able Futures is a UK (and UK-wide) government program for those in work whose circumstances or mental health may affect their well-being or work performance. It provides access to around 9 months of mental health support. Generally made up of monthly support sessions. Members may access its services without referral from Cheshire East Council.

[About Able Futures / Able Futures Mental Health Support Service.](#)

16. Training

- 16.1 Personal safety of Councillors is a responsibility of the Local Authority whilst they are on Council business. Therefore, personal safety training for Councillors, including online or social media, is a key component of the councillor induction programme. For further information on the resources and training available to Members, please contact the Senior Member Training and Development Officer.

17. A zero-tolerance approach to persistent abuse, intimidation and harassment

- 17.1 Cheshire East Council has a zero-tolerance approach against harassment, abuse and intimidation. Any reports of harassment, abuse and intimidation will be taken seriously and handled confidentially and sympathetically.
- 17.2 If you feel that you are being harassed, abused or intimidated, it is important that you report the incident (via the Incident Reporting Form – non emergencies) to raise the matter formally with the Nominated Officer – Councillor Safety (Head of Democratic Services). The Nominated Officer will provide advice as to whether they feel a criminal offence may have been committed, and will direct councillors to support/guidance available, including this Councillor Safety Protocol.

Additional Resources / Useful Links

LGA: General advice on handling abuse and intimidation.	General advice on handling abuse and intimidation Local Government Association
LGA: Guide to tackling online abuse.	Guide to tackling online abuse Local Government Association
LGA: Debate Not Hate Ending Abuse in Public Life for Councillors	Debate Not Hate: Ending abuse in public life for councillors Local Government Association
LGA: Managing Online Abuse and Intimidation	Miranda Smythe LGA Managing Online Abuse and Intimidation October 2024 (3).pdf
LGA: Social Media Guidance for Councillors	Social media guidance for councillors Local Government Association

LGA: Practical advice for handling psychological abuse and impact on wellbeing.	Practical advice for handling psychological abuse and impact on wellbeing Local Government Association
LGA: Basics on communicating with residents, colleagues and officers	Basics on communicating with residents, colleagues and officers Local Government Association
LGA: Practical advice for handling physical abuse and personal security	Practical advice for handling physical abuse and personal security Local Government Association
Cheshire Police: Support for victims and witnesses of stalking or harassment	Support for victims and witnesses of stalking or harassment Cheshire Constabulary
Cheshire Police: Report a Crime	Report a crime Cheshire Constabulary

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Councillor Safety Champion – Description of Role

The Champion's role is to establish and maintain strong strategic links with relevant partners leading to the implementation of stronger safety processes for elected members. The Champion will also provide a point of escalation for councillors if an incident has occurred.

The Champion will raise the profile of councillor safety issues and advocate for better two-way engagement. As a result, councillors should be more informed about risks and mitigations; they will have a conduit to feed intelligence back to relevant officers, and they know their safety is being considered seriously by the Council.

The Champion will encourage councillors to prioritise their own safety and take on board any information and advice provided to them.

The Champion will ensure councillor safety remains a high priority and provide a conduit for strategic engagement with local partners including Cheshire Police.

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OPEN

Corporate Policy Committee

06 August 2025

Director of Public Health Annual Report 2024: Commercial Determinants of Health

**Report of: Helen Charlesworth-May, Executive Director of Adults,
Health & Integration**

Report Reference No: CPC/24/25-26

Ward(s) Affected: All

For Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 To introduce the Director of Public Health Annual Report 2024, which was referred to Corporate Policy Committee by the Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board on 21 January 2025.
- 2 To support the delivery of the three overarching commitments of the Cheshire East Plan 2025-2029 to: (1) unlock prosperity for all, (2) improve health and wellbeing, and (3) be an effective and enabling council.

Executive Summary

- 3 Directors of Public Health in England are required to produce an annual report on the health of the local population they work on behalf of. The Cheshire East Director of Public Health Annual Report for 2024 (Appendix 1) focuses on the harmful health impacts of the CDoH and unhealthy commodity industries (UCIs) to Cheshire East residents.
- 4 There is growing recognition at an international level that CDoH are major drivers of ill-health. In June 2024, the World Health Organisation reported that alcohol, tobacco, ultra-processed foods and fossil fuels are responsible for over a third of all global deaths. There is also

growing recognition that the CDoH should be central to public health policy and practice.¹

- 5 Despite this, however, there is still a distinct lack of a coordinated, national approach to using legislation and regulations to more effectively govern how UCIs operate (and therefore, limit/reduce the negative harms they can cause).²

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the development of a Cheshire East Position Statement on Commercial Determinants of Health (CDoH), setting out the council's commitment to improving residents' health and wellbeing by counteracting the negative influence and impacts of CDoH.
2. Approve the council's Public Health team working with partners across Cheshire and Merseyside to produce a Cheshire and Merseyside Position Statement on Commercial Determinants of Health.
3. Approve the exploration of using planning powers and the local plan to restrict the density of unhealthy commodity industries in Cheshire East, particularly in areas where existing rates of deprivation and health inequalities are higher.
4. Approve the exploration of using cumulative impact assessment(s) and licensing powers to reduce the overall impacts of alcohol use and harm.
5. Approve the exploration of a Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach to sustainably and effectively address the underlying causes of health inequalities.
6. Approve the promotion, development and delivery of interventions and projects (e.g. The Bread and Butter Thing), to provide as many residents as possible with healthier food ingredients and meals, and reduce reliance on cheaper, processed products that are higher in fat, sugar and salt.
7. Note that forthcoming recommendations will be considered by Corporate Policy Committee and/or other service committee(s) as required.

¹ Marmot, M. et al. 2022. *The Business of Health Equity: The Marmot Review for Industry*. Available [here](#)

² Maani, N. *The Commercial Determinants of Health*. Oxford University Press.

Background

- 6 The CDoH comprise part of the wider determinants of health and are defined as the ways by which commercial entities (ranging from global multinational industries, through to local small and medium sized businesses) influence and impact health and wellbeing.
- 7 Commercial entities, particularly those that promote and sell unhealthy products (often termed Unhealthy Commodity Industries or UCIs), have the social, economic, and political gravity to shape the physical and social environments in which people live, grow, learn and work, in ways that even governments and health departments cannot.
- 8 The tactics employed by UCIs – ranging from marketing and advertising to political lobbying and national regulatory influence – shape societal norms and weaken health policies. These companies and industries have, and continue to, use their influence and tactics to first and foremost secure their own profits, shares and growth, which too often is at the expense of peoples' health and wellbeing.
- 9 The extent of this influence and impact is demonstrated by the fact that just four UCIs – tobacco, ultra-processed foods, alcohol and fossil fuels – are the cause of over a third of all global deaths each year.³ In Europe, almost two thirds (61%) of deaths caused by noncommunicable diseases can be directly attributed to risk factors linked to unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, alcohol and tobacco consumption.⁴

Taking Action

- 10 As awareness and understanding of the negative health harms of CDoH has grown in recent years, so too have the efforts of local authorities, regional bodies and local area partnerships to counteract these and protect the residents they serve.
- 11 In the absence of a national approach to tackling CDoH, local authorities have begun to proactively develop coordinated, local approaches and use local powers to introduce junk food advertising bans, advertising and sponsorship policies, tackle single use vapes and youth vaping, and support local people to access fresh and healthy foods.
- 12 Cheshire East Council approved its Healthier Food and Drink Advertising Policy in October 2024; 8 of the 9 local authorities in

³ World Health Organisation. 2024. *Just four industries cause 2.7 million deaths in the European Region every year*. Available [here](#)

⁴ World Health Organisation – Regional Office for Europe. 2024. *Commercial Determinants of Noncommunicable Diseases in the WHO European Region*. Available [here](#)

Cheshire and Merseyside now have such a policy in place (as of June 2025) and over 30 local authorities across the country in total.

- 13 Some local and regional governments have also introduced a 'Health in All Policies' (HiAP) approach to policy creation and decision making. First coined in health policy circles in 2006,⁵ this approach systematically puts health and wellbeing at the forefront of how local places govern and grow.
- 14 A HiAP approach can help local authorities to secure long-term, sustainable benefits to health and health equity, and can support greater economic stability, economic growth and wider social benefits.⁶
- 15 Cheshire East Council's public health team has commenced work with the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) to establish a greater understanding and awareness of CDoH and consider different ways to address the harmful impacts of UCIs.
- 16 Both the [North East Directors of Public Health](#) and [Yorkshire and Humber Directors of Public Health](#) have published their own Position Statements on CDoH. These detailed documents outline their collective, regional commitment to counteracting the health harms of CDoH to the local people and communities they represent
- 17 Actions taken by the Council to reduce the harmful impacts of CDoH, and/or to introduce a health in all policies approach, **would not result in the council taking an anti-business approach.**
- 18 In fact, the health and wealth of an economy are closely connected; a healthy economy needs healthy people.⁷ By promoting health and health equity in Cheshire East, the council will be promoting the long-term health of its local economy too.

Devolution

- 19 The recommendations in this report also link in to the recently announced Devolution Bill and forthcoming plans to establish a devolved Cheshire and Warrington Mayoral Combined Authority.
- 20 Each of the areas of competence that the elected mayor for Cheshire and Warrington will have responsibility for delivering – transport, infrastructure, skills, employment, housing, strategic planning, regeneration, environment, climate change, public safety, health and wellbeing – are determinants of health and will have a key role in

⁵ Greer, S. et al. 2022. *From Health in All Policies to Health for All Policies (The Lancet)*. Available [here](#)

⁶ The Health Foundation. 2019. *Implementing health in all policies*. Available [here](#)

⁷ The Health Foundation. 2021. *A Healthy Economy Needs Healthy People*. Available [here](#)

determining our residents' quality of lives, standard of living and healthy life expectancy.

Consultation and Engagement

21 No formal consultation was required.

Reasons for Recommendations

22 It is the duty of all upper-tier and unitary local authorities in England (under Section 2B of the NHS Act 2006) to take appropriate steps to improve the health of the people who live in their areas.

23 The recommendations will help to address deprivation, health inequalities and improve health and wellbeing outcomes for people of all ages.

Other Options Considered

Option	Impact	Risk
Agree to support all recommendations in full	There may be minimal cost and/or resource implications associated with the implementation of the recommendations. These would be assessed in greater detail prior to the planning of any projects implementation.	There is a low risk of minimal cost and/or resource implications.
Agree to support recommendations in part	The council would miss the opportunity to explore all opportunities with potential to deliver sustainable, long-term improvements to residents' health and wellbeing.	The council would risk missing an opportunity to explore and implement positive opportunities to improve residents' health and wellbeing.
Do nothing	Doing nothing will mean that the council does not explore several opportunities with potential to deliver sustainable, long-term improvements to residents' health and wellbeing.	The council would risk missing an opportunity to explore and implement positive opportunities to improve residents' health and wellbeing.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance

24 Directors of Public Health are required to prepare an annual report on the health of their local population under section 73B(5) National Health Service Act 2006. The local authority has published this report in accordance with section 73B(6) National Health Service Act 2006.

25 There are no immediate legal or governance implications associated with this report and its recommendations. Subject to the planned proposal(s) of future interventions, strategies and/or policies in this

area, there may be legal and governance implications that will be assessed in greater detail at this stage.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 26 There are no immediate finance implications associated with this report and its recommendations. Subject to the planned proposal(s) of future interventions, strategies and/or policies in this area, there may be financial implications that will be assessed in greater detail at this stage.

Human Resources

- 27 There are no immediate human resources implications associated with this report and its recommendations. Subject to the planned proposal(s) of future interventions, strategies and/or policies in this area, there may be human resources implications that will be assessed in greater detail at this stage.

Risk Management

- 28 There are no immediate risk management implications associated with this report and its recommendations. Subject to the planned proposal(s) of future interventions, strategies and/or policies in this area, there may be risk management implications that will be assessed in greater detail at this stage.

Impact on other Committees

- 29 There are no immediate implications for other committees associated with this report and its recommendations at this stage. Subject to the planned proposal(s) of future interventions, strategies and/or policies in this area, there may be implications for, and recommendations to, other committees dependent on the content and remits.

Policy

- 30 There are no immediate policy implications associated with this report and its recommendations. Subject to the planned proposal(s) of future interventions, strategies and/or policies in this area, there may be policy implications that will be assessed in greater detail at this stage.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 31 There are no immediate policy implications associated with this report and its recommendations. Subject to the planned proposal(s) of future interventions, strategies and/or policies in this area, there may be Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) implications that will be assessed in greater detail through Equality Impact Assessments at this stage.

Other Implications

32 There are no other implications.

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy):</i>			
Ashley Hughes	S151 Officer	11/07/25	16/07/25
Janet Witkowski Acting	Monitoring Officer	11/07/25	15/07/25
<i>Finance:</i>			
David Hallsworth	Principal Accountant	05/06/25	09/06/25
<i>Legal:</i>			
Leah Benson	Senior Lawyer (People)	13/05/25	16/05/25
<i>Executive Directors/Directors</i>			
Prof. Rod Thomson	Interim Director of Public Health	04/06/25	11/06/25
Guy Kilminster	Corporate Manager Health and Wellbeing	04/06/25	18/06/25
Dr Matthew Atkinson	Consultant in Public Health	04/06/25	17/06/25

Access to Information	
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Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Director of Public Health Annual Report 2024
Background Papers:	None.

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Cheshire East Public Health Annual Report for 2024

The Commercial Determinants of Health



Open

Fair

Green

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The Director of Public Health would like to acknowledge the contribution of Gisèle Spencer (Public Health ST2) and Joel Hammond-Gant (Health Protection Officer) and thank them for their excellent work on this year's Public Health Annual Report.



Foreword

from **Dr Matt Tyrer**, Director of Public Health

Thank you for reading my Annual Director of Public Health report for 2024.

As Director of Public Health, I am delighted to produce my third independent annual report focusing on the health, wellbeing, and direction of public health action in Cheshire East. Public health is defined as “the science and art of improving health, prolonging life and preventing disease.”¹ The Council's Public Health team works with a range of services and partner organisations to deliver a diverse range of meaningful work to improve the lives of Cheshire East residents.

I have chosen to focus this year's report on the impact and influence of the ‘commercial determinants of health’, which encompasses the many ways in which the private sector has an impact, both positive and negative, on our health and wellbeing.

The growth and advancement of industry and business has led to many vital improvements to the health of our society. However, there is a growing base of evidence showing that the practices, actions, and decisions being taken by certain industries and corporations are having a significantly negative impact on our physical and mental health.

Industries like the tobacco, alcohol, fast food, gambling, and fossil fuels are often referred to as unhealthy commodity industries because they sell and promote products and services that have overall negative impacts on our physical and mental health and wellbeing. As these industries and companies have focused on growing market shares and profits, the negative influence they have on global populations has grown too, with these five major industries responsible for over half of all annual deaths across the world (33 million in total per year, accounting for 58% of all deaths).²

The negative aspects of the commercial determinants of health can, and do, affect everyone. It is not something that Cheshire East Council can tackle alone, and much is dependent on policy direction and funding from central government. However, alongside our local partners we are committed to doing everything within our powers to protect and support the residents of Cheshire East.

Local authorities and partnerships are starting to take proactive action to counteract some of the more negative public health impacts of the commercial determinants of health, including managing the influence of advertisements of unhealthy products, increasing smoke-free areas, and using planning powers to limit the numbers and density of hot-food takeaways.

There is still more to be done, however, to continue to advocate for and protect the health and wellbeing of Cheshire East residents as a priority. I hope you find this report enlightening and informative and see that Cheshire East Council is committed to improving the lives and wellbeing of the people it serves.



Dr Matt Tyrer,
Director of Public Health for Cheshire East

1 Faculty of Public Health. 2024. What Is Public Health? [Available here](#)

2 Global Burden of Disease Collaborative Network. 2019. Global burden of disease study results. [Available here](#)

What are the commercial determinants of health?

