

Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

Agenda

Date: Tuesday, 21st February, 2012
Time: 2.00 pm
Venue: Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road,
Sandbach CW11 1HZ

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.

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

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest/Whipping Declarations**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interests in any item on the agenda

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 1 - 4)
4. **Public Speaking Time/ Open Session**

A total period of 15 minutes is allocated for members of the public to make a statement(s) on any matter that falls within the remit of the Committee.

Individual members of the public may speak for up to 5 minutes, but the Chairman will decide how the period of time allocated for public speaking will be apportioned, where there are a number of speakers

5. **Planning Enforcement** (Pages 5 - 10)

To give consideration to planning enforcement operations and assess whether the Committee wish to investigate the matter further.

For any apologies or requests for further information, or to give notice of a question to be asked by a member of the public

Contact: James Morley
Tel: 01270 686465
E-Mail: james.morley@cheshireeast.gov.uk

6. **Pre-Planning Application Service** (Pages 11 - 16)

To receive a briefing on the pre-planning application service and the recent performance of the planning service.

7. **Parking Charge Scale Proposals** (Pages 17 - 26)

To give consideration to the proposed car parking charge scales.

8. **Private Sector Housing Financial Assistance Policy** (Pages 27 - 94)

To consider the decision on private sector housing financial assistance policy being made by Cabinet in April

9. **Work Programme** (Pages 95 - 98)

To give consideration to the Work Programme

10. **Forward Plan** (Pages 99 - 102)

To give consideration to the Forward Plan

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee**

held on Tuesday, 20th December, 2011 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor L Gilbert (Chairman)
Councillor G M Walton (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors A Barratt, P Butterill, H Davenport, R Fletcher, P Hayes, S Hogben
and G Baxendale

Apologies

Councillors G Barton, K Edwards and P Hoyland and A Thwaite

ALSO PRESENT

Cllr R Menlove – Cabinet Member for Environmental Services

OFFICERS PRESENT

Paul Griffiths – Infrastructure and Development Manager
Andrew Ross – Strategic Highways and Transportation Manager
Paul Burns – Parking Services Manager
Diane Bramall – Media Relations Officer
James Morley – Scrutiny Officer

154 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

There were no members of the Committee who wished to declare a personal interest

155 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/ OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present who wished to address the Committee

156 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on the 22nd November be approved as a correct record and sign by the Chairman.

157 STRATEGIC HIGHWAYS UPDATE

The Committee received a presentation from the Strategic Highways and Transportation Manager and the Principal Transport Officer about the current position of the Council's key transport projects. The presentation outlined how

infrastructure planning and delivery would be integral to the implementation of the key economic strategies of the Borough as well as the proposals in the Local Plan. The presentation proceeded to give updates on the current projects supporting 'All Change for Crewe', 'Make it Macclesfield' and the Sustainable Towns strategies as well as how national infrastructure proposals in the area will affect the Borough.

After the presentation the Committee asked questions and the following information arose:

- Members of the Committee looked forward to having an opportunity to have an input into the Council's response to the proposed High Speed Rail Network "HS2". Public Consultation was due to take place in summer 2012. The main priority for Cheshire East would be to support mitigation of the environmental impact of HS2 whilst maximising the economic benefits.
- The Committee believed that when consultation with local members was conducted on projects such as Junction 17 of the M6 and the Middlewich Bypass local members in the surrounding areas should also be consulted as these projects would have a wider impact on traffic in their wards.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted and the Strategic Highways & Transportation Manager and the Principal Transport Officer be thanked.

158 **PLANNING ENFORCEMENT**

This item was withdrawn from the Agenda

159 **CAR PARKING - INCOME**

The Committee received a report on Car Park Income from the Parking Services Manager and were asked to make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services. The Committee were asked to receive a report by the Council's Scrutiny Chairmen's Group (SCG) which was concerned by the underachievement against budgeted income for the first quarter of the municipal year.

The report suggested that nationally local authorities experienced shortfalls of between 5 and 15% which was attributed to the difficult economic conditions and reduced customer spending power as well as lower footfall on high streets due to internet shopping. A regional comparison showed that over the previous three years Cheshire East had performed consistently and maintained a reasonable position against the average.

The Parking Services Manager assured the Committee that car parks were being maintained to a good standard, were open whenever possible and that enforcement was performing well both on the streets and in car parks.

Some Members of the Committee suggested that the income deficit may be due to the tariffs being set too high. The Parking Services Manager stated that the figures that SCG had questioned were from before the recent tariff rise in August 2011 and income had shown a 5% increase since the tariffs increase. Analysis showed that parking demand was more price sensitive in some towns compared with others and there was no overall correlation between price rises, income and demand. Car Parking was subject to the laws of supply and demand and in many cases lowering the price would not increase income through greater demand because many car parks were already filled to capacity most days due to limited supply of spaces.

The Parking Service Manager stated that there had been positive feedback from the 'Pay by Phone' trial that was being conducted. This actually cost customer slightly more due to the phone charge however customers preferred the convenience of the system. Parking Services was also looking into installing pay machines that accepted cards payments which it was hoped would make paying easier for customers and encourage the use of car parks.

Members of the Committee suggested that perhaps the budget was too optimistic about the income that car parks were able to generate. Income had been relatively consistent over recent years however it had continued to fall short of the budget figure that had been used in previous budgets. The Committee suggested that next years budget needed to be more realistic and reflect historical/actual income which was achievable in the current climate.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted and the Parking Services Manager be thanked for attending.
- (b) That the Committee believe the budget for car parking income had been set too high and that the Committee recommend to the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services that historic data be used to create a realistic budget figure for the 2012/13 budget.

The Parking Service Manager left the meeting.

160 **CAR PARKING - PARKING CHARGE SCALE PROPOSALS**

This item was withdrawn from the Agenda.

161 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee gave consideration to the Work Programme.

RESOLVED: That the current Work Programme be agreed.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.35 pm

Councillor L Gilbert (Chairman)

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 21 February 2012
Report of: Development Management and Building Control Manager
Subject/Title: Planning Enforcement
Portfolio Holder: Rachel Bailey

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report explores the role of the Planning Enforcement Team and its resources, protocols and workload.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That Members of the Committee note its content

3.0 Reasons for the Recommendation

- 3.1 The Portfolio Holder has requested information on the resources, protocols and workload of the Planning Enforcement Team.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 All