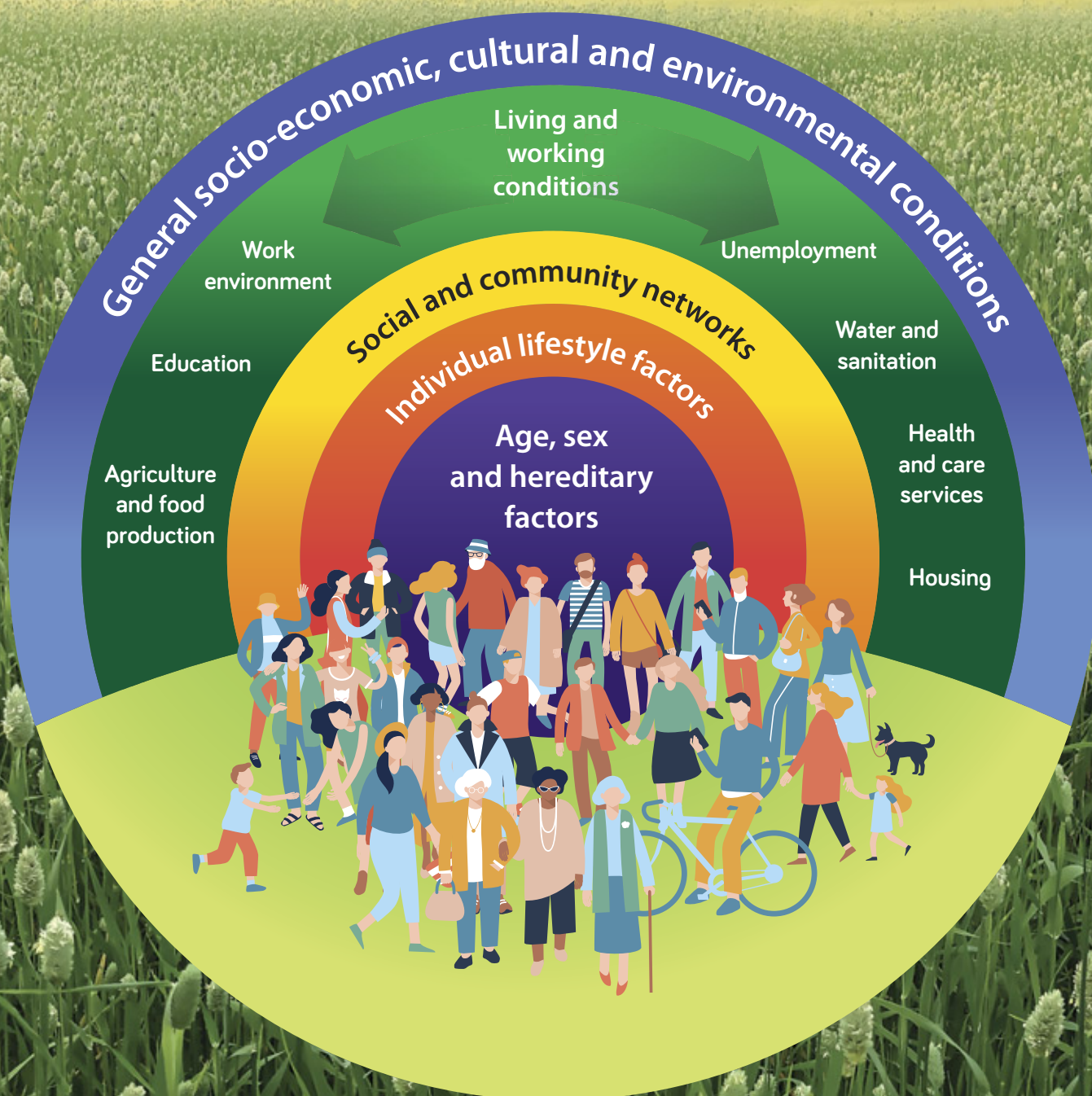


Figure 1. Dahlgren and Whitehead's model of the wider or social determinants of health.

Our health is influenced by a combination of factors relating to where we live, the environment around us, as well as our own individual characteristics and behaviours. Almost every aspect of our lives impacts our health and wellbeing. These factors, known as the wider determinants of health, provide the context for how healthy we are now, will be in the future, and how long we will ultimately live.

The wider determinants of health are shaped by a broad set of forces including global and national economies, government policies, as well as regional and local strategies, as demonstrated in Figure 1 below. It has been well documented in recent years, for example, that both the NHS and local government have been affected by reductions in national funding, or funding that is not proportionate to population growth and service demand, which has influenced the way these institutions have had to budget and plan the delivery of public services.^{3, 4, 5}

The **commercial determinants of health** are defined as the various ways by which commercial actors (ranging from global multinational industries, through to local small and medium sized businesses) can influence and impact the health and wellbeing of populations.⁶ These commercial actors, particularly the global multinational industries, have the social, economic, and political gravity to shape the world in ways that governments and health departments cannot.⁷

These commercial actors therefore are able to shape the physical and social environments in which people live, grow, learn and work. Recent research has shown that the tobacco, alcohol, gambling, unhealthy food and drink, and fossil fuel industries account for over a third of global deaths each year.⁸ This widens health inequalities, as well as negatively impacting health outcomes.^{9, 10}

Private industries and businesses can positively contribute to our health and wellbeing, when they make decisions that consider their broader public health implications and strive to uphold their corporate social responsibilities to help to improve the health and quality of the people and environments arounds them.¹¹ Examples of positive actions and decisions at a global level have included:

- ✓ Improving access to essential, high-quality, safe, effective, and affordable medicines and medical products
- ✓ Improving products and technologies to reduce the risks of harms to health (e.g., the introduction of seatbelts and continued research into vehicle passenger safety, and changing food production processes to reduce salt and/or sugar content in food products)
- ✓ Choosing not to invest financially in products and services that are harmful to health and wellbeing

At a more local level, smaller and medium sized businesses can positively contribute to the health and wellbeing of their workforces and wider population by:

- ✓ Embedding social value within decision making and workforce practices
- ✓ Ensuring fair, equitable employment conditions such as providing living wages, paid sick leave and paid parental leave to improve child health outcomes
- ✓ Providing essential services and products to local people and communities

However, the overall negative health impacts caused by commercial actors – particularly unhealthy commodity industries – have become increasingly apparent.¹² Some commercial actors and industries are known to carry out a range of activities that are harmful to the health of people and the environment,¹³ including:

- ✗ Cutting down (deforesting) large areas of trees to make room for mass farming or factories
- ✗ Paying celebrities to act as influencers for certain products, often targeting younger, more easily influenced audiences
- ✗ Lobbying policy makers to minimise regulation, as well as actions to stall and delay regulations

3 British Medical Association. 2016. Health in all policies: health, austerity and welfare reform. [Available here](#)

4 Denis Campbell (The Guardian). 2023. Austerity has led to NHS quality of care declining in key areas, study finds. [Available here](#)

5 Nuffield Trust. 2023. What was austerity's toll on the NHS before the pandemic? [Available here](#)

6 Maani, N. et al. 2023. The Commercial Determinants of Health. University Oxford Press.

7 Maani, N, Petticrew, M and Galea, S. 2023. Commercial Determinants of Health in: The Commercial Determinants of Health. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

8 Gilmore, A.B. et al. 2023. Defining and conceptualising the commercial determinants of health. The Lancet Series, 401(10383), pp. 1194-1213. [Available here](#)

9 World Health Organisation. 2023. Commercial determinants of health. [Available here](#)

10 Maani, N, Petticrew, M and Galea, S. 2023. Commercial Determinants of Health

11 World Health Organisation. 2023. Commercial determinants of health. [Available here](#)

12 Anaf, J, Baum, F and Fisher, M. 2023. Global Health and Equity Burden of Commercial Determinants of Health In: The Commercial Determinants of Health. Oxford: Oxford University Press.p24

13 World Health Organisation. 2023. Commercial determinants of health. [Available here](#)

14 Friel, S. et al. 2023. Commercial determinants of health: future directions. The Lancet Series, 401(10383), pp. 1229-1240. [Available here](#)

15 Maani, N, Petticrew, M and Galea, S. 2023. Commercial Determinants of Health

16 Lacy-Nichols, J. et al. 2022. The public health playbook: ideas for challenging the corporate playbook. The Lancet Global Health Viewpoint, 10(7), pp. 1067-1072. [Available here](#)

How unhealthy commodities profit from poor health

Figure 2 – The drivers of unhealthy commodity industries
(Joel Hammond-Gant)



Unhealthy commodities are then pushed out to the public, with companies using various 'industry tactics' to make their unhealthy products more appealing to people and to increase the numbers of people purchasing and consuming them.

More people consuming these unhealthy commodities has been directly linked to people experiencing poorer health, greater rates of non-communicable disease and an increase in health inequalities within communities.



General public

These are just some of the many ways that commercial actors impact our health and wellbeing and widen health inequalities. The actions and decisions taken by Unhealthy commodity industries are ultimately driven by an overarching aim of maximising profits,¹⁷ meaning that they cannot be relied on, or expected to, proactively make more ethical, moral choices to reduce their harmful impacts. Figure 2 above visualises how connected the drivers for growth are with the products put out to the public and the industry tactics they employ.

There is a growing movement within public health, as well as in the wider public sector, research, and voluntary sectors to better communicate the negative impacts of the commercial determinants on society's health, and what businesses, local authorities and broader anchor institutions can do to reduce these harmful impacts.

"Business can and should be a partner for good in creating healthier societies" – Sir Michael Marmot¹⁸

¹⁷ Marmot, M. et al. 2022. The Business of Health Equity: The Marmot Review for Industry. [Available here](#)

¹⁸ Marmot, M. et al. 2022.

How unhealthy commodity industries profit from poor health

Industry tactics, referred to by some as the “Industry Playbook”,¹⁹ are the tactics used by unhealthy commodity industries to distort evidence, lobby regulators and politicians, and advertise products to influence people and markets to buy and use more of their unhealthy products.

These tactics have been well documented since the rise of the tobacco industry in the early 1900s, when doctors and other health professionals were paid to advertise and promote cigarettes, as shown in Figure 3 below.²⁰

Figure 3 – Cigarette advertisements published by the tobacco industry in 1931 (top image/source: Stanford School of Medicine) and 1933 (bottom image/source: Stanford School of Medicine).



19 Lacy-Nichols, J. et al. 2022. 'The public health playbook: ideas for challenging the corporate playbook'. The Lancet Global Health 10,7 pp1067-1072. [Available here](#)

20 Little, B. When Cigarette Companies Used Doctors to Push Smoking. [Available here](#)

How unhealthy commodity industries profit from poor health

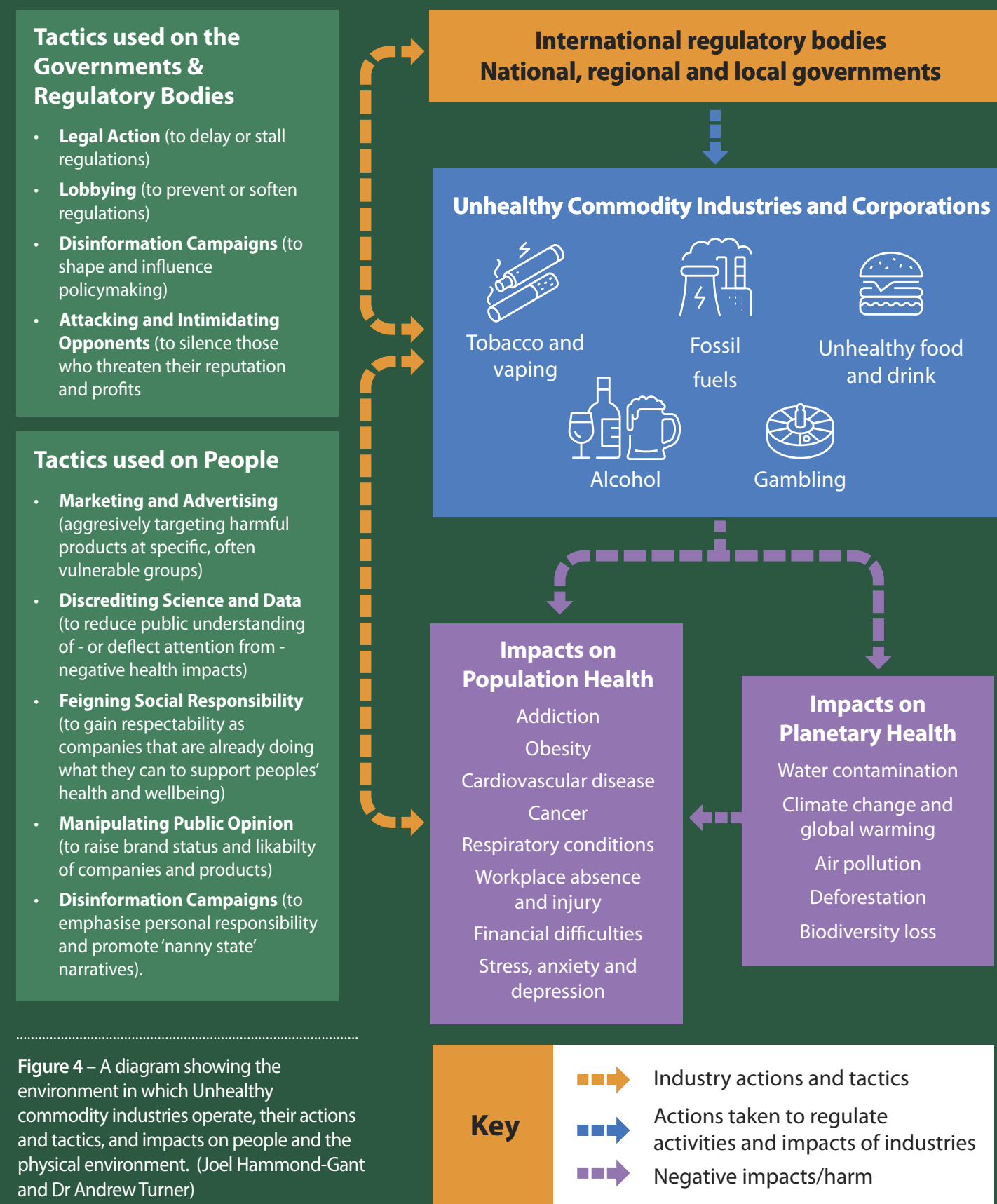


Figure 4 – A diagram showing the environment in which Unhealthy commodity industries operate, their actions and tactics, and impacts on people and the physical environment. (Joel Hammond-Gant and Dr Andrew Turner)

How unhealthy commodity industries profit from poor health

Unhealthy commodity industries have continued to develop these tactics alongside technological advancements, using the availability and accessibility of social media and internet and television advertisements to reach broader audiences, and specifically focus on certain groups and audiences.

The vaping industry, for example, have notably targeted younger generations through use of bright, colourful advertisements and flavours, as well as using paid endorsements and promotions online and on social media platforms. As recently as June 2023, a complete ban on e-cigarette advertising in the UK was recommended following a study completed by The George Institute of over 4,000 people aged 15-30 across the UK, India, China and Australia.²¹

In the biggest legislative step since indoor smoking was legally banned in 2007 (which brought about significant reductions in health problems and hospital admissions caused by tobacco),²² the government announced in November 2023 that the Tobacco and Vapes Bill will see all disposable vapes banned in the UK, and ultimately a total ban on tobacco sales by increasing the legal age of buying tobacco each year and creating a 'a smoke-free generation'.²³



The gambling industry is recognised for its widespread use of marketing and advertisement across many media platforms, but specifically its use of paid celebrity endorsement advertisements. A study carried out by the Gambling Commission found that 60% of people saw gambling adverts or sponsorships at least once a week, with over a third of people claiming to have been specifically influenced by the adverts or sponsorships to spend money on gambling activities.²⁴

The football industry in the UK continues to be closely affiliated with the national and international gambling industries, with 8 of the 20 Premier League clubs sponsored by gambling companies and presenting these companies on the front of their shirts,²⁵ and the English Football League sponsored by Sky Bet.²⁶ The saturation of gambling within UK football is epitomised by Ivan Toney; diagnosed with gambling addiction after being banned from the sport for breaching betting rules²⁷ and returning to play 8 months' later wearing Brentford Football Club's gambling-sponsored shirt.



21 Sky News. 2023. 'Complete ban' on UK vaping adverts needed, says medical research group after study on young people. Published 14 June 2023. [Available here](#)

22 British Heart Foundation. 2017. How has the smoking ban changed our health? [Available here](#)

23 UK Government Department of Health and social care. 2024. Disposable vapes banned to protect children's health. [Available here](#)

24 The Gambling Commission. 2023. Understanding how consumers engaged with gambling advertising in 2020. [Available here](#)

25 BBC News. 2023. Premier League clubs to ban gambling sponsorship on front of matchday shirts. [Available here](#)

26 BBC News. 2021. Betting in football: Could a gambling sponsorship ban ruin clubs? [Available here](#)

27 Sky Sports. 2023. Ivan Toney: Brentford striker diagnosed with gambling addiction as FA releases written reasons into eight-month ban. [Available here](#)

How unhealthy commodity industries profit from poor health



The tobacco industry has historically been a widespread sponsor and affiliate of teams and franchises across multiple sports, dating back to the inception of Major League Baseball in the late 1800s. By the end of the 20th century, the juxtaposition of having elite athletes and sporting events being associated with the leading cause of preventable deaths became more and more illogical and tobacco sponsorships were gradually banned across most of the world.²⁸

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the alcohol industry heavily marketed its products as coping mechanisms, encouraging people to drink alcohol to alleviate stress and anxiety caused by the pandemic.^{29, 30} Food and drink industries continue to spend significantly more money promoting products high in fat, sugar, and salt – up to 30 times more – than promoting fruits and vegetables,³¹ which is known to contribute to people's nutrition choices and the worsening trends in overweight and obese people in the UK.³²

One key tactic employed by unhealthy commodity industries is to frame the narrative around the use (and in many cases overuse) of their unhealthy products as personal choice, without assuming any responsibility for the growing negative impact that unhealthy products have on our physical and mental health, or the health inequalities amongst communities.

The World Health Organisation in 2021 acknowledged that our choices are individual, but can be easily influenced by the advertisement, digital marketing, and celebrity endorsements paid for by unhealthy commodity industries, which make it harder for people to make the healthy choice.³³

In 2023, the Chief Medical Officer was clear in stating that the tobacco industry's model has always been to get people addicted to nicotine as early as legally possible, to deliberately keep them hooked on their tobacco products and effectively take their personal choice of wanting or not wanting to use tobacco products away.³⁴ Gambling and alcohol are known to lead people to addiction, as they both stimulate the brain in similar ways to addictive drugs.³⁵

This evidence indicates that, while education and awareness can help people to make more informed and healthier individual choices, health outcomes can be improved by making changes to the environments we live, work, and go to school in each day. An analysis of 14 government strategies and 689 policies on obesity in England found that the policies did not have the intended effect or impact in large part because they relied too heavily on individual behaviour change, rather than focusing on shaping the external influences that drive people's behaviours and choices.³⁶



28 CNN Sports. 2020. Some motorsport teams remain addicted to tobacco company sponsorship deals, despite tobacco causing 8 million deaths each year. [Available here](#)

29 Atkinson, A.M., Sumnall, H. and Meadows, B. 2021. "We're in this together": A content analysis of marketing by alcohol brands on Facebook and Instagram during the first UK Lockdown, 2020. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 98(103376). [Available here](#)

30 Barbosa, C., Cowell, A.J. and Dowd, W.N. 2021. Alcohol Consumption in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in the United States. *Journal of Addiction Medicine*, 15(4), pp. 341-344. [Available here](#)

31 O'Dowd, A. 2017. Spending on junk food advertising is nearly 30 times what government spends on promoting healthy eating. *The British Medical Journal*, 369. [Available here](#)

32 The Food Foundation. 2022. Major report highlights impact of Britain's disastrous food policy. [Available here](#)

33 World Health Organisation. 2021. Our choices are individual but can be influenced. [Available here](#)

34 Professor Sir Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer for England on vaping. [Available here](#)

35 Mayo Clinic. 2022. Compulsive gambling. [Available here](#)

36 Dolly, R.Z. and White, M. 2021. Is Obesity Policy in England Fit for Purpose? Analysis of Government Strategies and Policies, 1992-2020. *The Milbank Quarterly*, 99(1), pp. 126-170. [Available here](#)

The impacts of unhealthy commodity industries

There is now overwhelming evidence that unhealthy commodity industries, particularly the largest, multinational corporations, are having increasingly negative effects on human health, social and health inequalities, and the environment. These corporations and industries are responsible for driving many of the world's greatest health problems including a significant rise in non-communicable diseases and the climate emergency.^{37, 38, 39}

The activities and products of four unhealthy commodity industries – tobacco, alcohol, foods high in fat, sugar and salt, and fossil fuels – are responsible for over half of all annual deaths across the world (33 million in total per year, accounting for 58% of all deaths).⁴⁰ On top of having a significant impact on peoples' health and wellbeing, these unhealthy commodity industries also have substantial negative financial implications to our health and social care systems.

Tobacco

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and cancer worldwide, as well as the largest cause of health inequality in the UK. Around 78,000 people in the UK die from smoking each year, with many more living with debilitating smoking-related illnesses. In most cases these deaths occur after long periods of pain and suffering from conditions including lung cancer, strokes, and heart attacks.⁴¹ The cost of smoking in England in 2022 was estimated at £17 billion, which included a £2.4bn cost to the NHS and a £1.2bn cost to social care systems.⁴²

Smoking, including second-hand smoking, increases the risk of developing more than 50 serious health conditions, including multiple types of cancer, heart disease, stroke, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Second-hand smoking increases a person's risk of developing lung cancer by around 25% and is particularly damaging to babies and children, who are more likely to develop severe asthma, respiratory infections and be at risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) than children who are not exposed to second-hand smoke.

Approximately 9.4% of adults in Cheshire East smoke, which is lower than the England average of 12.7%.⁴³ Local rates of smoking are highest in Crewe and Macclesfield,⁴⁴ the two areas of Cheshire East that experience the greatest levels of



deprivation and health inequalities. The most recently available data – from 2017 to 2019 – shows that 1,315 deaths in Cheshire East were caused by smoking,⁴⁵ equating to 11% of the total deaths during that period.

37 Millar, J.S. 2013. The corporate determinants of health: how big business affects our health, and the need for government action! Canadian Journal of Public Health, 104(4), pp. 327-329. [Available here](#)

38 Moodie, R., et al. 2013. Profits and pandemics: prevention of harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol, and ultra-processed food and drink industries. The Lancet, 381(9867), pp. 670-679. [Available here](#)

39 Kickbusch, I., Allen, L., and Franz, C. 2016. The commercial determinants of health. The Lancet Global Health, 4(12), pp. 895-896. [Available here](#)

40 Global Burden of Disease Collaborative Network. 2019. Global burden of disease study results. [Available here](#)

41 Public Health England. 2019. Health matters: stopping smoking – what works? [Available here](#)

42 Action on Smoking and Health (ASH). 2023. Economics of tobacco. [Available here](#)

43 Public Health Outcomes Framework. 2022. Smoking prevalence in adults (18+) - current smokers (APS). [Available here](#)

44 Cheshire East Council. 2023. Health Profiles for Electoral Wards plus Primary Health and Social Care Areas June 2022. [Available here](#)

45 Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. 2023. Public health profiles. [Available here](#)

The impacts of unhealthy commodity industries

This is despite all the work that has been done to reduce smoking through face-to-face stop smoking support, in-hospital support, and support through community pharmacies. It is also despite national bans of tobacco product advertisement, legislation around packaging, and increased taxes on smoking products.

The tobacco industry knows that more deprived groups are more likely to smoke and become addicted to smoking⁴⁶ and markets its products accordingly. Although national taxation of tobacco products has increased prices of packs of cigarettes and tobacco, the industry still ensures that it has a selection of 'budget' tobacco products (e.g., £10 for a pack of 20 cigarettes)⁴⁷ to guarantee its products remain as accessible as possible to people in more deprived groups, known to be most vulnerable to the impacts of smoking. Prices on 'premium' products have increased to make up for any profit lost to providing the lower priced, budget range.⁴⁸

This epitomises the attitude of the tobacco industry, and unhealthy commodity industries in general, making decisions to drive profits, with minimal consideration of the impacts to public health and wellbeing.

Vaping

Vaping was first introduced as an alternative to cigarette smoking in 2006 and has since been recommended to smokers by professionals as a way of quitting tobacco products. Today, vaping is recommended by the NHS and supported by the Chief Medical Officer as a safe and effective way of helping people quit smoking and other tobacco products.

However, since the introduction of vapes, the vaping industry has grown exponentially and has become far more than a tool to help people to stop smoking. As the tobacco industry has realised that younger generations are less likely to pick up smoking, it has shifted its focus to influencing more non-smokers to take up vaping⁴⁹ by

advertising and presenting single use vapes in similar ways to chocolate, sweets, and fizzy drinks; packaged in bright colours with a range of exciting flavours to try.⁵⁰

It has become increasingly clear that vaping products are being marketed to encourage all people, even those that have never smoked before, to take up vaping.⁵¹ It is therefore not surprising to see that the impacts of the marketing strategies and rapid rise in availability and promotion of single-use vapes has led to large numbers of children and young people to take up vaping.⁵²



46 Action for Smoking and Health. 2019. Health Inequalities and Smoking. [Available here](#)

47 Apollonio, D.E. and Glantz, S. 2020. 'Tobacco manufacturer lobbying to undercut minimum price laws: an analysis of internal industry documents'. Tobacco Control, 29, pp. 10-17. [Available here](#)

48 University of Bath. 2022. Tobacco Tactics: Tobacco Industry Pricing Strategies. [Available here](#)

49 Legg, T., Clift, B. and Gilmore, A.B. 2023. 'Document analysis of the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World's scientific outputs and activities: a case study in

contemporary tobacco industry agnogenesis'. Tobacco Control, 0, pp. 1-10. [Available here](#)

50 UK Parliament. 2024. Advertising, marketing and promotion of vaping products. [Available here](#)

51 Legg, T., Clift, B. and Gilmore, A.B. 2023.

52 Royal College of Paediatrics and Children's Health. 2023. Children's doctors call for an outright ban on disposable e-cigarettes. [Available here](#)

Case Study

Association of Directors of Public Health action against single use vapes

In June 2023, the Directors of Public Health across Cheshire and Merseyside issued a joint statement⁶⁰ expressing concern about the increase of the use of vapes in the region, particularly amongst young people, and condemned the “aggressive marketing and advertising strategies from tobacco companies” to target children and young people.

The Directors of Public Health endorsed the advice of England’s Chief Medical Officer: *“if you smoke, vaping is much safer. If you don’t smoke, don’t vape.”*

The joint statement strongly called for a nationwide ban on the sale of disposable vapes, as well as heavier fines for retailers selling vapes to under-18s, increased enforcement powers for local Trading Standards teams, and a consultation around the licensing and regulation of vapes.



NEWS

Directors of Public Health in Cheshire and Merseyside condemn harmful disposable vapes and ‘disgraceful’ targeting of children by tobacco companies.

20th June 2023

In Britain over 11% of 11–17-year-olds have tried vaping, and the number of children who have had to attend hospital due to vaping is four times greater than two years ago.⁵³ The rise in single-use vaping products, particularly amongst young people, has become a national concern, with Trading Standards officials calling it “the biggest threat on our high streets,”⁵⁴ and medical research groups urging stricter regulations to ban vaping adverts in the UK.⁵⁵ These trends are particularly concerning when we consider that we do not yet fully understand the long-term health impacts of vapes, and that the industry itself is not explicit about the lung scarring, asthma and addiction problems that can come from vaping.⁵⁶

In June 2023, the Directors of Public Health in Cheshire and Merseyside expressed collective concern about the rising numbers of young vape users and emphasised the Chief Medical Officer’s advice that vaping is not just some healthy

habit to take up, and that vaping products should only be used if advised by a professional to help achieve smoking quits.⁵⁷

The rapid rise in production of single use vape products is also having a significant environmental impact, due to the mass plastic production and mining for lithium battery materials causing harmful emissions and increasing carbon footprints. Concerns are also growing around the improper disposal of vape products, particularly single use vapes, which has a significant negative impact on our environment. It was reported in September 2023 that an average of 5 million disposable vapes are thrown away each week in the UK (equating to 260 million over the course of a year) with only 17% being correctly recycled and disposed of at local household waste and recycling centres.⁵⁸ It is a positive step therefore that the UK government has recently announced plans to ban single use vapes.⁵⁹

53 Action on Smoking and Health (ASH). 2023. Use of e-cigarettes among young people in Great Britain. [Available here](#)

54 BBC News. 2023. Illegal vapes are biggest threat on High Street, say Trading Standards. [Available here](#)

55 Sky News. 2023. ‘Complete ban’ on UK vaping adverts needed... [Available here](#)

56 Brandt, A.M. 2012. ‘Inventing Conflicts of Interest: A History of Tobacco Industry Tactics’. American Journal of Public Health, 102(1), pp. 63-71. [Available here](#)

57 NHS UK. 2024. Vaping myths and the facts. [Available here](#)

58 BBC News. 2023. Five million vapes thrown away every week – research. Published 8 September 2023. [Available here](#)

59 Department for Health and social care. 2024. Disposable vapes banned to protect children’s health. [Available here](#)

60 Champs Public Health Collaborative. 2023. Directors of Public Health in Cheshire and Merseyside condemn harmful disposable vapes and “disgraceful” targeting of children by tobacco companies. [Available here](#)

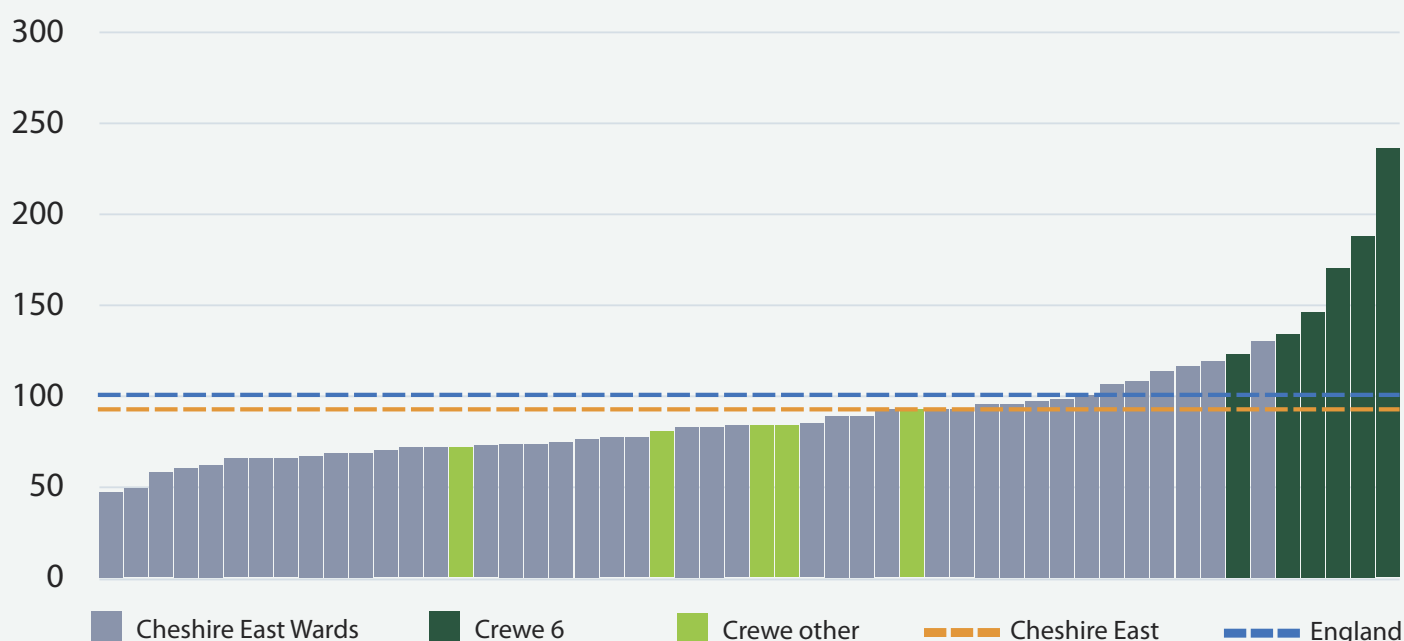
The impacts of unhealthy commodity industries

Alcohol

Alcohol is widely available in the UK, as it is in many countries of the world, with the most recent lifestyle survey data showing that only 20% of respondents aged 16 and over stated they did not drink alcohol,⁶¹ whilst data shows that approximately 1 in every 100 residents in Cheshire East are dependent alcohol drinkers.⁶² Excess

alcohol consumption can lead to any of over 200 illnesses including cancer, liver disease, and depression. Alcohol-related harms are known to create additional financial burden on individuals, families, and society, costing approximately £21 billion per year and adding a £3.5bn burden to the healthcare system in England.⁶³ Alcohol use and alcohol-related incidents also result in significant costs to police and fire services.⁶⁴

Figure 6 **Alcohol-attributed hospital admissions (broad definition), 2016/17 - 2020/21**



Further to this, drinking levels at age 15 are higher in Cheshire East than for England general⁶⁸, showing that such perceptions are associated with drinking behaviour.

For years the alcohol industry has marketed certain drinks towards younger customers through creating sweet and colourful options. Unlike the tobacco industry, the alcohol industry is still permitted to advertise their products in England.⁶⁹ Through their advertising the alcohol industry lures new customers by giving the impression that drinking is attractive, fun, and normal, through sponsorships. It could be argued that advertising alcohol products just makes people aware of what is on offer, but the industry wouldn't pour millions into advertising if it wasn't effective.

Quite the opposite, it has been shown that advertising increases both how often young people drink and how much.^{70,71}

The alcohol industry is also targeting women as a potential growth area, as women historically drink less than men⁷². They have been working hard to normalise drinking as a way to unwind at the end of a day, through 'girls' nights', or by pushing supposedly healthier options.⁷³ The alcohol industry publicly advocates for personal choice and personal responsibility when drinking, with phrases such as 'drink responsibly' to deflect from their own role in driving alcohol harm and to avoid increased regulation.⁷⁴

Case Study

Lower My Drinking

NHS Cheshire and Merseyside, in collaboration with Champs (Cheshire and Merseyside Public Health Collaborative) developed the free Lower My Drinking app, available from any smart phone or smart device.

The Lower My Drinking app empowers people to understand why they drink, and gives expert advice and tools to help them to reduce drinking to within the recommended guidelines of 14 units a week or less. The app allows users to set realistic drinking goals, track progress, review drinking habits, compare weekly drinking levels and uses notification alerts to help to keep users to stay on top of managing their drinking levels.