6.0 Policy Implications

- 6.1 None

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 None

8.0 Legal implications (authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 8.1 None

9.0 Risk Management

9.1 N/A

10.0 Consideration

Resources

- 10.1 The enforcement of planning legislation in Cheshire East is dealt with by a team comprising 8 planning enforcement officers.
- 10.2 In addition to this there is an enforcement officer who currently sits within the minerals and waste team and specialises in minerals and waste enforcement issues including the monitoring of conditions and compliance on minerals and waste planning permissions. This officer covers the whole of the borough.
- 10.3 The 8 officers are split equally between the northern and southern parts of the borough. The northern team cover what was the former Macclesfield Borough Council area. The southern team cover the former Crewe and Nantwich and Congleton districts. Each team is managed by a Principal Planning Officer (Enforcement).
- 10.4 The departmental structure includes two Compliance and Monitoring Officer posts. However, owing to a reduction in planning fees received by the Council during the downturn in the economy, these posts have not been filled to date.
- 10.5 A Section 106 Officer is currently aligned to the Northern Team. This posts deals with the monitoring of S106 Agreements across the whole Borough. .
- 10.6 The enforcement team was significantly under strength until June 2011 after the sudden departure of one officer and the untimely death of another. It was not until May 2011 that the posts were filled. In addition to this, an enforcement officer was seconded to deal with planning applications between April and October 2011 to provide support in this area during a significant period of maternity leave (4 staff).
- 10.7 In addition to this, it should be noted that as well as investigating alleged breaches, Officers also deal with a number of retrospective planning applications and applications for certificates of lawfulness of existing use or development.
- 10.8 After the loss of the Planning Help Desk based in Crewe there is no administrative support for the Enforcement Team. This means that officers undertake tasks including the entry of case details on databases and generating acknowledgement letters themselves.

Enforcement Protocol

- 10.9 The Council has an adopted Enforcement Protocol which sets out how reported breaches will be investigated and allocates priorities, based

on the level of harm resulting, to categories of alleged breaches. The priorities and site investigation times are summarised below.

Enforcement Priorities

PRIORITY 1 – HIGH

- Works to listed buildings (demolition/alteration/disrepair);
- Demolition in a conservation area
- Works to trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order or in a Conservation Area
- Development causing immediate / irreparable harm to protected
- Ecology or causing serious danger to the public

PRIORITY 2- MEDIUM

- Operational development already in progress;
- Development where potentially immune from enforcement within 6 months
- Development causing serious harm to amenity;
- Breaches of condition/non compliance with approved plans causing serious harm

PRIORITY 3 – LOWER

- Other operational development which is complete;
- Changes of use resulting in some harm to amenity;
- Advertisements;
- Breaches of condition / non compliance with approved plans causing non-serious harm to amenity;

PRIORITY 4 – LOW

- Changes of use resulting in no harm to amenity;
- Untidy land

Enforcement Site Inspection Timescales

Enforcement inspections are undertaken on the following basis

Priority 1 – Within 1 working day

Priority 2 – Within 10 working days

Priority 3 – Within 20 working days

Priority 4 – Within 65 working days

10.10 It is intended that a review of the priorities will be undertaken by officers within the next 12 months. This review will consider whether the current priorities are fit for purpose. The results will be reported to the Strategic Planning Board in due course and agreement to the adoption of a revised protocol will be sought.

- 10.11 It is important to remember that when a person carries out development without the benefit of planning permission they have not committed an offence, rather it is a breach of planning control. It is not until such a time as the Council has issued a formal notice (e.g. served an enforcement notice) and its requirements have not been met that an offence has been committed (i.e. only then is a breach of planning control an illegal rather unlawful act). It is at this point that the Council may choose to prosecute and/or carry out works in default.
- 10.12 Whilst the Local Planning Authority (LPA) has a statutory duty to investigate the alleged breach, any action is discretionary. Legislation is clear that action should only be taken where it is considered to be expedient. Action should not be taken only to regularise a breach of planning which would ordinarily be granted planning permission had an application been submitted.
- 10.13 The LPA must be satisfied that, should their actions be challenged through the appeal process, they can mount a robust defence. The absence of such may lead to costs being awarded against them.
- 10.14 It appears that appellants are becoming increasingly willing to apply for an award of costs at appeal and the level of those costs can be not inconsiderable. However, it should be noted that no costs were awarded against the Council in 2011 in relation to enforcement matters.
- 10.15 In instances where no breach is found or action is not considered to be expedient, the case officer produces a report seeking authorisation to close that case. This report is considered by the Principal Planning Officer (Enforcement) who either accepts or rejects the request. This provides an audit trail for the investigation and sets out the rationale for the decision to close the case. It also accords with best practice advice from the Local Government Ombudsman
- 10.16 It is essential that planning enforcement directs its limited resources to those cases where demonstrable harm is being caused and that it does not get deflected by minor issues or neighbour disputes. Whilst such matters may constitute a breach, diverting resources to deal with them may have a detrimental impact on the effectiveness of the service and dilute its effectiveness.
- 10.17 The authorisation of enforcement action is delegated to the Area Manager North and South Team. A report is produced by the investigating officer seeking authority to issue a notice. This report, along with a draft enforcement notice, is sent to the Council's Legal Services for their observations prior to it being placed before the Area Manager.
- 10.18 Close liaison with the Council's solicitors is considered to be an integral part of the enforcement process. It is recognised that the solicitors

have many other commitments in addition to planning enforcement cases. However, consideration needs to be given to standardising response times, to ensure that it is possible to predict the timescales involved in taking action.

- 10.19 Should any recipient of an enforcement notice fail to meet with its requirements, prosecution proceedings may be instigated against them.
- 10.20 A report is prepared setting out the offence and considering the public interest test for prosecution. This report, along with instructions to the Borough Solicitor, is sent to the Council's legal department. The final authorisation for prosecution comes from the assistant chief executive.
- 10.21 There are instances where the Council should positively promote action that it has taken. A recent example of this is the direct action was undertaken at Timbersbrook in August. 2011.
- 10.22 The Timbersbrook Project had been operating within the South Cheshire Green Belt for approximately 7 years without the benefit of planning permission. It was an educational and recreation facility which resulted in the erection of numerous buildings, including a classroom facility and various animal shelters. Two planning appeals and an appeal against an enforcement notice were dismissed. However, despite this, the use continued.
- 10.23 There was no realistic expectation that the owner / occupier of the site would comply with the notice (i.e. to cease to use the land and remove all associated buildings and structures). As such, a decision was taken to turn to direct action.
- 10.24 Planning Enforcement Team worked closely with the Communications Team to ensure that any media interest was carefully managed and directed by the Council rather than by the transgressor who was well known for courting the press. This produced a more balanced media response to what was a sensitive matter. The Councils Animal Health and Welfare Team were also an integral part of the process given that before any clearance works could be undertaken by operatives from Streetscape, the animals had to be removed from the site and taken to temporary accommodation. The Portfolio Holder was closely involved in this process and undertook media interviews.
- 10.25 It is important that the Council continues to positively promote action that it has taken. It will do this through press releases produced by Development Management and issued via the Communications Team or, if the case merits it, via media involving the Portfolio Holder.