Since its release, the app has been downloaded over 2,400 times and continues to help people in Cheshire East and the rest of Cheshire and Merseyside.



68 Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. 2023. Public health profiles 'Child and Maternal Health'. [Available here](#)

69 Brotzman, P. 2018. Trouble Brewing: Making the Case for Alcohol Policy. New York. [Available here](#)

70 World Health Organisation. 2018. Global status report on alcohol and health. [Available here](#)

71 European Alcohol Policy Alliance. 2017. European report on alcohol policy. [Available here](#)

72 World Health Organisation. 2018. Global status report on alcohol and health 2018. [Available here](#)

73 Brotzman, P. 2018.

74 Brotzman, P. 2018.

The impacts of unhealthy commodity industries

Food and drink high in fat, sugar, and salt

We live in a world where it is a constant battle to eat healthily, and this is no accident. Heavily processed food and foods high in salt, sugar, fat, and refined carbohydrates are addictive, and are aggressively marketed to the public.⁷⁵ It is generally cheaper to purchase an unhealthier option in supermarkets, and they are also quicker and easier to prepare and cook, compared to cooking with fresh ingredients.

Food and drinks that are high in fat, sugar and salt now make up around half of all foods eaten in Western countries like the UK.⁷⁶ These foods are high in calories but low in the vitamins and nutrients our bodies need to stay healthy;⁷⁷ contributing to the average adult eating 300 more calories than they need each day.⁷⁸ Poor diets and excess calorie intake lead to significant levels of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancers, and muscular conditions and cost the NHS £6.1 billion every year.⁷⁹

A diet containing lots of processed, salty, fatty, and sugary food and drinks commonly causes people to become overweight or obese and contributes to malnourishment, diabetes and other non-communicable diseases.⁸⁰ Just over 1 in 3 adults manage to eat 5 daily portions of fruit and vegetables in Cheshire East.⁸¹ Around 41.4% of adults are overweight in Cheshire East, and 21.1% are classified as obese.⁸² The picture for children is similarly worrying, with more than 2 in 10 children aged 4-5 being overweight or obese in Cheshire East, with this figure rising to over 3 in 10 by the age of 11.⁸³

Changing working patterns and financial constraints such as the recent cost of living crisis have made it more difficult for people and households to stick to a diet consisting of a variety of fresh and healthy foods. It is widely agreed that the most effective way to improve diet would be to change national and international policy to acknowledge that the issue is not just down to individual choice.⁸⁴

The UK Health Security Agency⁸⁵ noted the critical role that businesses can have in helping people to adopt and maintain healthier eating and exercise habits, by:

- promoting general physical activity amongst employees and encouraging them to take regular breaks to reduce inactivity and sedentary days
- offering healthier choices in workplace canteens and/or ensuring sufficient fridge space to enable employees to bring fresh food and packed lunches with them to work
- maintaining the conversation with staff about healthy nutrition and exercise habits, and using the promotion of national campaigns to encourage employees to take part in fun and motivational challenges (e.g. Couch to 5K and Healthy Eating Week)
- engaging the whole workforce and ensuring that different employees' and teams' working patterns are taken into account with any work to promote and improve nutrition and exercise choices amongst employees

75 Gearhardt, A.N. et al. 2023. 'Social, clinical and policy implications of ultra-processed food addiction'. British Medical Journal, 383. [Available here](#)

76 Wood, B. et al. 2021. 'Market strategies used by processed food manufacturers to increase and consolidate their power: a systematic review and document analysis'. Globalisation and Health, 17. [Available here](#)

77 Wood, B. et al. 2021

78 Gearhardt, A.N. et al. 2023

79 Gearhardt, A.N. et al. 2023

80 World Health Organisation. 2023. Noncommunicable diseases. [Available here](#)

81 Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. 2024. 'Percentage of adults aged 16 and over meeting the '5-a-day' fruit and vegetable consumption 2021/22'. Fingertips Public health data. [Available here](#)

82 Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. 2024. 'Cheshire East Obesity Profile 2021/22'. Fingertips Public health data. [Available here](#)

83 Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. 2024. 'Prevalence of overweight (including obesity) (4-5 yrs and 10-11 yrs) 2022/23'. Fingertips Public health data. [Available here](#)

84 Government Office for Science. 2007. Foresight: Tackling Obesity. Future Choices Project Report. 2nd Edn.

85 UK Health Security Agency. 2018. 5 ways businesses can help employees eat well and move more. [Available here](#)

The food and drink industry is dominated by a small number of major corporations; making it very difficult for new companies to successfully break into the food and drink market.⁸⁶ The lack of competition within the market means that this relatively small number of major corporations have considerable influence over the setting of food and drink prices, and can exploit this to maximise profits, even if this means marketing and promoting unhealthy food and drink products to people.⁸⁷

In the less affluent and more deprived areas of Cheshire East, there are more hot food takeaways and fewer healthy food establishments per square mile, compared to the more affluent, less deprived areas.^{88,89} This pattern is not a coincidence and mirrors what is happening across the country.⁹⁰ The local food landscape has a major influence on our behaviours and the more fast-food and takeaway outlets there are around us is likely to influence us to opt for these healthier food choices more often. Children and young people can also be influenced by the number and availability of unhealthy food outlets in their local environments. Public Health England emphasised the need for local authorities and national governments to create healthier environments to help to tackle obesity and health inequalities.⁹¹

The licensing powers granted to local authorities provides the responsibility and authority to review personal and premise licensing applications for the sale and supply of alcohol, provision of entertainment, and/or late night refreshments. The 2003 Licensing Act requires local authorities to consider **Crime and Disorder, Public Safety, Preventing Public Nuisance, and Protecting Children from Harm** to determine whether a licensing application should be granted. The Local Government Association stated that, whilst public health factors into all four of these statutory objectives, it can be difficult for public health to be an effective, responsible partner within the licensing process.⁹²

In 2023, the government launched a Food Data Transparency partnership, which provides people with the facts and information they need to make more ethical, sustainable, and healthy dietary choices.⁹³ It is clear, however, that focusing solely on improving individual choice will not solve this issue. These health problems can only be solved by holistically addressing the causes and factors that lead people to unhealthy diets, being overweight, and obesity, including tackling the commercial determinants of health and the availability of healthy and unhealthy food choices provided within everyone's individual environment.

Case Study

Healthier Food and Drink Advertising Policies

In January 2024, Knowsley Council became the first local authority in the North West to introduce a policy aimed at reducing the advertisement of unhealthy food and drink products. Its Healthier Food and Drink Advertising Policy prioritises the health and wellbeing of residents, tackles climate concerns and reduces health inequalities by limiting the promotion of unhealthy foods and drinks on council-owned advertising spaces.

The policy uses the well-established Nutrient Profiling Model to classify foods and identify which advertisements are promoting products high in fat, salt and sugar that need to be restricted and/or replaced by healthier promotions.

Cheshire East Council is also preparing a similar approach to encouraging the promotion and advertisement of healthier food and drink across the borough, which is hoped to be finalised by the end of 2024.



86 Wood, B. et al. 2021

87 Wood, B. et al. 2021

88 Cheshire East Council. 2019. Excess Weight Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. [Available here](#)

89 Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. 2022. Government food strategy. [Available here](#)

90 Public Health England. 2018. England's poorest areas are fast food hotspots. [Available here](#)

91 Public Health England. 2018.

92 Local Government Association. 2020. Public health and the Licensing Act 2003: Guidance on effective participation by public health teams. [Available here](#)

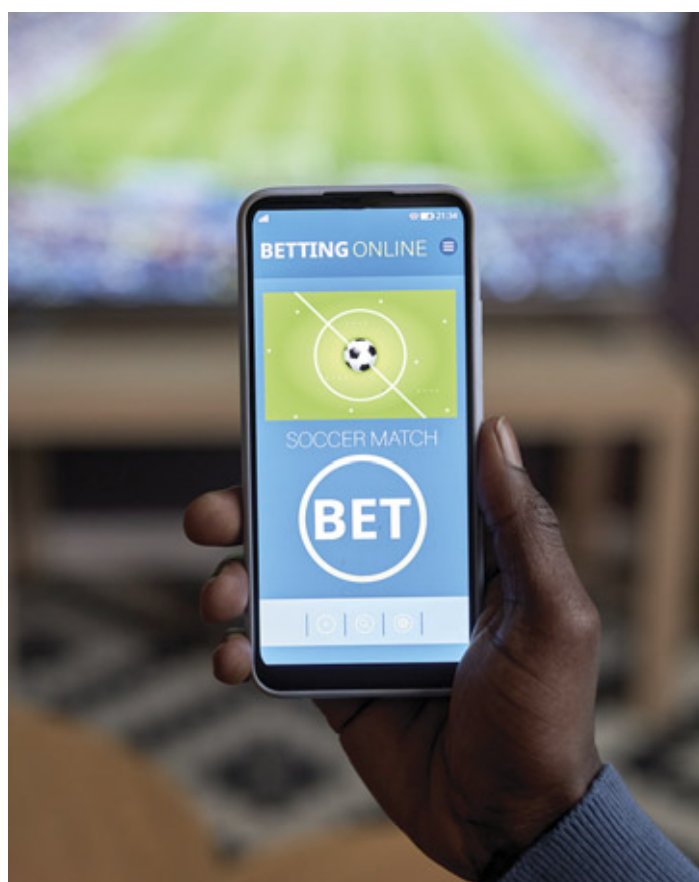
93 Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. 2022.

The impacts of unhealthy commodity industries

Gambling

The gambling industry uses the same Industry Playbook methods to influence people and drive profits by marketing through a variety of media – television adverts, social media, and celebrity endorsements to name a few – to target certain products or messages at specific groups. It has arguably become one of the most innovative health-harming industries of recent times in its mission to maximise profits.

Alongside the continuous improvement of mobile technology and internet accessibility, the industry has rapidly transformed and developed its offering of products to offer people 24-hour-a-day access to gambling games and services, as well as the ability to reach audiences and users across high, middle, and low-income countries. The UK's online gambling market has grown rapidly in recent years, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is reflected by its dominance in the European market (over 30% of the total online gaming and gambling revenue) during this period.⁹⁴



A large study completed by the Gambling Commission found that 60% of respondents saw gambling adverts or sponsorships at least once a week, with over a third of people claiming to have been prompted or influenced to spend money on a gambling activity by advertising they had seen in the previous 12 months.⁹⁵

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities recently reviewed evidence on the financial impacts of the gambling industry in England, estimating that harmful gambling costs the government over £400 million each year. It also reports that the health impacts caused by harmful gambling costs an additional £1.35 billion per year.⁹⁶

The negative health impacts caused by gambling, just like other unhealthy commodities explored in this report, disproportionately affect those living in the most deprived areas. It is estimated that betting shops are 10 times more likely to be found in poorer and more deprived areas than more affluent and less deprived areas.⁹⁷ This is evident in Cheshire East, where 13 (43%) of the 30 licensed gambling premises in the borough, are in the town with the highest levels of deprivation, Crewe.⁹⁸

Gambling harms can destroy lives and have significant negative health, economic, and social consequences on individuals, families, and households. Gambling is associated with increased financial difficulties and debt, increased rates of family violence, homelessness, substance misuse and suicide. Based on the government's estimates of the proportion of the population who have a problem with gambling, are at-risk, or are impacted by another's gambling, there are approximately 2,000 residents in Cheshire East are currently dealing with a gambling problem, 15,000 are gambling at at-risk levels, and over 28,000 are negatively affected by another person's gambling.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ IDnow. 2023. Online gambling regulations in the UK – an overview. [Available here](#)

⁹⁵ Gambling Commission. 2020 Gambling behaviour in 2020: Findings from the quarterly telephone survey. [Available here](#)

⁹⁶ Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. 2023. The economic and social cost of harms associated with gambling in England. [Available here](#)

⁹⁷ Sky News. 2023. Betting shops 10 times more likely to be found in UK's poorest areas. [Available here](#)

⁹⁸ Cheshire East Council. 2023. Statement of Gambling Principles 2023-26. [Available here](#)

Steps have been taken by the government to refresh gambling laws to better protect people from the increased risks of gambling harms brought about by smartphone and online gambling accessibility.¹⁰⁰

However, the new rules and regulations will not entirely prevent people from experiencing gambling harms and does not address the issue of the prevalence of gambling in people's environments.

In June 2022, the Association of Directors of Public Health issued a clear statement that all members of society have the right to live without unnecessary and preventable risk to health and safety from gambling products and the gambling industry. People who do choose to gamble should be safe from preventable harm, regardless of their ability to protect themselves.¹⁰¹



Case Study

Sefton and Halton Councils – Tackling Gambling Related Harms

Sefton Council worked in collaboration with the charity, Beacon Counselling Trust, to deliver training to front-line, public-facing staff to help these staff to feel more confident and enabled to have conversations with members of the public around harmful gambling and helping people impacted by gambling to access appropriate help and support.

Beacon Counselling Trust carried out workshops in primary and secondary schools in Halton Borough, which aimed to educate pupils, parents/carers and teachers on the harms of gambling, with online resources available for staff, teachers and the public to continue to access.



As the Licensing Authority for Cheshire East, Cheshire East Council continues to follow its Statement of Gambling Principles and Licensing Objectives to protect children and vulnerable people from gambling harms and exploitation, ensuring gambling is conducted in a fair and open way, and preventing gambling links to crime and disorder.

99 Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. 2023. Gambling-related harms evidence review: summary. [Available here](#)

100 Department for Culture, Media and Sport. 2023. Major reform of gambling laws to protect vulnerable users in smartphone era. [Available here](#)

101 Association of Directors of Public Health. 2022. Protecting the public from being harmed or exploited by gambling and the gambling industry. [Available here](#)

102 Friel, S. 2023. 'Climate change mitigation: tackling the commercial determinants of planetary health inequity'. The Lancet, 402(10419), pp. 2269-2271. [Available here](#)

The impacts of unhealthy commodity industries

Fossil fuels

Climate change is arguably the greatest global health issue of our time. Without effective climate mitigation, the world we know will be unrecognisable by the time a child today reaches old age. Unhealthy commodity industries, whose main driver is to increase profits, have been known to maximise production, distribution, and purchase of fossil-fuel reliant products and services. These practices include political and financial lobbying, influencing scientific research to try to discredit other scientific research and data, and encourage climate change denial.

Through lobbying of politicians and governments, industries and corporations can influence the creation and approval of policies that are favourable to their business interests and reduce any regulations that could enforce greater use of renewable energy sources, reduce fossil fuel dependency, and reduce harmful environmental practices.

The fossil fuel industry has spent millions on disinformation campaigns that seek to promote (highly polluting) gas and propane appliances, whilst also criticising and disinforming about electric alternatives, to help them to make record-setting profits.¹⁰³ These negative tactics date back to the 1960s when oil companies actively sought to slow down and hide research into electric vehicle technologies – which ultimately stalled the development of the electric car – to maintain continued reliance on petrol and diesel for vehicle fuels.¹⁰⁴

Many companies have accepted they cannot deny climate change outright and must show public support for the wider green energy agenda, so have shifted their strategy from denying to delaying. These companies and industries are using greenwashing – disinformation published or promoted by industries and companies to present themselves as environmentally responsible in the public eye – to obscure their continuing extraction of fossil fuels.¹⁰⁵

Despite the growing understanding of the harmful impacts of fossil fuels, and the UK's commitment to international climate agreements and carbon neutral targets, its energy consumption is still heavily reliant on fossil fuels (providing



78% of total energy), with only 16% from renewables and 6% from nuclear energy sources.¹⁰⁶

This is consistent with reporting that since 2015, fossil fuel industries received £20 billion more funding from the UK government than renewable energy industries, with around 20% of this funding intended to support new extraction and mining¹⁰⁷ – both of which are environmentally-damaging practices.

The UK government also lifted a ban on fracking – the extraction of natural gas and oil from shale rock by causing fractures in the rock formations – in September 2022.¹⁰⁸ Government climate advisers and environmental think-tank organisations are united in arguing for greater investment in renewable energy sources, and that this is the most effective way to reduce carbon emissions as well as household energy bills.¹⁰⁹

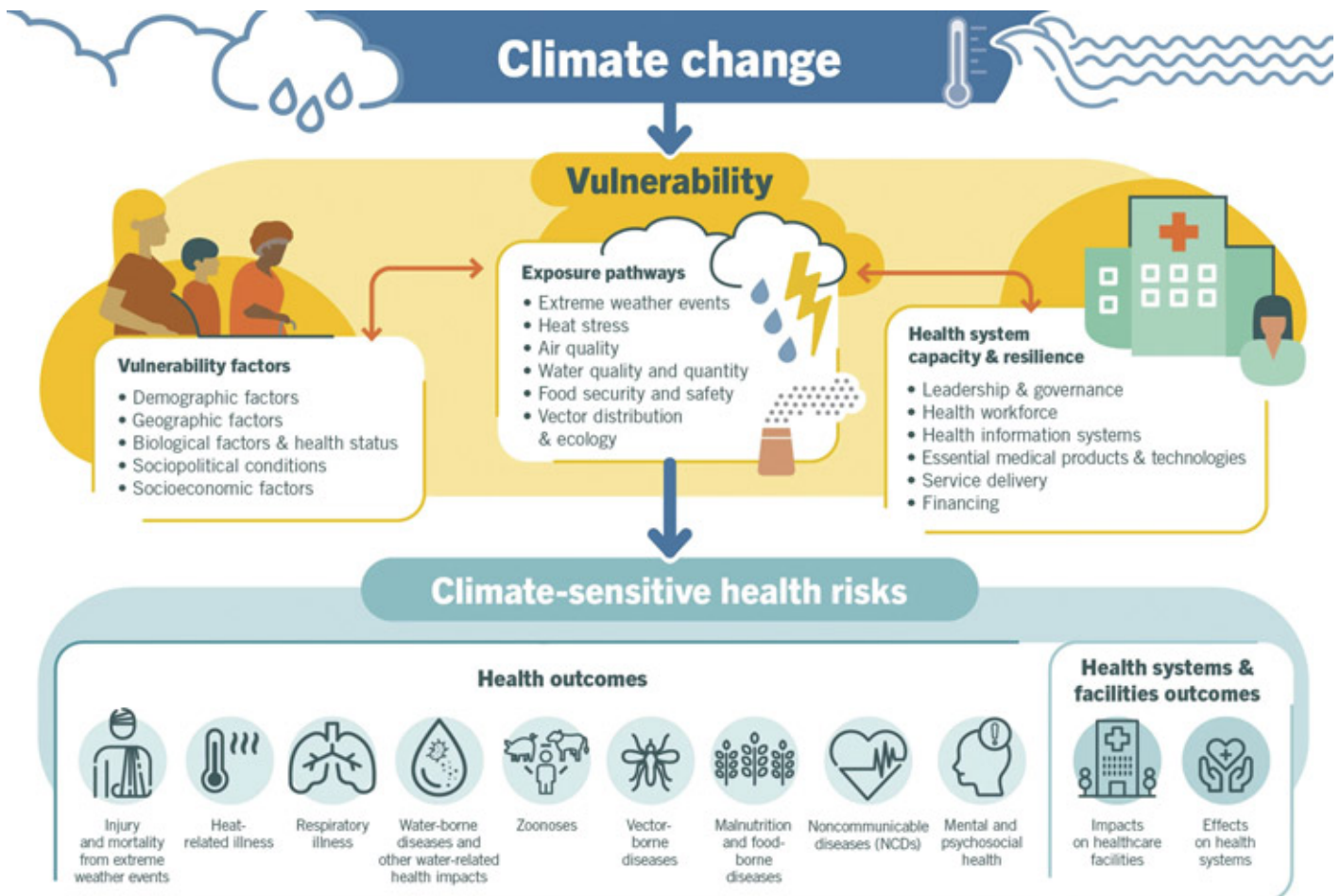
The use of fossil fuels contributes significantly to the pollution of our air. In addition to climate change and global warming, the continued use of fossil fuels around the world has led to significant levels of air pollution and poor air quality. Poor air quality is linked to numerous health issues including stroke, heart disease, lung cancer, respiratory disease, and asthma.

In April 2021, Ella Adoo-Kissi-Debrah was the first person in the UK to have air pollution listed as their cause of death, after the coroner's inquest found that air pollution had materially contributed to her death at age 9.¹¹⁰

103 Marsh, R. 2022. Big Oil has engaged in a long-running climate disinformation campaign while raking in record profits, lawmakers find. [Available here](#)
 104 Goldenberg, S. 2016. Oil company records from 1960s reveal patents to reduce CO2 emissions in cars. [Available here](#)
 105 Earth Justice. 2024. For Big Oil and Gas, Greenwashing is the New Climate Denial. [Available here](#)
 106 Poynting, M. 2023. What are fossil fuels? Where does the UK get its energy from? [Available here](#)

107 Horton, H. 2023. Fossil fuels received £20bn more UK support than renewables since 2015. [Available here](#)
 108 Stallard, E. 2022. Fracking ban lifted, government announces. [Available here](#)
 109 Harrabin, R. Government climate advisers say cut fossil fuels to lower energy bills. [Available here](#)
 110 BBC News. 2021. Air pollution: Coroner calls for law change after Ella Adoo-Kissi-Debrah's death. [Available here](#)

Figure 8: An overview of health risks associated with climate change. Source: World Health Organisation



Climate change presents a fundamental threat to human health; it can be the cause of several negative health risks and outcomes, which can also increase demand and impact on healthcare services, as shown in Figure 8. It is unequivocal that climate change affects human health and that climate risks are appearing faster and becoming more severe sooner than research had previously predicted.¹¹¹ The World Health Organisation estimates that 3.6 billion people in the world already live in areas highly susceptible to the impacts of climate change.¹¹²

As air quality, climate change, global warming and severe weather events worsen and/or become more frequent, it is inevitable that the health, wellbeing, and livelihoods of people in Cheshire East and across the UK will continue to be put at greater risk.



111 World Health Organisation. 2023. Climate change. [Available here](#)

112 World Health Organisation. 2023

The impacts of unhealthy commodity industries

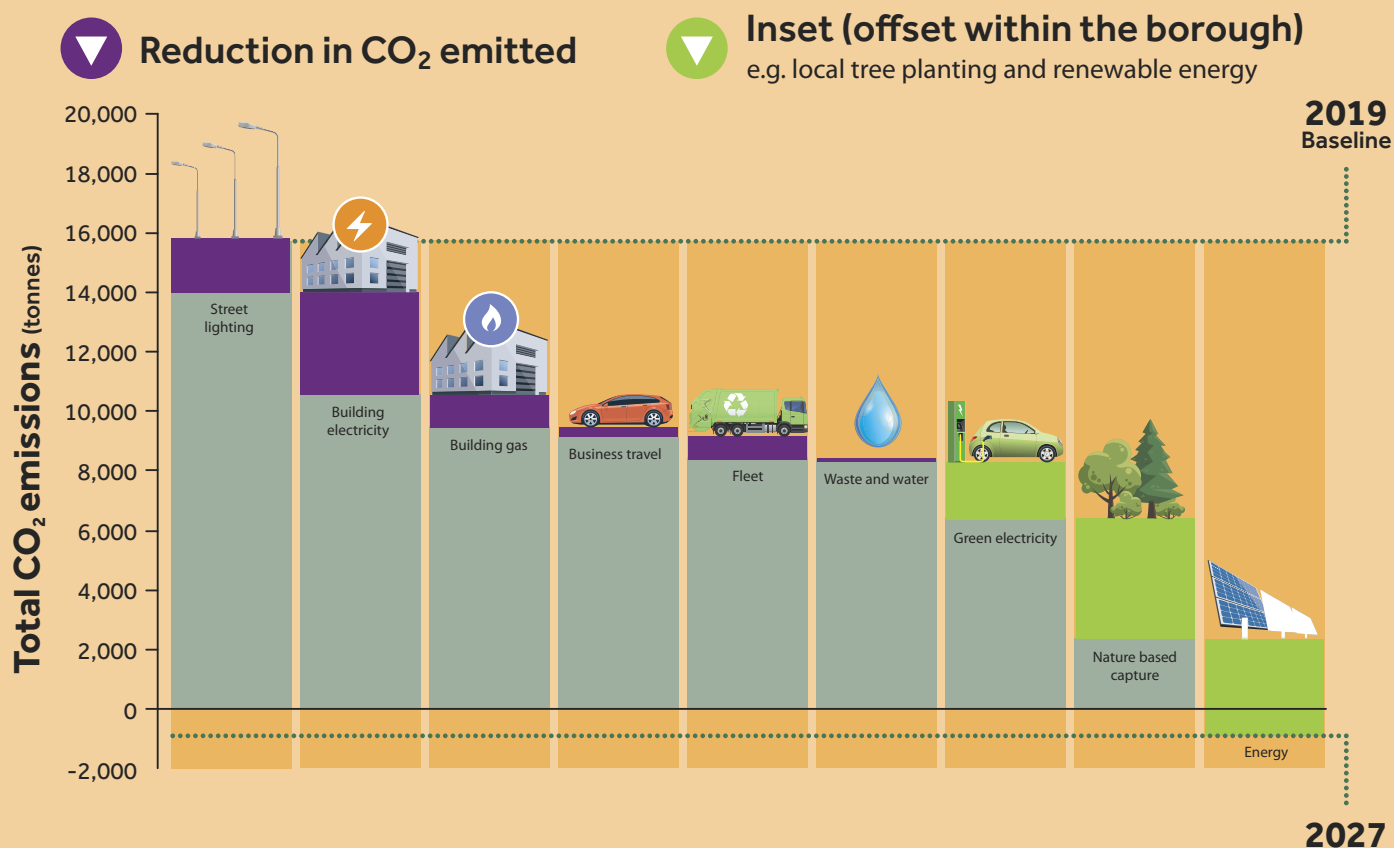
Case Study

Cheshire East Council's carbon neutral pledges

In May 2019, Cheshire East Council unanimously voted to acknowledge the government's declaration of. Councillors also asked that the council fast-track the development of a Cheshire East Environmental Strategy¹¹³ to ensure that the council and partners are working effectively to meet common climate and environment goals.

In the same month, the council also committed to becoming a carbon neutral council (by 2027). The Carbon Neutrality Action Plan¹¹⁴ set out the council's strategies and priorities to ensure it meets this important commitment. As well as undertaking specific projects to reduce or offset the council's carbon emissions, the Action Plan commits the council to continue to raise awareness of the environment and climate emergency, working with suppliers, and influencing behaviour change from individuals and households through to big businesses.

In January 2022, Cheshire East Council made a further pledge to make Cheshire East a carbon neutral borough by 2045. This is not something that the council can achieve on its own and it will take a committed, collaborative effort with Cheshire East residents and businesses alike to meet this important goal. During 2024, the council will be publishing its first 5-year action plan to set out the clear direction for achieving carbon neutrality as a borough.



113 Cheshire East Council. 2020. Environment Strategy 2020-24. [Available here](#)

114 Cheshire East Council. 2020. Carbon Neutrality Action Plan 2020-2025. [Available here](#)

Opportunities for positive action



The most effective way to reduce the influence of unhealthy commodity industries, and the harmful impacts to health they cause, would be through **national changes to legislation and regulations to more effectively govern how these industries and corporations operate**

Opportunities for positive action

Figure 9 below shows the different kinds of public health interventions and actions that Cheshire East Council, other local authorities, and the UK government can put in place to protect our most vulnerable residents, and improve the health and wellbeing and quality of life of all UK residents.



In the absence of a coordinated approach by central government, some of the opportunities for positive action available to Cheshire East Council includes:

- Producing a Cheshire East Position Statement on tackling the negative health impacts of the commercial determinants of health and influence of unhealthy commodity industries on residents.
- Encouraging the Champs Public Health Collaborative to produce a similar position statement for local authorities, partners and industries across Cheshire and Merseyside.
- Advocating for caps and limits on exposure to unhealthy commodities such as tobacco, alcohol and gambling products in certain settings and locations
- Establishing an advertising and sponsorship policy to reduce our residents' exposure to the influence of Unhealthy commodity industries
- Putting in place a cumulative impact policy for alcohol and the night time economy strategy through licensing, to reduce the overall impacts of alcohol use/abuse
- Using planning powers and the local plan to restrict density of high fat, salt, sugar foods, tobacco, alcohol and gambling
- Using regulatory powers and enforcement action to regulate and reduce avoidable exposure and harms from illegal sales of alcohol, tobacco and vapes
- Using social value and climate impact as additional key factors within procurement and commissioning processes
- Working with other local authorities and regions to continue to enhance and develop the Cheshire East approach to reducing the negative impact of commercial determinants of health
- Securing endorsement and support for creating a position statement and Cheshire East approach to CDOH with the Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board, Adults and Health Committee and Scrutiny Committee.
- Using the council's status and influence as a local Anchor Institution and lead the local business sector by example in ensuring that employee policies are conducive to good health and wellbeing, do not widen inequalities, and take meaningful action to address pay gaps.
- Continuing our planned action to become a carbon-neutral organisation by 2027 and a carbon-neutral borough by 2045, Cheshire East Council will be further helping all businesses across Cheshire East to improve their long-term environmental and sustainability impacts, and ultimately reduce the health impacts of climate change and global warming on our residents.

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OPEN

Corporate Policy Committee

06 August 2025

Knutsford Business Improvement District

Report of: Phil Cresswell, Executive Director - Place

Report Reference No: CPC/35/25-26

Ward(s) Affected: Knutsford and Mobberley

For Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 Groundwork CLM has formally notified the Council of its intention to instruct Cheshire East Council, on behalf of the Knutsford BID Steering Group, to put a proposal for a Business Improvement District (BID) in Knutsford to a ballot. The proposed BID is to focus on Knutsford town centre but is also tentatively proposed to extend into Tatton Park.
- 2 The report provides information on BIDs; the emerging draft Knutsford BID proposal; the expected implications of the notification received; and seeks decisions enabling officers to respond appropriately.

Executive Summary

- 3 The Council has received formal notification that Groundwork Cheshire Lancashire & Merseyside (Groundwork CLM), a charity focused on mobilising practical community action to tackle poverty and improve the environment across the UK, intend to submit a proposal for a Business Improvement District (BID) in Knutsford and request the Council hold a postal ballot on the BID proposal in late October/November 2025.
- 4 If successful at ballot, this will be the third BID in Cheshire East, the first being the Wilmslow Town Centre BID, the second being the Crewe BID.
- 5 The Cheshire East Plan (2025-29) sets out the Council's ambition to work with local businesses to unlock prosperity for all. Many councils view BIDs as a valuable tool to help their business communities thrive enabling collaboration between town centre businesses focused on

common ambitions. This proposal has the potential to help unlock prosperity, subject to the detail of the final BID proposal.

- 6 There is a need to comply with the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004, (BID Regulations) including providing information to the BID proposer, holding a postal ballot if formally requested to do so, and if the BID is successful at ballot, taking responsibility for collection of the BID levy on behalf of the BID. This has both staff resource and financial implications.
- 7 There are added implications for the Council as the owner of hereditaments within the draft BID area. The Council will be entitled to vote in any BID ballot, the number of votes available being linked to the number of hereditaments for which the Council would be levy payer. If the BID is successful at ballot, the Council would then be liable to pay the BID levy for its hereditaments falling within the scope of the BID proposal.
- 8 This report to Corporate Policy Committee is intended to ensure members are aware of actions officers will need to take in response to the emerging BID proposal; to outline the anticipated resource implications for the Council associated with the process of establishing a BID; and to seek a decision on any charges to be made by the Council associated with the BID development, ballot, and levy collection.
- 9 Until the detail of the BID proposal is fixed the Council cannot properly consider the implications for the Council as the owner of hereditaments within area. A separate later report will therefore be prepared, post receipt of the final BID proposal. Given that the ability to vote in the BID ballot is linked to the Council's built assets, and that a BID has the potential to impact on town centre vitality and viability, it is intended to take this second report to Economy and Growth Committee for a decision as to which way the Council should vote in the ballot. This follows the same decision-making process used for both the Wilmslow Town Centre BID and the Crewe BID.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy Committee agree the following:

1. The Executive Director of Place shall notify the BID proposer of the Council's intention to recoup any and all reasonable costs associated with the Knutsford Business Improvement District and

officers shall recover reasonable charges for the associated services provided by the Council.

2. On receipt of the Knutsford Business Improvement District (BID) final proposal:
 - a. The Chief Executive as Returning Officer and “Ballot Holder” shall check the BID proposal against the requirements set out in the BID Regulations, and subject to the BID proposal meeting the necessary requirements, shall make all necessary arrangements for the BID proposal ballot to take place, and for the results of the ballot to be counted and declared on behalf of the BID proposer.
 - b. The Executive Director for Place shall take a further report to the Economy and Growth Committee outlining the detail of the final BID proposal and seeking any necessary further authority to respond, including a decision as to how the Council should vote in the ballot.
3. That subject to a “yes” vote at ballot; the Executive Director for Place shall ensure a final review of the BID proposal is undertaken and shall determine whether there is any cause to veto the proposals having regard to all relevant matters as prescribed by the BID Regulations; and following that determination shall either confirm that the Council will not veto the BID proposals or serve a notice to exercise a veto.
4. That subject to a “yes” vote at ballot, and the Executive Director of Place confirming that the Council will not veto the BID proposals:
 - (a) The Council’s Monitoring Officer shall make necessary arrangements for the completion and updating of such legal agreements as they consider necessary to facilitate the BID, including agreements ensuring clarity around baseline service levels within the BID area, and clarity of arrangements for collection and management of the BID levy.
 - (b) The Council as billing authority shall make necessary arrangements for billing, collection and enforcement of the BID levy and its transfer to the body responsible for the Knutsford BID.