Statistics

- 10.26 In the six-month period between April and September 2011, the Council has received 525 reports of alleged breaches of planning control, of which 344 remain open.
- 10.27 In April 2011, planning enforcement migrated 2 legacy IT systems (the former Crewe and Nantwich and Congleton ones) to the Swift System used by the former Macclesfield Borough.
- 10.28 The migration occurred relatively smoothly but absorbed a considerable amount of officer time in ensuring it was fully configured and back office templates were set up properly.
- 10.29 Owing to the migration to one system, it is not currently possible to provide a full statistical analysis of the numbers and types of enforcement cases under investigation. Nor is it possible to provide figures for the numbers of cases closed. However, from historical data, we can say with some certainty that 50-60% of reported breaches turn out not to be breaches at all. They either relate to:
- Development which is permitted under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1990;
 - Do not constitute development as defined by S.55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990;
 - Are matters which fall to be dealt with by other Council Departments (e.g. Environmental Health, Highways
 - Civil matters which the Council has no jurisdiction.
- 10.30 Steps are being taken to resolve the issue of statistical information. Once it is possible to provide this information, bi-annual reports will be placed before the Strategic Planning Board setting out the performance of enforcement in accordance with the Local Performance Indicators. This report will then filter down to the Northern and Southern Area Planning Committees.
- 10.31 Since 1 April 2011, 6 Enforcement Notices and 1 S215 (Untidy Site) Notice have been issued.
- 10.32 The Council fought 5 enforcement appeals in 2011, all of which were won by the Council.

CESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 21 February 2012
Report of: Development Management and Building Control Manager
Subject/Title: Planning Enforcement
Portfolio Holder: Rachel Bailey

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report looks at the Council's new pre-application planning system and specifically the background to implementing charging, its current fees and initial reactions to its implementation.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That Members of the Committee note its content

3.0 Reasons for the Recommendation

- 3.1 The Portfolio Holder has requested information on the Council's new pre-application planning system introduced on 3rd October 2011.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 All

6.0 Policy Implications

- 6.1 None

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 None

8.0 Legal implications (authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 8.1 None

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 N/A

10.0 Background

- 10.1. The Council introduced a pre-application charging system on 3rd October 2011. These charges were approved as part of the budget package for 2011/12.

10.2. The intention is to provide a much more structured and improved service for pre-application advice. The advantage to the customer is that they receive:

- Identification of all the planning issues raised by application.
- Identification of all the requirements needed to validate and process an application.
- Earlier decisions on applications.
- Higher level of certainty concerning the decision the Council will reach.
- Cost savings (no unnecessary applications / additional work).
- Reduced confrontation.
- More involvement of Stakeholders (formal consultation with statutory bodies, Town and Parish Council's, Members and residents).
- Providing the necessary time, within a co-operative climate, to negotiate changes to a proposal so the development can meet policy objectives and the expectations of the local community.

10.3 The benefit for the Council is that the users and people who benefit from the pre-application service start to contribute to the cost of providing it and that this cost does not fall as a general cost to the Council taxpayer.

10.4 It should be noted that the current statutory planning fees do not cover the cost of pre-application planning advice.

11.0 Current Fees

11.1. The sliding scale of fees the Council charges is as follows:

Service Type	Cost	Description
Duty Planning Officer	FREE	Free for a single 30-minute session, booked on an appointment basis. It provides verbal advice only. It is available for any size scheme and is intended to provide initial guidance to applicants of all types.
Householder	£100	This service is for proposals to extend or alter a single domestic property, which is not a listed building and will apply to extensions / outbuildings to houses.
Minor Operations	£200	This service is for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential schemes between 2-5 units. • Non-residential schemes up to 500 sqm. • Agricultural Buildings up to 540 sqm. • Glasshouses up to 465 sqm. • Plant and machinery. • Telecommunication Masts. • Car Parks. • Advertisements • Forestry Services • Demolition of Buildings • CLEUD's • Discharging of conditions • Trees • Non-material alterations • Minor-material alterations

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes of use • Shopfront's
Replacement Dwelling	£335	This service reflects the complex nature of these types of applications, especially in green belt areas
Medium-sized Developments	£700 + follow up fees	For 'medium-sized' schemes (6-29 residential units, approximately 500-2999 sqm of development). It is not suitable for complex cases that raise significant planning concerns
Large Developments – the 'Development team'	£2000 initial meeting £1000 follow up	This service is designed for proposals that are more complex (30+ residential units, 3000 sqm+ of commercial floorspace). It involves one or more meetings with the process being project managed by a planning officer. Depending on the complexity and scale of the proposal, the team may comprise of officers from all parts of the Council. At the end of the process, the applicant will receive written advice from a senior officer.

11.2 Other planning authorities already charge for such services. Of our neighbouring authorities, Staffordshire Moorlands charge £1000, £750 or £500 depending on whether a scheme is a 'major', 'medium' or 'small' scale scheme. Similarly, Shropshire charge £1750, £1000, £500 or £80 depending on the scale of a scheme. Both Trafford and Stockport Council's are looking to adopt pre-application charging in the next financial year.

12.0 What is the potential future income that will be created from this process?

12.1 The Council has based its projections on the income expected from the pre-application process based on the number of applications received by Cheshire East in 2010-11 and on the experience of others who have implemented pre-application charging. However, it should be borne in mind when considering the below that:

- the numbers of the applications received by Cheshire East last year were lower than expected in 'normal' economic circumstances.
- the number of applications will rise significantly should the economy improve in due course.
- the majority of experience of pre-application charging is South and South-East based and therefore may not transfer directly to a North-West authority such as Cheshire East.

12.2 The table below sets out how the funding estimate is broken down

TYPE OF APPLICATION	NUMBER OF PRE-APPS EXPECTED	% TOTAL OF THIS TYPE OF APPLICATION	COST OF PRE-APPLICATION (£)	INCOME FROM PRE-APPLICATION (£)
Large Scale Major	9	90% (9 of 10)	2000	18000
Small Scale Major	12 (Between 30 and 199 residential unit schemes)	48.6% (36 of 74)	2000	24000
	24 (between 10 and 29 residential unit schemes and		700	16800

	medium sized employment sites)			
Minor	100	10.5% (100 of 952)	200	20000
Householder	100	5.6% (100 of 1780)	100	10000
Replacement Dwellings	20**	Not known (not recorded in NI 157 data)	335	6700
TOTAL	265	7.8% (265 of 3400)		£95,500

12.3 The total income was initially downplayed by £20k to reflect take up increasing during the first year. We therefore expected £75k income in 2012-13 from this service.

12.4 In relation to the potential future income that will be created from this process, this will obviously depend principally on the state of the economy and the development industry. Should the economy recover, then more pre-application enquiries can be expected than those estimated. Nevertheless, it can be assumed – based on others experience – that as the service ‘beds-in’ there will be an increase in revenue as the service matures, develops further and as it provides more services for Cheshire East’s planning customers.

13.0 Issues

Cost of Service

13.1. At a time when the planning system is being encouraged to promote economic growth it is important that charges are not seen as an impediment to development. This is the main criticism of customers who have questioned the need for this service. In these circumstances, Officers accept that the charging regime will require careful operation – and regular review.