Background

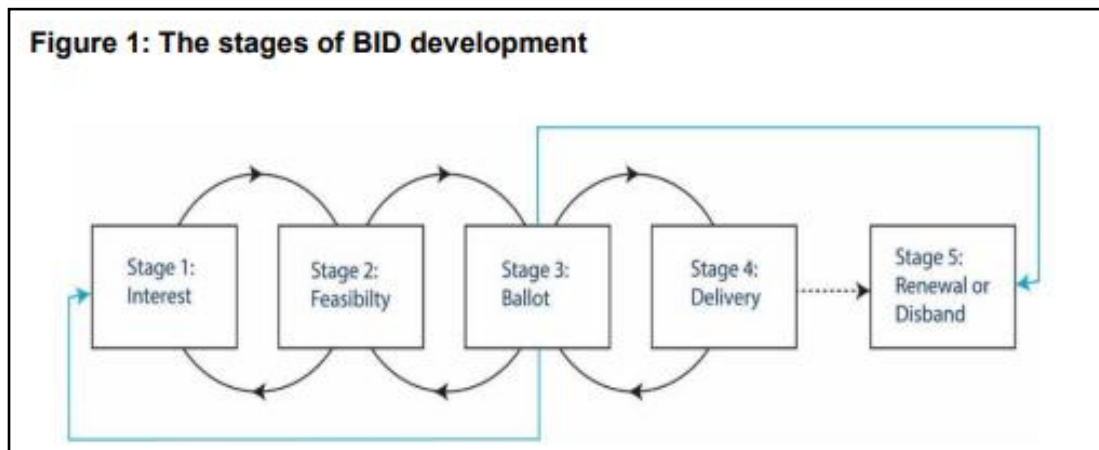
- 10 A Business Improvement District (BID) is a defined area where business rate payers have voted in a ballot to pay a levy, in addition to

business rates, into a fund for a fixed period (normally 5 years), and that levy is then managed to deliver specific agreed initiatives to benefit the BID area. Legislation to enable BIDs was included in the Local Government Act 2003. Subsequently the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004 outlined the procedures for their establishment and management.

- 11 The majority of BIDs are focused on town centres and BIDs have the potential to bring significant extra regeneration impact to a town or district centre. The priorities for BID levy spend will depend on the exact detail of the final BID proposal, but town centre BIDs might typically support such things as improving the general appearance of the BID area, enhanced marketing and promotional activity, events to stimulate footfall, crime reduction initiatives, access initiatives such as wayfinding, support for business such as schemes to reduce costs through combined procurement, and collective training opportunities.
- 12 To be successful at ballot a BID proposal must have gained a simple majority vote in favour, both in terms of the number of voters and the aggregate value of business rates of those that have voted. The Regulations do not specify how a BID scheme should be managed once established. BIDs may constitute their managing board, make spending decisions, and seek other income as they see fit. Most are non-profit bodies, but this is not required by legislation.
- 13 Since their introduction, BIDs have become an important mechanism for place management in many locations. There are around 324 BIDs across Great Britain, Northern Ireland and Ireland (Source 2021 BID survey), now with two in Cheshire East - Wilmslow Town Centre BID and Crewe BID. Several BIDs are also currently in place across neighbouring authorities, including Manchester BID; Stockport Town Centre BID; Warrington Town Centre BID, Altrincham BID, and five BIDS in Cheshire West and Chester.
- 14 BIDS have a maximum term of five years unless renewed by reaffirmation of support through a further ballot. Many BIDs progress beyond their first five-year term, with some of the UK's longest-running BIDs, having now been in operation for over 20 years and through five ballots. Evidence shows that BID ballot results increase in support the longer a BID has been in existence. (Institute of Place Management 2019). This suggests that BIDs can be seen by local businesses as adding value worthy of the levy charged. Regional locations with long-running BIDs include Liverpool City Centre BID now in its fifth term and Winsford Industrial Estate in Cheshire West, well into its fourth term.
- 15 A BID has the potential to bring significant extra regeneration impact to a locality. They are financed principally through an annual compulsory

levy based on the rateable value of businesses in the BID area. The levy rate is typically something in the order of 1.5% of rateable value, but the rate is a matter of choice for the BID proposer. This income is ringfenced to provide improvements in the BID area that would otherwise not occur. The BID can also draw on other public and private funding streams.

- 16 The development of a BID can be described in the five stages set out in Figure 1 (Source Institute of Place Management (IPM)).



- 17 In general terms, where there is potential interest in a BID, work is undertaken to test feasibility. This will involve consideration of a potential BID geography, testing the appetite of businesses, considering the amount of levy which could be raised, and contemplating the priorities the BID might focus on. If the feasibility work suggests there is likely to be sufficient support for a “yes” vote, a BID proposal may then be developed further and the local authority as billing authority requested to put the BID proposal to a ballot. If the BID is successful at ballot, it will then progress to delivery stage.

Current BID Proposal

- 18 In 2023 Knutsford Town Council applied for and were successfully awarded UKSPF to fund a BID feasibility study. In 2024 they appointed The Mosaic Partnership to carry out that feasibility study on a potential BID in Knutsford. In undertaking this work the Mosaic Partnership undertook a business engagement exercise including online survey, one-to-one meetings, business workshop, and engagement with head offices of national businesses. 33 businesses responded providing feedback. This work concluded that there is potential to develop a BID in Knutsford generating circa £1M over 5 years to carry out visible and tangible improvements.
- 19 In March 2025 Knutsford Town Council considered the report flowing from the feasibility study and resolved to appoint Groundwork CLM to deliver the development stage of a BID proposal, noting the contract

would be structured to enable early termination in the event that it becomes apparent a BID vote would fail, and noting that it was planned that the cost of developing the BID proposal would be recovered in the event of a successful BID vote.

- 20 Subsequently, on 27th May 2025 Groundwork served notice on CEC confirming that the Knutsford BID Steering Group intends to ask the Council to hold a BID ballot. This notice (the “84 day notice”) is submitted at least 84 days before the BID proposer submits a formal BID proposal and a further formal notice requesting the holding of the ballot. It is therefore anticipated that the final BID proposal and the notice requesting the BID ballot will be received by the authority on or shortly after 19 August 2025.
- 21 The first draft of the BID proposal was issued on 7 July 2025 and is appended to this report for information at Appendix 1. The BID Steering Group are inviting businesses in the area to comment on this proposal to inform its final form. It shows the draft BID area illustrated in figure 2 extending across Knutsford town centre but additionally including business premises at Tatton Park. The exact boundary of the BID will be refined as the BID proposal is developed further.



- 22 The final BID proposal will also confirm the levy rate, the non-domestic ratepayers for which the BID levy is to apply, and any reliefs that will be given. At the present time the BID proposer is testing a levy rate of 2% of Rateable Value, but this could alter before the BID proposal is finalised. Whilst exemptions may also still change, the current draft suggests that properties with a rateable value below £2,500 would be excluded from levy charges. Typically, some categories of businesses are also excluded such as those falling into the categories of education, emergency services, storage, workshop and warehousing. Again, these will be sense checked by the BID proposer through the BID development process and may change. The BID Steering Group anticipate that the BID could generate an investment of circa £1M over five years. The exact amount will however be dependent on the final proposal its exact geographical extent, the final levy rate and finalised exclusions, all of which will be confirmed in the final BID proposal before a ballot is held.
- 23 The levy raised via the BID would be used to fund interventions designed to support businesses in the BID by adding value to existing Council services. The BID proposal when received will also set out broadly how funds levied would be spent.
- 24 The first draft proposal confirms the Steering Group would like the ballot to be held in November 2025. If the BID ballot is successful, the ambition is for the BID to come into operation on 1 April 2026.

Implications for CEC

- 25 Despite the business-led approach to BID development and management, there are a series of critical roles that a local authority must perform to facilitate the establishment, smooth running and termination of a BID as required. Some of the key local authority roles are summarised below:

Preparation of Rating List Data

- 26 On receipt of a valid request from the BID proposer, the Local Authority is required to prepare a document giving the name of each business ratepayer within the boundary of the proposed BID, together with the address and rateable value of each relevant business property.

Checks on the formal proposals.

- 27 On receipt of the formal submission of the BID proposal the Local Authority must check and be satisfied that the submission from the BID proposer includes the relevant information set out in the BID Regulations.

Baseline Agreement

- 28 The focus of a BID is to create a programme that provides additionality, complementing those services provided within the area by the local authority and other statutory services. The Regulations require the BID proposal to include the range of new or expanded services and works which would be provided using the levy collected. The local authority is in turn asked to demonstrate its intention regarding services it provides within the BID area, through a Baseline Service Agreement. Officers will therefore need to draw up a statement of existing services, to be set out in a formal agreement if the BID progresses beyond ballot stage. This has already been done for the Wilmslow and Crewe BIDs and a similar format is anticipated to minimise workload for CEC officers.

Operating Agreement and Collection of Levy

- 29 If the BID progresses beyond ballot stage, the local authority is required to manage the collection and enforcement of BID levy charges. It is common practice for the BID body and the local authority to establish a levy collection agreement called an Operating Agreement. This agreement is to define the principles and processes for collecting the levy; enforcing the payment of the levy; reporting on collection and bad debt; monitoring provisions between the BID and the local authority; and providing regular detailed and summary information on the service to the BID as the client. Best practice suggests that a draft arrangement between the authority and BID should be available for scrutiny by businesses during the ballot period. Officers will need to work with the BID proposer to draft an Operating Agreement, to be finalised and signed if the BID progresses beyond the ballot.

Ballot

- 30 BIDs can only be established if they have been sanctioned through a formal postal ballot conducted among businesses that operate in the BID area. The ballot must return a majority in favour of the BID, both by number of votes and aggregate rateable value. Eligibility to vote is based on one vote per eligible business premise (hereditament) situated in the defined BID area. Business ratepayers vote for or against the establishment of a BID for a period of up to 5 years. Beyond that time a further ballot would be required to renew the BID. According to the BID survey of 2021, there had at that time been a total of 822 BID ballots since 2004, of which 710 had been successful.
- 31 The Returning Officer is required to ensure the ballot is operated, either inhouse or outsourced, in line with the BID Regulations. Irrespective of whether the ballot is run in-house or outsourced, the local authority ballot holder remains legally responsible for the ballot process as set

out in the Regulations. It is currently anticipated that the BID ballot would be outsourced.

Veto of BID Proposals

- 32 The Local Government Act 2003 sets out at S51 that where BID proposals are approved by a ballot, the billing authority has the power to veto the BID in limited circumstances only. This is where it considers that the BID would conflict to a material extent with formally adopted and published local authority policy, or where it considers the BID would place a significantly disproportionate and inequitable financial burden on any person or class of persons in the geographical area of the BID caused by the manipulation of that geographical area. This power must be exercised within 14 days of a successful ballot.

BID Governance

- 33 A BID should be managed through a Board or similar. The BID body must decide on the mix of representatives to ensure their Board is an effective, decision-making body with the right skills, which can represent the mix of businesses in the area. If the BID is successful at ballot and proceeds to commencement, whilst the Council will not be responsible for its management, as the Council would be a levy rate payer for several hereditaments within the anticipated BID boundary, there may be an opportunity for the authority to be represented on the BID Board (or equivalent). The Terms of Reference of any BID Board have not yet been set out. The Local Authority representation on any such BID Board will be considered further in the paper to be taken to Economy and Growth Committee having regard to the relevant decision-making framework.

Consultation and Engagement

- 34 Although the proposed BID boundary may change up until the proposal is finalised, the proposed BID is anticipated to sit predominantly within Knutsford Ward but also incorporating Tatton Park in Mobberley Ward. These wards are represented by Councillors Peter Coan, Tony Dean and Stewart Gardiner (Knutsford Ward) and Councillor Hannah Moss (Mobberley Ward) . Councillors Peter Coan and Stewart Gardiner are also Knutsford Town Councillors and Knutsford Town Council has been instrumental in funding work to bring the BID proposal forward. All ward members will have been briefed on the emerging BID proposal by committee.
- 35 As set out at 18, initial engagement with businesses was undertaken in 2024 by the Mosaic Partnership. Further consultation is ongoing by Groundwork on the draft proposal which will inform the final form of the proposal to be put to ballot.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 36 If a Council as billing authority receives formal notification of an emerging BID proposal, they must respond to enable that BID proposal to be considered in the manner prescribed by the BID Regulations. If a formal request to hold a ballot is submitted in accordance with the BID Regulations, unless it has just grounds to veto the proposal, the Council as the billing authority must instruct the 'ballot holder' (the Council's Returning Officer) to make the necessary arrangements for a postal ballot to take place. Putting a BID proposal to ballot is a transparent and open mechanism for testing the appetite of businesses for paying an additional levy to be used for local priorities.
- 37 Similarly, if the BID is successful at ballot, the Regulations set out that the relevant billing authority, in this case the Council, shall provide for the imposition, administration, collection, recovery and application of the BID levy. Whilst the local authority is required to manage the collection and enforcement of BID levy charges, in practice the BID body and the local authority establish a levy collection agreement often known as an Operating Agreement. Additionally, technical guidance advises that it is best practice for a baseline agreement to be approved at the start of a BID's term which sets out baseline services the local authority is going to provide reflecting existing baseline services, and services to be provided by the BID.
- 38 This report seeks to inform members of the requirements and to ensure appropriate delegations to officers to enable the Regulations to be adhered to.
- 39 The BID proposal will generate additional work for several services within the Council and if the BID is successful at ballot there will be additional resource implications for the Council principally in the collection of levy charges as set out in more detail in the financial implications section of this report. There is scope within the BID Regulations for the Council to charge for various services provided to enable BID development, levy collection, and in certain prescribed, limited circumstances, ballot costs. There is no requirement for the Council to charge for the services it can charge for, but it may choose to do so. It is therefore necessary for the Council to determine which costs it will seek to recover.
- 40 Having regard to current financial pressure, pressure on staff resources, precedent set by the Wilmslow and Crewe BID proposals and the potential for future precedents, it is recommended that the Council seek to charge for all services provided by the Council which the Regulations allow to be recharged. This is aligned to the way in which the costs associated with the Wilmslow and Crewe BID proposals were dealt with.

Other Options Considered

- 41 The following alternative options to the recommended option have been considered but are not recommended given the impacts and risks noted:

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	<p>The BID proposal would not be transparently considered.</p> <p>The Council would be in breach of its duties under the BID Regulations</p>	<p>Complaint likely</p> <p>Loss of potential opportunity to raise additional funding to support Knutsford</p>
Determine not to charge for some or all of the Council's services associated with responding to the BID proposal	<p>The BID proposers would have more resources available for spending in the BID area if the BID is successful at ballot.</p> <p>Budget and/or staff resourcing pressures for the Council.</p> <p>Inconsistency in approach with Wilmslow and Crewe BID proposals</p>	<p>Complaints regarding inconsistency of approach</p>

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance

- 42 The legal implications of the recommendations have largely been canvassed in the body of this report.
- 43 There is a need to comply with the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004, (BID Regulations) including providing information to the BID proposer, holding a postal ballot if formally requested to do so, and if the BID is successful at ballot, taking responsibility for collection of the BID levy on behalf of the BID.

- 44 The BID proposer must consult those affected by the proposed levy before submitting a request for a ballot. On receipt of a valid request from the BID Proposer, the Council is required to prepare a document (from its business rates records) with; the name of each business ratepayer within the boundary of the proposed BID, together with the address and rateable value of each relevant business property occupied or (if unoccupied) owned by the ratepayer and provide this to the BID proposer for canvassing purposes. This means that personal data has to be disclosed.
- 45 A request to hold a ballot submitted in accordance with the BID Regulations, requires the Council as the billing authority to instruct the Council's Returning Officer to make arrangements for a postal ballot to take place. The Returning Officer is required to ensure the ballot is operated, either in-house or outsourced, in line with the BID Regulations. Irrespective of whether the ballot is run in-house or outsourced, the local authority ballot holder still remains legally responsible for the ballot process as set out within the Regulations.
- 46 The Council is responsible for the collection and for managing the enforcement of BID levy charges. This will need a levy collection agreement with the BID body covering such matters as the processes for collecting the levy, enforcing the payment of the levy and reporting on collection and bad debt. Additionally, it is best practice for a baseline agreement to be approved at the start of a BID's term which sets out baseline services the local authority is going to provide reflecting existing baseline services, and services to be provided by the BID.
- 47 The Council should satisfy itself that the BID proposal does not conflict with any existing local authority policy, nor does it propose a disproportionate burden on a particular business by way of an unfair levy.
- 48 The billing authority is required to have a separate BID revenue account in respect of each BID for which it has responsibility.
- 49 The billing authority may require BID proposers or BID body to pay the costs of the ballot if less than 20% of those entitled to vote in the ballot voted in favour and either the proposals were not approved, or if the ballot is declared void. Such costs shall include any expenses properly incurred in relation to the exercise.
- 50 The billing authority may terminate BID arrangements where the BID body has insufficient finances to meet its liabilities for the relevant chargeable period or if the billing authority is unable, due to any cause beyond the control of the billing authority, to provide works or services necessary for the BID to continue. However, there are procedural steps

that must be taken prior to termination, such as providing sufficient notice and consulting with interested parties.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 51 The BID proposal will generate additional work for several services within the Council and if the BID is successful at ballot there will be additional resource implications for the Council principally in the collection of levy charges. There is scope within the BID Regulations for the Council to charge for various services provided to enable BID development, the BID ballot and levy collection, but not a requirement to do so.
- 52 It is therefore necessary for the Council to determine which costs it will seek to recover such that the BID proposer can take account of this in finalising the BID proposals. For the Wilmslow and Crewe BID proposal, the Council sought to recover all costs allowable, and a similar approach is suggested as appropriate in this case.
- 53 Key costs to the Council are anticipated to be the cost of gathering information required by the BID proposer, the cost of holding the ballot (estimate £5,500), the cost of gearing up to collect a levy (estimate £6,250), and annual costs in collection/enforcement for the lifetime of the BID (estimate £6,000-£12,000 per annum). These costs are not currently budgeted for within the MTFS and are in the process of being estimated by the relevant services. Any cost calculations need to recognise the Council's overhead costs.
- 54 It is recommended that the Council seek to charge for the services provided by the Council, to be recouped from the BID proposer or the levy collected as appropriate. Where the Regulations or guidance are explicit that charges can be made to recover costs, it is recommended that the BID proposer/BID Body be billed a reasonable charge to be determined by officers. It is anticipated that all costs associated with the collection of the BID Levy will be covered by charges, with no shortfall for the Council. Regarding the cost of holding a ballot, on which the Regulations are silent other than in the limited specific circumstances covered by Regulation 10, it is recommended that the BID proposer be asked to voluntarily cover ballot costs in the event of a successful ballot from levies raised, noting that this may be rejected by the BID proposer.
- 55 In addition to the financial implications above, Cheshire East Council is the rate payer for hereditaments in the proposed BID area, and if the BID is successful it will have to pay the levy on those properties. It is provisionally estimated that the levies payable by CEC will amount to

circa [£5-6,000] per annum for the lifetime of the BID, based on current rateable values. These are not budgeted for within the MTFS.

- 56 If the ballot is successful, the feasibility work provided to the Council projects that the BID could raise in the order of £200,000 per annum in levy income for sole use by the Knutsford BID, although this will depend on the final BID proposal.

Human Resources

- 57 There are considered to be no direct significant implications for human resources stemming from this report.

Risk Management

- 58 There is potential for both positive and negative reactions from local businesses to this proposal. Whilst the Council is not the BID proposer there is a clear possibility that the BID proposal may be perceived as a Council initiative with consequent potential positive or negative public reaction, particularly as the Council would be responsible for collection of the levy. Risks around this can be mitigated by establishing a clear communication plan and liaison with the BID proposer.
- 59 The checks undertaken by the Council on receipt of the BID proposal include a review of finances designed to enable the Council to ensure the BID proposer can cover costs should the ballot be unsuccessful and return a 'yes' vote of less than 20% of those entitled to vote, reducing the risk of abortive costs falling to the Council.
- 60 There are additional reputational and financial risks which might flow from procedural error, for example should a challenge be lodged claiming an irregularity in the ballot process.

Impact on other Committees

- 61 The decisions sought from Corporate Policy Committee are intended to ensure officers have clear authority to carry out all the procedures required to enable a BID proposal to be received and dealt with in accordance with the BID Regulations including the holding of a ballot. Whilst these decisions have no direct implications for other committees, assuming a ballot is held, this will trigger the need for a further decision as to the way the Council votes in that ballot as owner of hereditaments within the proposed BID area. For the past two previous BID proposals, the decision as to which way to vote in a ballot has been taken by Economy and Growth Committee given the decision is effectively being taken by the Council as the owner of land/building assets and also there being potential implications of a BID for the local economy. This later decision will have potential financial implications for the Council in that if

the ballot returns a 'yes' vote and a BID commences, the Council will become liable to pay the BID levies for its own hereditaments. This later decision (anticipated to be considered by Economy and Growth Committee in November) will have impact on general Council budgets and will therefore, likely to also be of interest to Finance Sub-Committee.

Policy

- 62 The Cheshire East Plan (2025-2029) seeks to enable prosperity for all in Cheshire East. It recognises that working with businesses is a key route to unlocking prosperity. A well-managed, successful BID could support Knutsford to thrive economically. Depending on the final form of the proposal a BID also has the potential to support several other commitments set out in the Cheshire East Plan. For example, a BID could seek to improve security in the town centre, aligned to the Cheshire East Plan in helping the local community to feel safe and secure, or a BID could provide opportunities for continuous learning. The extent of alignment with Council policies can however only be confirmed once the final BID proposal has been finalised. This matter will therefore be considered further after the final BID proposal has been received and reported in the follow-on report proposed to go to Economy and Growth Committee.
- 63 A BID proposal, subject to its final detail, could support the following aims and priorities of the Cheshire East Plan (2025-2029).

Unlocking prosperity for all	Improving health and wellbeing	An effective and enabling Council
<p>Creating new opportunities for business communities</p> <p>Supporting life- long learning associated with local businesses.</p> <p>Potential for improvements to active travel.</p>	<p>Everyone feels safe and secure.</p> <p>Communities build their capacity, with support to access information, guidance and funding</p>	<p>Innovative solutions are developed through a culture of collaboration</p>

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 64 The Council has not undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) on this proposal since it is being brought forward by a third party and additionally at this point the BID proposal has not been finalised.

Other Implications

Rural Communities

- 65 There are considered to be no specific implications for rural communities arising from this report.

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

- 66 There are considered to be no specific implications for young people/cared for children stemming from this report.

Public Health

- 67 There are considered to be no direct implications for public health stemming from the BID proposal. If the BID is successful in boosting the local economy this could potentially have beneficial health impacts although economic benefit may not necessarily filter to those in poorest health, particularly in a five-year period.

Climate Change

- 68 The BID proposal has the potential to change on climate change dependant on the final form of the BID proposal. For example, if the BID supports business to thrive this could encourage more people in Knutsford to stay in their local area for leisure but conversely it could attract new visitors from outside the area, both scenarios affecting on carbon emissions in different ways. Given that the Council would not be in control of BID expenditure it would likely be able to exercise only limited influence over initiatives which could have implications for climate change, whether positive or negative. If the Council has a representative on any future BID Board, there will likely be more scope to ensure that the climate change agenda is considered is considered when decisions are made by the BID body.

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy):</i>			
Ashley Hughes	S151 Officer	17/07/25	17/07/25
Janet Witkowski	Acting Monitoring Officer	17/07/25	17/07/25
<i>Legal and Finance</i>			
Aaron Lecroy	Senior Accountant	02/06/25 & 12/06/25 & 16/07/25	05/06/25 & 12/06/25
Nick Wrigley	Senior Lawyer	02/06/25 & 12/06/25 & 16/07/25	06/06/25 & 12/06/25
<i>Other Consultees: Executive Directors/Directors</i>			
Peter Skates	Director of Growth	02/06/25	06/06/25
Sal Khan	Director of Finance	12/06/25	

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Jo Wise Development & Regeneration Delivery Manager jo.wise@cheshireeast.gov.uk 07939 508547
Appendices:	Draft Knutsford BID Proposal (Issued 7 July 2025)
Background Papers:	N/A

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KNUTSFORD

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

OUR 5 YEAR PLAN FOR A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

2026-2031



WWW.KNUTSFORDBID.CO.UK

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF KNUTSFORD BID STEERING GROUP



I am proud to present our first draft of a new shared vision for a Business Improvement District in Knutsford - a vision rooted in Knutsford's rich heritage, distinctive charm, and strong sense of community.

Knutsford: a vibrant market town, mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, with a good quality combination of national and independent retail and hospitality businesses. It has a welcoming atmosphere, and a unique connection to one of the region's most iconic attractions - Tatton Park (which is also part of this BID area).

A BID would be a first for Knutsford—something completely new and never tried here before. It's a chance for us, the business community, to take the lead and make our own decisions about what our town really needs—not wait around for government direction. With £1million of private sector funding, we have the opportunity to drive bold, practical change that benefits Knutsford right now and builds a stronger future on our own terms.

The BID will focus on making Knutsford a more attractive, accessible and, importantly an, economically resilient destination. Investing in environmental enhancements and improved public spaces. A BID could support the development of the towns calendar of events to drive footfall and encourage even stronger local civic pride. The BID will also focus on marketing and PR to raise the profile of the town and promote all that Knutsford has to offer.

Tatton Park attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year—but too many come and go without ever stepping into Knutsford. A key part of our BID ambition is to change that. By strengthening the link between Tatton and our town—through better signage, easier transport, and joined-up visitor experiences—we'll make sure those visitors don't just pass by. We want them walking our high street, eating in our restaurants, booking beauty treatments, discovering our shops—and even choosing to work or live here. This is a chance to turn passing footfall into lasting local value.

We are committed to ensuring that businesses have a strong, unified voice and the support they need to thrive. The BID will bring businesses and organisations together, drive investment, and act as a catalyst for positive change. Your feedback on this plan is critical and will help shape the final proposal for a BID which we expect to release in September / October 2025.

Yours,

Helen Rogers

Chair of the BID Steering Group and founder of Matix Accounts,
a Knutsford centre-based business of 14 years



MEET THE KNUTSFORD BID STEERING GROUP

The Knutsford BID Steering Group has been drawn from companies and organisations across Knutsford. Organisations small and large, independently owned or operating as part of larger groups have all contributed to the development of this draft plan for a BID.

Helen Rogers

Matix Accounts

Chair of the BID Steering Group

Adam Hilton

The Blind Pig

Annette McDonald

Tatton Estates

Caterine Hooper

Detaljer

Hattie Cufflin

Hot Cocoa Ltd

Hitesh Jesuja

Sigiriya

Zoe Garner

Oil Art Advisory

Councillor April Johnson

Knutsford Town Council
Representing the Bexton and
Town Centre ward

Julia Chard

Knutsford Olde Sweet Shoppe

Melanie Barnes-Batty

Knutsford Asset Management

Richard Heap

TT Games

Roberta Dyer

Roberta Beauty Redefined

Sean Spooner

The Lost and Found

Sandra Curties

Town Centre Manager,
Knutsford Town Council

Richard Milkins

Visitor Economy, Tourism &
Hospitality Manager
Cheshire East Council

HOW THE BID WORKS

- ▶ All premises with a rateable value greater than or equal to £2.5k will receive a vote.
- ▶ If a majority vote in favour of the BID (by number and rateable value) the BID is approved for a 5 year period.

VOTE

BID BOARD

- ▶ Businesses within the Knutsford BID area form a representative Board to govern the BID.
- ▶ The BID Board includes representation from organisations across the Knutsford BID area.

- ▶ The BID Board guides and directs the BID team who are responsible for the delivery of the BID 5 year business plan.
- ▶ New projects and services agreed by the business-led BID Board are commissioned in line with the BID proposal.
- ▶ The impact and success of the BID is reported to businesses.

INVEST, BENEFIT AND REPORT

WHAT IS A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)?

WHAT IS A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)?

- ▶ A BID is an opportunity for businesses and organisations to take a lead in the management and improvement of Knutsford for a five year defined period.

ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT LED BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR

- ▶ The BID in Knutsford could generate over £1m of business led investment over a five-year period and will cost the average premises the equivalent of £1.27 / day, and for 60% of premises less than £1 day.
- ▶ The investment will be delivered through a new private sector led Knutsford Business Improvement District Board. The Board will be made up of local businesses and organisations who contribute towards the BID and answerable to the wider business community who fund the BID.

WHERE DOES THE INVESTMENT COME FROM?

- ▶ The investment will principally come from a small additional levy paid by each premises (hereditament) within the BID area with a rateable value above £2,500. The proposed model will cost the average premises the equivalent of £1.27 / day.
- ▶ Together this will raise an investment of circa £1m, over 5 years, which we expect will lever in additional funding from a range of sources.

WHO DECIDES IF THE BID IS TO BE INTRODUCED?

- ▶ All eligible premises will be able to take part in a 28-day postal ballot vote to approve or reject the BID proposal. This is expected to take place in November 2025.
- ▶ If a majority vote in favour of the proposal from the number of votes cast, and this represents a majority in level of rateable value from votes cast, the BID will come into operation from 1st April 2026, when all premises with a rateable value above £2,500 would pay the small annual levy (equivalent to 2% of their rateable value) to fund investments planned by the BID.

HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT TO BUSINESS RATES?

- ▶ The BID levy is separate from business rates, which are a local tax collected by Cheshire East Council and pooled with council tax and government funding to support general services, with no direct link between what businesses pay and the services delivered. Any retained funds from business rates are principally invested in core council services including adult social care, children's services, domestic waste disposal, highways and economic development.
- ▶ The funds from the BID once collected will be held locally, under the control of local businesses and will only be invested in projects and services that are additional to base line services (highways, street scene, environmental enhancement etc) provided by the public sector.
- ▶ The BID funds will be invested under the direct control of the business community who pay the annual BID levies.

WHERE DO BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS ALREADY OPERATE?

- ▶ Businesses and organisations across 350 towns and cities have embraced BIDs since 2005, with notable examples that support town centres or city centres in Wilmslow, Altrincham, Northwich, Chester and Manchester.
- ▶ More than 300 BIDs have been approved by business communities in towns and cities across the UK since 2004 when they were first introduced.



KNUTSFORD CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In 2024, Knutsford Town Council commissioned a Business Improvement District (BID) feasibility study to explore the potential benefits of establishing a BID in the town. As part of this process, a consultation was carried out with the local business community through an online survey, one to one stakeholder meetings and business workshops. The results from the consultation have helped to shape this draft business plan. A summary of the key headlines are listed below:

WHAT YOU TOLD US

Maximise the opportunity that being so close to Tatton Park provides - particularly with large events.

Improve the cleanliness, lighting, security and highlight the uniqueness of the town's ancient ginnels and alleys.

Lobby for improved frequency and quality of service of train routes and station arrival experience.

Marketing support for the town's businesses via dedicated social media platforms.

Introduce visitor monitoring/footfall measurement system and town event evaluation.

Work with the public agencies, Cheshire East Council and Knutsford Town Council on improving the quality of the visitor experience.

Knutsford's history/architecture/literary significance should be showcased more.

Provide better quality and more events that are targeted at more than just families.

THE TOP TEN OPPORTUNITIES FOR KNUTSFORD

1. Giving Businesses a Stronger Voice

The BID will provide a platform for Knutsford's business community to influence local decision-making, access funding opportunities, and shape the town's future direction.

2. Boosting Footfall through Events & Experiences

The BID will work with partners and stakeholders to build on existing events and introduce new high-quality events - markets, festivals, late-night shopping, and cultural activities to attract visitors and encourage local spending.

3. Enhancing the Link with Tatton Park

Enhance physical and promotional links between Knutsford town centre and Tatton Park to encourage two-way visitor flow, ensuring both locations benefit from increased footfall and engagement.

4. Marketing and Promotion

Working with key stakeholders to promote a strong, unified identity for Knutsford as a must-visit destination - targeting both residents and regional/national day-trippers through coordinated campaigns.

5. Improving the Public Realm

Invest in cleaner streets, greener spaces, better signage, and improved lighting to make the town centre more attractive, accessible, and welcoming.

6. Supporting Local Businesses

The BID will provide free training, link businesses to support and provide networking opportunities, and collective services (e.g. waste management, joint procurement) to reduce costs and improve competitiveness.

7. Encouraging a Day-to-Night Economy

Support the growth of Knutsford's evening economy by promoting dining, culture, and leisure options to encourage longer dwell times and more diverse opportunities.

8. Improving Accessibility & Parking

Work with partners to address parking concerns, enhance signage, lobby for public transport improvements, promote public and active transport options, and make it easier for people to work, visit and stay longer.

9. Enhancing Safety & Security

Introduce initiatives such as business crime reduction partnerships, or improved CCTV to create a safer and more secure town environment.

10. Influencing Local Investment through Devolution

As devolution brings greater powers and funding to the region, the Knutsford BID can act as a key voice in shaping how investment and resources are directed locally. By aligning BID priorities with the wider Cheshire and Warrington devolution agenda, the BID can champion the needs of Knutsford's business community - ensuring the town benefits from infrastructure improvements, skills funding, transport upgrades, and place-based regeneration initiatives.

WHAT CAN A BID DO FOR ME?