13.2. However, it has to be remembered that this service is discretionary – in other words nobody is forced to use it. Instead applicants can simply choose to submit a planning application in the normal way if they feel the service will add no value to them. It is their choice if they wish to use the service. Indeed choice is deliberately promoted in the scheme since the applicant has the choice as to which Officers advice they require if they use the service (they can choose the Officers they require at any meeting).

13.3. Furthermore, the cost of our pre-application planning advice service is significantly less than than using private sector advice. There is some evidence elsewhere that suggests that the success of our service could affect the amount of private sector planning advice required by applicants as they may prefer a cheaper planning advice service that comes directly from the Council, rather than pay for ‘second hand’ advice on planning constraints from others.

13.4. Additionally, the governments own figures show that pre-application charges are no more than 0.2% of the total cost of a development anywhere in the country and significantly less than this in major schemes. Cheshire East has set it’s fees to ensure typically no pre-application fee is more than 0.1% of any total development cost. Furthermore, the Council’s fees are set well below the figure required for full-cost recovery at present.

13.5. Moreover, the Government in its own guidance: Planning for Business, makes it clear that:

“ for a more extended pre-application discussion, the Council may charge a fee”.

The Council are therefore doing nothing that isn't encouraged by Government Planning Advice.

Consultation

- 13.6 Service Users were consulted on pre-application charging before it is implemented. We will be reviewing its effectiveness at the next Developers Forum meeting on 12th March 2012. Fees will be thoroughly reviewed starting in April, with the aim of amending fees (if required) in October 2012.

Initial thoughts on the new service

- 13.7 Over the first four months of the new service, the Council has received 102 pre-applications made of:

- 13 Householder applications
- 47 Minor operations applications
- 24 Replacement dwelling applications
- 14 Medium-sized applications
- 4 Large-scale applications

These produced a revenue of £38 040 for the Council.

- 13.8 The positive news is that it appears that the initial take-up of the service has been strong. If repeated over a 12-month period, the service would provide revenue of £114 120 a year, well above the £75 000 envisaged initially.

- 13.9 In terms of numbers, the table below indicates the originally estimated and current number of cases expected in a year.

Type of Application	Original Estimate	Current Projection for the year
Large	9	12
Medium	36	42
Replacement	20	72
Minors	100	141
Householders	100	39

- 13.10 In summary, it shows that the majority of estimates were reasonable, but are slightly ahead of projections across the board, barring the householder service where take-up has been less than expected and replacement dwellings where take-up has been significantly stronger. Overall, the take-up of the new service has been stronger than expected showing significant confidence in the level and quality of the service.

- 13.11 Moreover, this take-up is all the more positive in view of the fact that there is still some evidence of other sections of the Council giving out 'free advice', in part because some of our pre-application discussions started before 3rd October 2011 (the start date of the new service) and in part because some sections of the Council have not engaged initially with the pre-application process as quickly as others (they are having free meetings). These 'kinks' are being ironed out by Officers at the time of this report.

- 13.12. Initial reaction from service users has been extremely positive, with several users of the pre-application service reporting:

- A more positive interaction with the Council staff across the board (i.e. beyond planning, as well as with planning).
- More timely and disciplined responses to enquiries.
- They found the responses they have received are more useful than previously.

13.13. Whilst clearly this process is in its early stages, there is some evidence to support the contention that the service is providing a much more structured and improved service for pre-application advice, as envisaged in paragraph 1.2 of this report.

13.14. Finally, the Government has indicated that Local Planning Authorities will be allowed to set their own Planning Application fees (currently set nationally) with a view to recovering more of the cost of providing the planning service. This proposal is out for consultation currently and is likely to be implemented within the next year. It will then be open to the Council to decide on the balance of charging between the pre-application stage and the planning application itself and this will clearly need to be taken on board when deciding the future level of pre-application charges.

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: ENVIRONMENT AND PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

	21 st February 2012
Date of Meeting:	
Report of:	Parking Services Manager
Subject/Title:	Cheshire East Parking Management : tariff structure options; and general update
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Rod Menlove

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 The report offers options for a Cheshire East car park tariff structure and provides an update on Parking Reviews, as well as developments proposed for future control of parking.
- 1.2 The current car park tariff structures vary between different locations in the Borough. They are a mixture of inherited tariffs from pre-LGR authorities, new Cheshire East tariffs and some pre-LGR tariffs partly adjusted in 2011 to achieve a fairer structure for some individual towns. This report suggests some alternative options for the creation of a new Cheshire East Council Tariff Structure, which
 - conforms to the Borough Parking Strategy and
 - takes account of the classification of towns and villages as assessed by the Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.3 The proposal includes an extension of the 'zonal' approach to parking tariffs in larger towns, reflecting different demands in central business centres and the needs of shoppers.

2.0 Recommendation: The Committee is requested:

- 2.1 to review the options presented in this report and to express a preference or to suggest other approaches for officers to consider.
- 2.2 to comment on the proposed developments set out in section 5. below

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Cheshire East Parking Strategy sets out the principles for the application of tariffs to car parks as follows:

Off Street Parking Management

It is expected that an appropriate charging level combined with the enforcement will help the authority to make the best use of the car park assets which in turn is likely to make parking easier and more attractive to the short term customers upon whom our towns rely heavily. Longer stay parking in the most convenient central car parks puts undue pressure on visitor and short term parking.

Long stay parking should continue to be priced more cheaply per hour than short stay and usually limited to less central car parks. (Where the capacity of central car parks can cope, long stay is allowed but controlled with higher fees).

The pricing mechanism adopted is appropriate for the following purposes:

- Managing demand, required to promote the use of town centre short stay spaces for shoppers and visitors.
- Ensuring that direct users pay for the service wherever practical.
- Providing finance to implement other strategic transport aims

Key Principles

The key principles that flow from the Parking Strategy are:

1. Parking should be managed in a way that assists the vitality/viability of town centres and villages through local parking policies and standards which take into account the needs of local residents, disabled drivers, shops, businesses, employment and education.
2. Local parking policies and standards to be consistent with regional and national guidance.
3. Parking management will seek to assist with environmental improvement in town centres.
4. Parking charges should be set at levels which
 - reflect the role and economic strength of centres,
 - effectively manage demand, and
 - respond to integrated transport and sustainability

Objectives

The objectives of the Strategy are linked to the wider Local Transport Plan “Areas for Action”:

Primary Local Transport Plan Area for Action (secondary areas)	Parking Strategy Objective
<p><i>Create conditions for business growth</i></p> <p><i>(Unlock the potential of our towns)</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Control and manage parking so as to sustain the economic vitality of Cheshire East town centres and villages 2. Provide excellent parking facilities, at an appropriate cost, to users and Council tax payers.