INDEPENDENT RETAILERS	NATIONAL RETAILERS	LEISURE, HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM	PROFESSIONAL AND OFFICE SECTOR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ We're committed to increasing footfall in Knutsford – seven days a week, 365 days a year. Through strategic destination marketing and a dynamic calendar of events, we'll attract more visitors and keep Knutsford buzzing all year round ▶ Our bespoke promotional campaigns will shine a spotlight on Knutsford's vibrant business scene. High-quality videos and professional photography will be shared across leading digital channels – connecting you with thousands of new customers ▶ Seasonal events and fresh activities will elevate Knutsford's profile and draw crowds. There'll be exciting opportunities for your business to get involved and be featured front and centre in these campaigns ▶ Collaborate with fellow businesses on group purchasing and cost-saving initiatives. Take advantage of practical support including training workshops, expert advice, and dedicated networking events – all organised by the BID ▶ Access exclusive footfall data and insights into town centre performance. Play an active role in shaping BID priorities and have your say in the future of Knutsford 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Increased footfall, dwell time and more consumers and visitors to Knutsford ▶ Access to a professionally managed business crime reduction partnership ▶ Raising the profile of Knutsford through a joined up and more targeted local and regional year-round marketing and promotional campaign ▶ Being part of a local network of major retailers who can share and gain in-depth insight into trading factors/conditions ▶ The ability to collaborate with fellow traders over seasonal campaigns ▶ The BID will support a better shopping environment in Knutsford with additional public realm improvements and improved safety initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Increased footfall and spend with visitors and consumers staying longer ▶ Promotional campaigns that shine a spotlight on the range and quality of food and beverage operators ▶ Improve the daytime to night-time economy experience ▶ The creation of new events and festivals that directly involve and promote a range of leisure and cultural opportunities in Knutsford and Tatton Park ▶ A BID gives the leisure/hospitality sector a collective voice in discussions with the council, police, and other stakeholders, influencing policies and planning decisions ▶ Opportunities to join together with neighbouring businesses to access group purchasing initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ An enhanced and more vibrant town centre for your clients and employees ▶ The BID will lobby for better transport linkages and additional public transport services to support attracting talent and staff retention ▶ The ability to promote your business services to a wider audience and to 400+ fellow Knutsford businesses through regular media communications ▶ Promotion of a strong, positive narrative about Knutsford to help your business attract prospective employees to a high-quality work location ▶ Additional initiatives aimed specifically at the professional and office-based businesses within Knutsford, such as improved network opportunities, links with professional development providers and better routes into the local labour market ▶ Greater exposure and interaction with regional bodies such as Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington, The Growth Hub and Cheshire East Council

**VOTE
YES** 

THEME ONE – DESTINATION KNUTSFORD



Making Knutsford the place people want to visit, explore and enjoy.

The BID will focus on promoting Knutsford as a must-visit destination, attracting more consumers, visitors, tourists and encouraging them to stay longer and spend more. By improving the visitor experience, delivering exciting events, and working with partners like Tatton Park, we'll raise the profile of Knutsford and boost footfall into the area. This theme is all about making Knutsford even more welcoming, vibrant and memorable—for both visitors and locals alike.

► **Support the evolution of the Knutsford Brand Identity**

Lead and work with partners to develop a unified visual identity and messaging strategy to promote Knutsford across all media platforms

► **Seasonal Marketing Campaigns**

Seasonal cross promotional activities in Knutsford and Tatton Park e.g. autumn walks, Easter trails and festive Christmas promotions

► **Promotional Partnerships with local visitor attractions**

Joint campaigns, shared visitor materials, cross-promoted events, and package deals working with local visitor destination including Tatton Park and the National Trust

► **High-Quality Photography and Video Production**

Commissioning professional content showcasing Knutsford's streetscapes, markets, heritage, and links to Tatton Park for use in PR and social media

► **Seasonal "Buy Local" Campaigns**

Promote spring gifting, summer dining, Christmas shopping, showcasing Knutsford's diverse range of businesses

► **Marketing Spotlights**

Weekly features on local businesses and attractions across social media, website, and printed newsletters

► **Knutsford in National Tourism Publications & Travel Guides**

Work with agencies to feature Knutsford in broader national / regional media campaigns e.g. Private sector PR, Marketing Cheshire, and Visit England

► **Enhance and develop the annual Knutsford events calendar**

Work with partners to develop a year-round, diverse programme of high-quality events that celebrate Knutsford's food, culture, history, and retail offering, attracting new visitors, encouraging local participation, and driving footfall to the town and Tatton Park



THEME TWO – EXPERIENCE KNUTSFORD



Creating a cleaner, safer and more enjoyable town centre for everyone.

The BID will work to improve the cleanliness, safety, and accessibility of Knutsford, helping to create a welcoming environment for shoppers, visitors, workers, and residents. Whether it's cleaner streets, better signage, improved spaces, or more vibrant displays, we want people to enjoy their time in Knutsford and keep coming back.

► **Heritage-Inspired Street Art or Interpretation Boards**

Commission art or storyboards sharing Knutsford's history to enrich the visitor experience

► **Wayfinding & Signage Improvements**

Refresh existing signage, introduce accessible signage including directions to car parks, toilets, Tatton Park, and heritage points of interest

► **Enhanced Deep Cleaning Programme**

Targeted deep cleaning of key locations in addition to the standard cleansing services delivered by the council. E.g. Jet-washing of pavements, street furniture, signage, and alleyways

► **Work with Transport Providers to Improve Service Provision and Information**

Work with partners to lobby for better public transport provision in Knutsford and ensure up-to-date train and bus schedules are available online, on BID signage, and in printed visitor guides

► **Connecting Tatton Park and Knutsford Town Centre**

The BID will commission a feasibility study to identify opportunities for enhancing connectivity between Tatton Park and Knutsford Town Centre and vice versa. Our goal is to develop new ways to ensure visitors can fully enjoy both the historic beauty of the Tatton Estate and the unique offerings of the town centre.

► **Introduce a Knutsford Town Link Radio Scheme**

To improve safety, reduce crime, and enhance communication between Knutsford's businesses, Cheshire Police, and local authorities through the implementation of a digital Town Link Radio Scheme

The benefits of a town link radio scheme are:

- Allows instant communication about incidents such as shoplifting and antisocial behaviour
- The radio will be linked to the town CCTV systems and monitored centrally by Cheshire East Council
- The radio link helps with rapid response to issues and improves the feeling of safety for staff and the public



THEME THREE – CONNECTED KNUTSFORD



A thriving Knutsford depends on strong, supported businesses.

The BID will provide practical support—from cost-saving initiatives and skills development to shared promotion and networking. It will also act as a voice for business, helping shape local decisions and connecting Knutsford to wider opportunities through the devolution agenda.

A Private Sector Led BID Board

- ▶ Creating “One Voice” for the private sector in Knutsford
- ▶ Driving forward improvements and lobbying for change
- ▶ Governance of the BID Investment
- ▶ Representative of the business area in the BID

The Knutsford BID Team

- ▶ One-stop shop for businesses to refer issues and opportunities
- ▶ Creating new opportunities to tackle barriers to growth
- ▶ Responsible for delivering the five-year BID Business Plan

Start-Up Support & Knutsford ‘Welcome Pack’

- ▶ Development of a ‘Welcome to Knutsford’ business information pack containing local contacts and information on BID services to new businesses launching in Knutsford
- ▶ Supporting local enterprise/entrepreneur development programmes

Free or Subsidised Training Workshops/Courses

- ▶ Training and workshops covering key topics such as digital marketing, customer service training, merchandising, social media, financial planning, food hygiene, staff recruitment, first aid at work or fire safety

Joint Procurement Services

- ▶ BID-negotiated deals to cut costs for local businesses on commercial waste, utilities, energy, insurance, and card processing to reduce business overheads



INCOME AND EXPENDITURE BUDGETS

Governance and Management of the Business Improvement District funds will be governed and directed by a private sector led Board of local businesses leaders and premises occupiers from across the Business Improvement District area.

The added value investment that will be generated from the BID over five years will be circa £1m, with the potential to leverage additional investment from other sources including the public sector, grant awarding bodies and commercial opportunities.

An exemption is planned for any premises / hereditaments with a rateable value lower than £2.5k.

Administration costs for delivery of the BID will be no more than 20% of the overall budget, to ensure that the significant majority of investment is targeted towards delivery of tangible added value services and projects.

Any eligible business will be able to put a representative forward for appointment onto the private sector led Board, which will be elected through an annual meeting of members of the Business Improvement District.

Circa £1m added value investment over the five years

BID levy for the average premises **£1.27 / day** based upon **2%** of a premises rateable value

Premises with a rateable value lower than **£2.5k** are exempt

BASELINES

A benefit of a BID being approved for businesses is the statutory baseline agreements we will receive from Knutsford Town Council, Cheshire East Council and Cheshire Police. These are required to ensure that funds from the BID do not fund council or other statutory services.

All funds raised by the BID will only be used to support added value investments into Knutsford that without the BID would otherwise not be realised.



PROPOSED BID AREA



**VOTE
YES** 



KNUTSFORD

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

MORE INFORMATION AND YOUR THOUGHTS ON THIS PLAN FOR A KNUTSFORD BID

You can feedback online at **www.knutsfordbid.co.uk** and click on the draft business plan consultation link or contact BID Project Team:
Jane Hough on 07966 375162 or John Graham on 07826 907742



Full details are available on the Knutsford BID website: **www.knutsfordbid.co.uk**. Scan the QR code to learn more and share your views.



Corporate Policy Committee Work Programme 2025-26

Report Reference	Corporate Policy Committee	Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item	Decision or Scrutiny
October 2025									
CPC/05/25-26	02/10/25	Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation for 2026/27 - 2029/30	To agree the Pre Budget Consultation survey and material for the four years 2026-2030. The consultation will run from October to December 2025 and will allow stakeholders and residents engagement for the coming four years	Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer	Yes	No	Yes	No	Decision
CPC/25/25-26	02/10/25	First Financial Review of 2025/26	To note and comment on the First Financial Review and Performance Position of 2025/26, including progress on policy proposals and material variances from the MTFS and (if necessary) approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements	Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer	No	No	Yes	No	Decision and Scrutiny
CPC/14/25-26	02/10/25	Q1 Performance Report - 2025/26	To provide Committee with oversight of organisation performance against the priorities and vision set out within the Council's Corporate Plan 2025-29	Assistant Chief Executive	No	No	No	No	Scrutiny
CPC/15/25-26	02/10/25	Q1 Strategic Risk Update - 2025/2026	This report provides an update on the activity of the Council's Strategic Risk Register for Q1 2025/2026.	Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer	No	No	No	Yes in part	Scrutiny
CPC/30/25-26	02/10/25	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2025-2029	Seek approval from the Corporate Policy Committee (CPC) to adopt the refreshed Equality Objectives and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2025-2029.	Assistant Chief Executive	Yes	Yes	TBC	TBC	Decision
CPC/37/25-26	02/10/25	Corporate Improvement and Delivery Plan including Q1 progress	The draft CE Plan 2025-29 was approved at Council in February, delivery will be monitored with quarterly updates to Committee.	Assistant Chief Executive	No	No	No	No	Scrutiny
EG/20/25-26	02/10/25	Crewe Town Centre Regeneration Programme	To update committee on the Crewe Town Centre Regeneration Programme and to seek approvals for any recommended actions.	Executive Director - Place	Yes	TBC	TBC	Yes in part	Decision

Corporate Policy Committee Work Programme 2025-26

CPC/40/25-26	02/10/25	Violence and Aggression - Health and Safety Policy	The purpose of the report is to seek approval of the Council's Health and Safety policy on Violence and Aggression, in line with the Committee's responsibilities for health and safety matters and the adoption of policies in relation to staffing matters.	Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer	No	Yes	No	No	Decision
November 2025									
CPC/06/25-26	27/11/25	Council Tax Base 2026/27 (Corporate Policy Committee)	The report notifies of the Council Tax Base for Cheshire East and identifies any changes to the calculation of the tax base for 2026/27, so they can recommend the amount calculated to Council in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992. Cheshire East Council is required to agree the tax base before 31st January 2026	Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer	No	No	Yes	No	Decision
CPC/26/25-26	27/11/25	Second Financial Review of 2025/26	To note and comment on the Second Financial Review and Performance position of 2025/26, including progress on policy proposals and material variances from the MTFS and (if necessary) approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements	Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer	No	No	Yes	No	Decision and Scrutiny
CPC/13/25-26	27/11/25	Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2026/27 - 2029/30	All committees are being asked to provide feedback in relation to their financial responsibilities as identified within the Constitution and linked to the budgets approved by the Finance Sub-Committee in 2025. Responses to the consultation would be reported to the Corporate Policy Committee to support that Committee in making recommendation to Council on changes to the current financial strategy	Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer	No	No	Yes	No	Decision and Scrutiny
CPC/17/25-26	27/11/25	Q2 Performance Report 2025/2026	To provide committee with an oversight of organisational performance against the priorities and vision set out within the councils corporate plan 2025-2029.	Assistant Chief Executive	No	No	No	No	Scrutiny
CPC/18/25-26	27/11/25	Q2 Strategic Risk Update	This report provides an update on the activity of the Council's strategic risk register for Q1.	Governance, Compliance and	No	No	No	Yes in part	Scrutiny

Corporate Policy Committee Work Programme 2025-26

				Monitoring Officer					
CPC/44/25-26	27/11/25	Corporate Improvement and Delivery Plan including Q2 progress	The draft CE Plan 2025-29 was approved at Council in February, delivery will be monitored with quarterly updates to Committee.	Assistant Chief Executive	No	No	No	No	Scrutiny
CPC/45/25-26	27/11/25	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) - Policy and Procedure and Online Investigations Policy	To seek endorsement from Committee for the RIPA Policy and Procedure and Online Investigations Policy as recommended by the Audit & Governance Committee.	Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer	No	No	No	No	Decision
February 2026									
CPC/19/25-26	05/02/26	Medium term Financial Strategy 2026/27 - 2029/30 (Corporate Policy Committee)	To recommend the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2026 to 2030 to Council for approval. The report will incorporate the Council's priorities, budget, Policy Proposals and Capital Programme. The report will also include the Capital, Treasury Management, Investment and Reserves Strategy	Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer	No	No	Yes	No	Decision
CPC/27/25-26	05/02/26	Third Financial Review of 2025/26	To note and comment on the Third Financial Review and Performance position of 2025/26, including progress on policy proposals and material variances from the MTFS and (if necessary) approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements	Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer	No	No	Yes	No	Scrutiny and Decision
CPC/28/25-26	05/02/26	Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2026/27 - 2029/30 Provisional Settlement Update	All Committees are being asked to provide feedback in relation to their financial responsibilities as identified in the Constitution and linked to the budgets approved by the Finance Sub Committee in 2025. Responses to the consultation would be reported to the Corporate Policy Committee in making recommendations to Council on changes to the current financial strategy. Finance Sub Committee will also receive an update on the Local Government Financial Provisional Settlement	Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer	Yes	No	Yes	No	Decision

Corporate Policy Committee Work Programme 2025-26

CPC/08/25-25	05/02/26	Calendar of Meetings 2026-27	To consider the proposed calendar of meetings for the 2026-27 municipal year.	Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer	No	No	No	No	Decision
March 2026									
CPC/29/25-26	19/03/26	Service Budgets 2026/2027	The purpose of the report is to set out the allocation of budgets for 2026/27, for all Committees, following Council's approval of the Medium Term Financial Strategy in February 2024, as determined by Finance Sub	Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer	No	No	Yes	No	Scrutiny
CPC/20/25-26	19/03/26	Q3 Performance Update	To provide committee with an oversight of the organisational performance against the priorities and vision set out within the council's corporate plan 2025-29.	Assistant Chief Executive	No	No	No	No	Scrutiny
CPC/21/25-26	19/03/26	Q3 Strategic Risk Update	This report provides an update on the activity of the council's strategic risk register for Q3.	Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer	No	No	No	Yes in part	Scrutiny
CPC/42/25-26	19/03/26	Cheshire East Plan 2025-29 Delivery Plan	The draft CE Plan 2025-29 was approved at Council in February, delivery will be monitored with quarterly updates to Committee.	Assistant Chief Executive	No	No	No	No	Scrutiny

Task and Finish Groups

Group	Membership	Established	Purpose
Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation of Councillors (Final report being presented to CPC on 6 August)	Cllrs F Wilson, E Hall, H Moss, N Cook and J Snowball.	January 2025 – July 2025.	To review increasing levels of intimidation, harassment and abuse faced by elected members in the course of their work and identify what support can be put in place to assist members.
Governance and Decision-Making	Cllrs M Gorman, L Wardlaw, C O'Leary, M Beanland, G Gardiner, A Burton, M Warren, F Wilson and L Braithwaite. 4 Cons: 3 Lab: 2 Ind.	February 2025	To drive-forward a review of the council's decision-making and governance arrangements.

**Corporate Policy Committee
Work Programme 2025-26**

Briefing Reports/Reports for noting

Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Expected Circulation Date via the Members Hub
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion annual report	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion annual report - The purpose of this report is to update members on progress against delivery of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2025.	Assistant Chief Executive	October 2025

Note: These reports will be circulated outside of committee meetings.

[Library folder - Reports for Noting - Reports for Noting | Cheshire East Council](#)

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