The Strategy also sets out how these objectives are to be achieved:

Provide excellent parking facilities, at an appropriate charge, to customers and Council tax payers

- Review charges annually, in accordance with the Council’s Fees and Charges policy, at least recovering the cost of the car park service. The annual review should consider the charges applied at comparator Councils and similarities in demand profile of each of the town centres and villages.

- The scale of charges should conform to a consistent pattern across the stay periods in all towns, to improve choice and optimise management of parking supply. The steps in charge level from one time period to the next should be broadly consistent throughout all locations.

4.0 Factors affecting tariff setting:

- 4.1 Town Rankings: The Committee previously studied the town centres of the Borough from a parking perspective and has devised a scheme of classification or ranking for these towns. This reflects the type of town in terms of services provided, as well as attractions and type or character. The results of the study were summarized in the table attached to the Committee's October 2010 Report (Appendix 2).
- 4.2 **Members are invited to consider whether such a classification of towns should be used in allocating parking tariffs, or if some other means should be used. For example, recent studies of economic well being might also be utilised.**
- 4.3 **Portas Review** : In considering town centres, the recent Portas report has highlighted the availability and cost of parking as one factor in the economic health of towns. Members may wish to consider whether allowance should be made for this, and in which towns, in setting tariff grades. Concessions will affect parking income but may be worthwhile if a wider economic benefit to specific towns can be identified. This should also influence Members' views as to whether new tariff allocations should take place in more than one step, or indeed at all in the short term. However it should be acknowledged that a decision to reduce short stay parking tariffs implemented during the 2012/13 Financial Year must result in a budget shortfall. 50% average of parking income comes from up to 2 hours' stay purchased.
- 4.4 **Tariff Steps**: at present there is inconsistency in the way the tariffs step up across time purchased. The tariff steps should ideally follow a logical pattern which is transparent to customers and at the same time reflects the needs to control long and short stay parking. The current position is shown at Appendix 1 in graph form, with a graph of the following proposal (table 1) also for comparison.

Table 1 Proposed Tariff Step ratios									
Uses	Tariff	1/2 hr	up to 1 hr	up to 2 hrs	up to 3 hrs	up to 4 hrs	Up to 5 Hrs	up to 6 hrs	up to 10hrs
town centre shoppers/visitors	A1	0.6	1	2	3	4	6	7	8
Less central	B1		1	2	3	4	6	7	8
small towns/edge of centre	C1		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
suburbs/villages	D1		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
rural/leisure/new	E1		1	2	3	4	5	6	7

- 4.5 In table 1, the ratios of the charge for each time period to that for 1 hour, are shown. This is to make clear how the steps in tariffs have been calculated. (ie the price for 2 hours is 2 x the price for 1 hour, etc).
- 4.6 There is a deliberate larger step at over 4 hours in central town car parks to reflect the need to discourage longer stay there. This is in line with the policy stated above. However it has been amended from the current position where the step, in Macclesfield, occurs at 3 hours. Consultation has indicated that this is felt to be discouraging to business in the town centre and so this 'step' has been moved to a 5 hour stay.
- 4.7 Charges are calculated from the starting point of the 1 hour charge. This ensures that given the need to keep the minimum stay charge at a level not to discourage shoppers, all other charges are then in proportion. (The charts below (Appendix 1) are a representation of the steps to illustrate the improved position in the proposed structure).
- 4.8 The new structure would have the advantage of a clear, logical background rooted in both the agreed Parking Strategy and the work of the committee. In some towns these tariff structures already apply.
- 4.9 **The Committee may wish to suggest other methods of devising tariff steps.** In principle any ratio could be used, though rounding to acceptable coin differences and price points need to be considered. (Also, the increase over time should not be too "shallow" a graph curve as there need to be clear decision points for each customer as to what time period to purchase). The important element is that a consistent calculation of the steps can be demonstrated and explained. Should the structure, or something like it, be agreed upon for the Borough as a whole, further consideration will be needed as to
- how and where the structure should replace the existing one, and
 - whether this should take place in one or more phases.

5. Developments in Charging and Control

5.1 Pay By Phone: In November 2011 Parking Services began a trial of this service. Customers may use their mobile phone to buy parking time and may also top up if time is running out. This benefits them by removing the need for change in moderate to large time purchases, and also avoids the risk of penalty. The trial seeks to determine whether, after paying the provider its management fee, the Council gains or loses income. In the two months so far there has been a strong take up and an apparent net gain in income (little if any loss in pay and display income overall) though penalty income may be reduced in the longer term. The latter should be seen as a benefit given reduced contravention leading to better use of the car parks and reduced penalty administration and complaints to the Council. Should this continue for a maximum of 15 months the trial will be converted to a contract via the procurement process.

5.2 Pay by card: two card accepting pay machines will be installed during February in two car parks. Should take up and income be sufficient, again roll

out across more sites in the Borough will be pursued subject to approval of the necessary capital bid.

- 5.3 Pay on Exit:** two sites in Macclesfield lend themselves to a further trial of this method of parking control. Customers park without fear of penalty due to being timed out as in a pay and display car park. The system is very expensive to install and maintain and also slows vehicle throughput considerably, which makes it only appropriate for very few sites such as the Grosvenor Centre and Town Hall car parks in Macclesfield. A more detailed assessment of this control method as against others, is available separately. For both this and card payments trials extension, capital bids have been made for the forthcoming financial year.
- 5.4 Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR):** cameras linked to a parking control system detect vehicle registrations and match these with either a permit list or with data from a pay and display machine which requires customers to enter their registration number upon payment. Discrepancies may be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice by default, in the post, (although human screening normally takes place before these are triggered).
- 5.5** At present this system cannot be used on public car parks operated by Local Authorities who must prove first that control by conventional methods on the specific sites is “difficult or sensitive” (Traffic Management Act 2004) . This is rarely, if ever the case on surface car parks or even multistoreys in most towns or villages. A further difficulty is that disabled drivers would show up as non payers and might attract a PCN. The alternative is to charge disabled drivers for parking on ANPR controlled car parks. Again the systems are very expensive although 100% compliance is offered and would also reduce patrol costs to some extent.
- 5.6 ANPR cameras and systems in a vehicle** may be used for on street enforcement where the TMA rules are complied with: typically these are for bus lanes and school crossings. Subject to capital bid approval such a mobile system may be purchased in the new Financial year and this should enhance mobile patrol effectiveness although this will not reach levels of penalty issue experienced in other authorities who unlike Cheshire East, have extensive bus lane contraventions. Authorities investing in such solutions usually have significant traffic control issues to deal with (typically in cities) which make the business case robust. In the case of Cheshire East, at present that case is marginal but has been submitted for capital support this coming year, as the need is likely to grow.
- 5.7 Retailer linked parking promotions:** we continue to offer opportunities for town centre retailers to link purchases to parking discounts. Two such schemes operate now, in Knutsford, and Wilmslow, whereby customers purchase a splittable ticket, redeeming one portion in the store while displaying the other in the vehicle as evidence of payment. The higher cost of the split ticket stationery is borne by the Council, while participating stores bear the cost of the refund to the customer. It can be an effective method of driving increased footfall or dwell time in stores leading to improved turnover and good will for the relatively small cost of a parking refund. This scheme was also operated in Congleton at the start of charging there but was discontinued by the retailers themselves. There should be scope to offer this type of scheme elsewhere in the Borough should retail and business groups consider it beneficial.
- 5.8 Other means of cost recovery:** The Committee may wish to consider other means of parking control and cost recovery, which could include such ideas as:

- a “buy two hours, get a third hour free” promotion in limited locations- designed to improve dwell times in shopping centres
- an extension of the dual ticket schemes referred to above
- improving or adding to pay by phone options to encourage return visits or longer dwell times
- create other charging options through extending current periods

5.9 Town Centre Parking Reviews: the programme of reviews continues with those for Alderley Edge and Crewe recently completed. A review of Handforth is now in progress. The reviews produce recommendations for improvements to on and off street parking management in the central business districts of our towns and in the smaller centres. Many of these improvements involve requirements to change or introduce new Traffic Regulation Orders or Car Park Orders and so these necessarily take longer to deliver due to the statutory processes involved. For this reason there is a time lag after completion of the Reviews to the delivery of the changes. The list of reviews completed to date is as follows:

- Macclesfield) : before 1/4/2009 by Macc BC/Cheshire CC
- Wilmslow) :
- Congleton
- Knutsford
- Nantwich
- Crewe
- Alderley Edge

It is anticipated that the remaining centres will be completed by the end of this calendar year. These include:

- Poynton
- Bollington
- Prestbury
- Middlewich
- Sandbach (planned for June / July 2012)
- Holmes Chapel
- Audlem

5.10 Car Park Improvements: there is a programme of continuous inspection of car parks to identify maintenance and development needs. These are collated and form part of the capital programme, demonstrating a commitment to reinvest some of the income surplus earned in the car park assets. Since the establishment of the Ringway Jacobs Highway contract, work required on Off street car parks is now forwarded to Cheshire East Highways managers for integration in their work programmes, hopefully to deliver economies of scale through the contract.

5.11 Residents Parking Schemes : these continue to be implemented where there is clear demand for a majority of affected residents in specific zones (groups of streets) and where such schemes are practical on the ground. Those recently completed or nearing completion are:

- Congleton (3 schemes)
- Alderley Edge (2 schemes) (subject to final consultation on TROs)
- Gladstone St Crewe

At other earlier stages of consultation are:

- Ladyfield St/Bollin Walk Wilmslow
- Central Macclesfield (to replace old off street schemes)
- Hungerford Road Crewe
- Meredith Street and area, Crewe

Many of these schemes originate from the Town Centre Parking Reviews and demonstrate the value of the consultative element of these reviews.

6. **Wards Affected** : All

7. **Local Ward Members** : All

8. **Policy Implications including**

8.1 **Carbon reduction:** Effective parking management should assist with reducing carbon emissions through reduced congestion and unnecessary vehicle movements in town centres.

8.2 **Health:** N/A.

9. **Financial Implications (Authorised by the Director of Finance and Business Services)** N/A

10. **Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)** N/A

11. **Risk Management** N/A

12. **Options**

12.1 To propose a different tariff structure, or to recommend no changes be made to the existing structure.

13. **Access to Information** : Contact

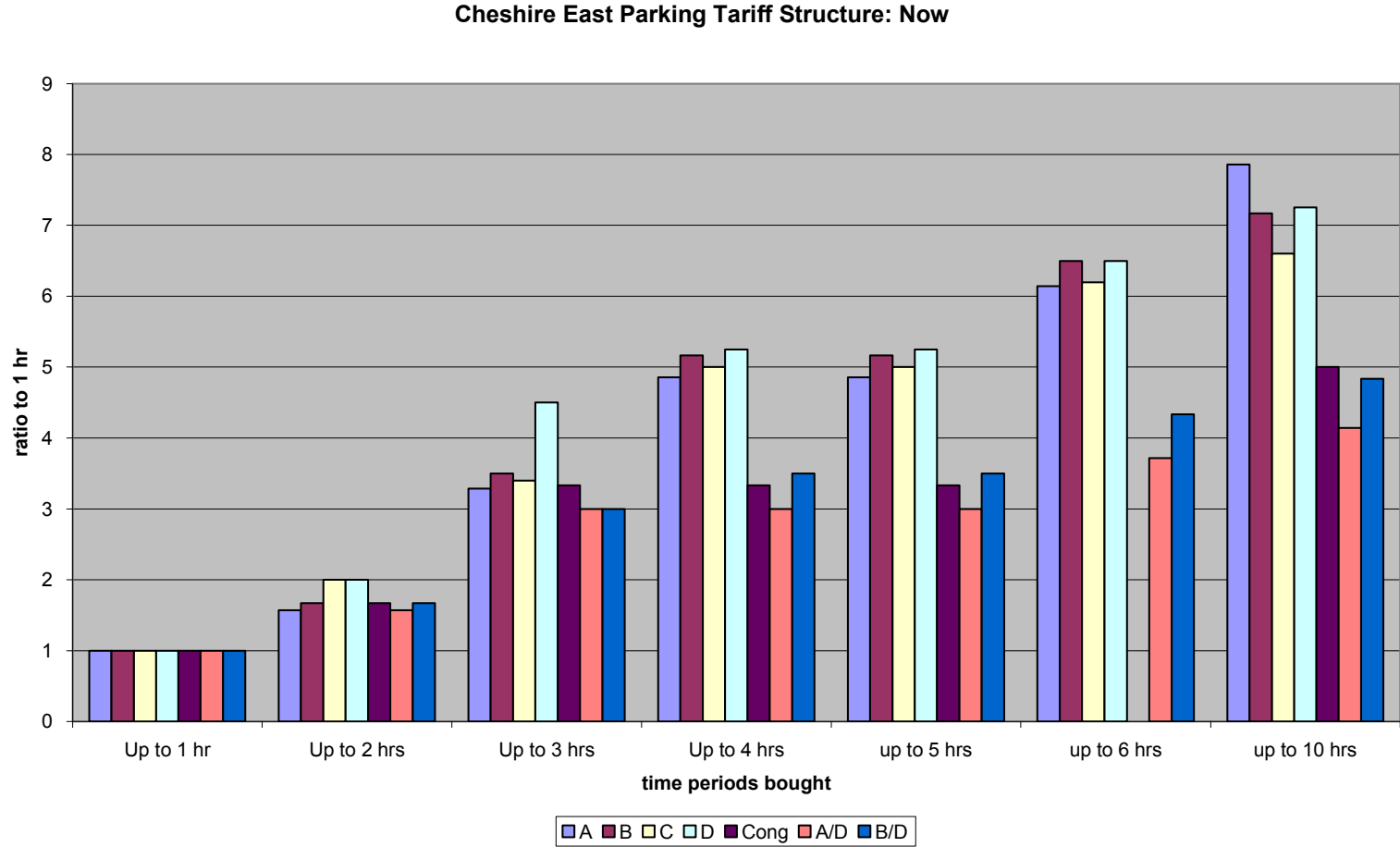
Name: Paul Burns

Designation: Parking Services Manager

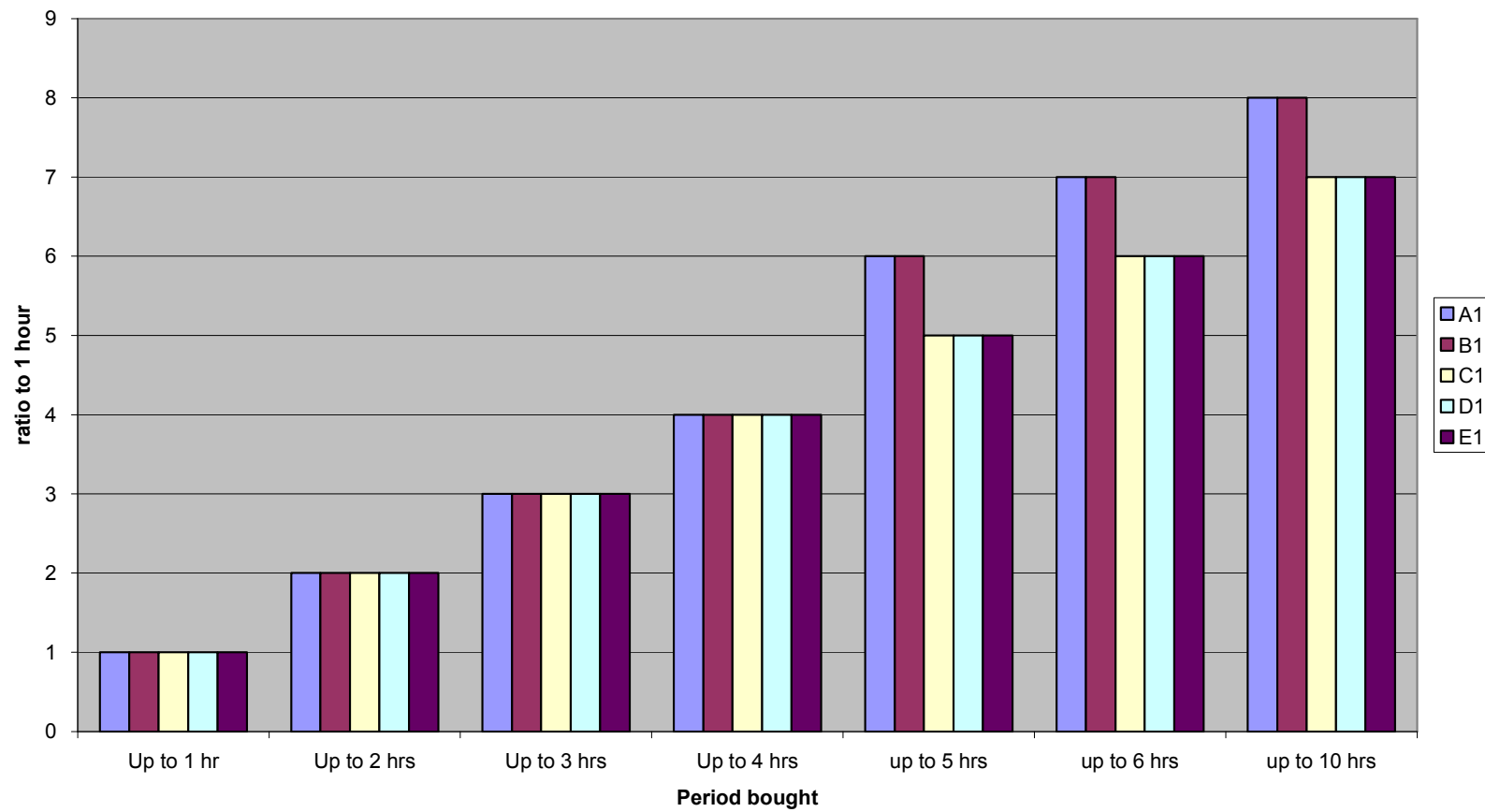
Tel No: 01270 537805

Email: Paul.Burns@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Charts of Current and Proposed Tariff Steps



Cheshire East Tariff Steps: Proposal



Appendix 2: Scrutiny Committee Assessment – Towns & Villages

Review of Towns and Villages within Cheshire East – July/August 2010 Draft Report of the Car Parking Task and Finish Group

Agreed Terms of Reference

To rank towns and villages by criteria, to ensure that, if parking charges are reviewed sometime in the future, comparable towns and villages are treated equally and a reasonable tariff is created.

TOWN	POPULATION	UNEMPLOYMENT LEVELS as at Oct 09 (%)	FACILITIES	RAILWAY	CCTV	RETAIL	FOOD AND DRINK PROVISION	NIGHT TIME ECONOMY	EASE OF ACCESS	PUBLIC TRANSPORT	NUMBER OF SPACES ON CHESHIRE EAST CAR PARKS	TOTAL	RANK
CREWE	(50600) 10	5	10	10	(48) 6	10	8	6	5	9	(2643) 10	86	A
MACCLESFIELD	(50470) 10	3.5	8	10	(78) 10	8	10	8	8	9	(2166) 9	90	A
WILMSLOW	(30020) 6	2.5	7	10	(62) 8	9	10	8	9	8	(1239) 6	81	A
NANTWICH	(14100) 2	2.6	9	8	(15) 5	9	10	8	9	8	(750) 4	72	B
KNUTSFORD	(12650) 2	2.7	10	8	(14) 5	9	10	9	8	8	(635) 4	73	B
CONGLETON	(26350) 5	3.2	7	7	(8) 3	7	8	6	7	7	(799) 4	61	C
SANDBACH	(17840) 3	3.1	5	7	(5) 3	6	8	7	9	8	(487) 3	59	C
POYNTON	(14360) 2	2	7	8	(6) 3	6	7	6	7	7	(204) 2	55	C
ALDERLEY	(4710) 1	1.4	6	8	(3) 2	6	7	8	8	7	(181) 2	55	C
MIDDLEWICH	(13450) 2	3.1	5	0	(5) 3	6	7	3	5	4	(133) 2	37	D
ALSAGER	(12440) 2	2.6	5	7	(6) 3	5	7	3	8	7	(403) 3	50	D
HANDFORTH	(8014) 1	3.5	5	8	(3) 2	6	6	4	8	8	(102) 1	49	D
BOLLINGTON	(7400) 1	3.5	6	0	(0) 0	4	6	8	7	4	(71) 1	37	D
HOLMES CHAPEL	(5780) 1	1.3	5	8	(3) 2	5	7	4	8	6	(47) 1	47	D
DISLEY	(4210) 1	2.1	4	7	(3) 2	4	6	4	6	7	(60) 1	42	D
PRESTBURY	(3290) 1	1.1	4	7	(0) 0	3	7	7	5	7	(122) 2	42	D
HASLINGTON	(6670) 1	1.8	2	0	(0) 0	3	2	2	8	4	(15) 1	23	E
AUDLEM	(1940) 0	1.7	2	0	(0) 0	4	7	6	7	4	(59) 1	31	E

The above criteria have been scored out of 10

The population, number of CCTV cameras and number of carparking spaces for each town are quoted in brackets.

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting:	21 st February 2012
Report of:	Private Sector Housing Manager
Subject/Title:	Draft Private Sector Housing Financial Assistance Policy

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 The Draft Private Sector Housing Financial Assistance Policy sets out the forms of assistance that the Council will make available to owner-occupiers, private landlords and people with disabilities to repair and adapt their homes. This report highlights the role that improving housing has in the Council's emerging public health role and corporate priority to tackle the wider determinants of health.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee give consideration to the Draft Private Sector Housing Financial Assistance Policy.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Council makes a significant financial investment through its capital programme to improving housing conditions for vulnerable people in private sector housing.
- 3.2 Housing is a key determinant of health, and as well as the key links with improvement of the housing stock, the Policy also contributes to the Council's wider strategy to support vulnerable people, reduce child poverty and support the Council's emerging public health role.
- 3.3 The private sector assistance programme supports our corporate priorities to support children and young people, ensure a sustainable future, prepare for an increasingly older population, and drive out the causes of poor health, as well as our safeguarding role for vulnerable adults and young people.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All Wards are affected.

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 All local Ward Members are affected.

6.0 Policy Implications including – Carbon Reduction - Health

- 6.1 Housing is recognised as a key determinant of health, with the condition and suitability of a person's home being closely linked to their health, their care, and their ability to participate in social networks. Poor housing conditions have a causal link to chronic health conditions including heart disease, stroke, respiratory conditions, mental health and arthritis and rheumatism. It is estimated that poor housing conditions in Cheshire East are costing the NHS £4.3million per annum. Improving housing conditions, such as making properties weathertight, improving indoor temperatures, and tackling damp, will have a positive impact on the health of vulnerable people, including older people, people with disabilities, and families with young children living in poverty.
- 6.2 Fuel poverty is the most recognised of housing's influence on health, where people are unable to afford to heat their homes to an adequate level without compromising other essential factors for a healthy lifestyle such as healthy eating or participating in social and physical activities. The Policy seeks to address fuel poverty by improving the energy efficiency of properties and assisting people to heat their home in the most economic way possible, which in turn contributes to carbon reduction, with existing housing being a major contributor to carbon emissions in the UK.
- 6.3 The policy also serves to support bringing empty homes back into use. Making best use of the existing stock contributes to carbon reduction as there is a reduced need for building additional housing and the resultant emissions associated with the manufacture and transport of materials.

7.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

- 7.1 The 2011-12 capital programme includes £300,000 to resource the delivery of the Interim Private Sector Assistance Policy 2009.
- 7.2 The draft Policy includes three formats of assistance: equity share loans, interest free repayment loans, and grants. Consideration has been given to the costs of delivering the assistance and the borrowing costs.
- 7.3 Equity share loans: There is no repayment due on the loan, instead a charge is placed on the property equivalent to a percentage of the value of the property which is derived from the value of the loan compared to the market value of the property. The Council obtains repayment of the loan when the property is next sold. The expectation is that the property value will increase over time thereby enabling full recovery of the loan amount plus additional funds in lieu of interest covering the lost investment opportunity of tying up capital in the loan. However, there is a risk that the property value may not increase or could fall resulting in a loss on the loan. A further risk associated with secured borrowing arises if there is a prior legal charge - if the applicant

goes into arrears in relation to the first charge or the first charge allows further borrowing (depending on the terms of their charge) then there is a risk that the amount of arrears/borrowing may outstrip the equity in the property. As the first charge will recover the monies due under that charge (and any arrears) in precedence to the Council's charge, then there may be insufficient funds to repay all/some of the Council's loan. This arrangement has the advantage of no monthly repayments so is relatively easy to administer.

- 7.4 Interest free repayment loans: The applicant would make monthly repayments until the loan is repaid in full or upon sale of the property, whichever is the earlier. The loan term will range from between 1 and 10 years based on a test of affordability for the applicant. Although these are technically a mortgage, the administration of these loans could be dealt with in the same way as a normal debtor to the Council. There is an opportunity cost of offering interest free loans: by tying up the capital in interest free loans, the Council loses the opportunity to invest the money and receive interest on its investment. Risks associated with secured borrowing outlined at paragraph 7.3 also apply to interest free repayment loans.
- 7.5 Grants are the most costly to the authority as the expenditure is only recouped in the event of a breach of grant conditions, but are easy to administer.
- 7.6 We have discounted using interest-bearing loans as these would take the form of a mortgage. Mortgages in general are difficult to administer. The Council currently uses a mortgage administrator to manage the remaining former district mortgages, which will all be repaid in the next few years. This currently costs around £4,900 per year, which would be an additional cost to the Council in future years if new mortgages were advanced. Alternatively arrangements and resources would need to be made available in house to administer any new mortgages, which will become more onerous if repayments are not maintained.

8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 8.1 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002 repealed much of the existing prescriptive legislation governing the provision of renewal grants to homeowners and replaced it (by Article 3 of the Order) with a new wide-ranging power to provide assistance for housing renewal, including for the purpose of acquiring living accommodation within or outside the council's area, adapting or improving or repairing living accommodation, demolishing buildings comprising or including living accommodation, and where such buildings have been demolished, constructing buildings which comprise or include replacement living accommodation. The Order also states (by Article 4) that before the powers contained within it can be used, the Council must publish a policy on how it intends to use them.

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 The publication of a policy setting out how we intend to use the powers within the Regulatory Reform Order will remove the risk of the Council acting outside of its powers when giving financial assistance for housing renewal.
- 9.2 The revised policy extends the use of legal charges registered at the Land Registry to all forms of loan assistance, replacing the use of local land charges as set out in the Interim Private Sector Assistance Policy 2009. This is the most secure method of registering the Council's interest in a property, and will ensure that the property cannot be disposed of by the applicant or their estate without the Council redeeming its interest following repayment of the loan. Risks associated with secured borrowing are outlined within the Financial Implications.

10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 The Government believes that everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home. Poor quality housing can have an impact on the health of the occupants and on the quality of life in an area. The Government's view is that it is primarily the responsibility of private sector owners to maintain their own property but it recognises that some owners, particularly the elderly and most vulnerable, do not have the necessary resources to repair or improve their homes. Local authorities therefore have an important role to play in providing assistance in these cases.
- 10.2 Tackling the wider determinants of health forms part of the Council's emerging role in delivering public health. The exact relationship between poor housing and ill health is complex and difficult to assess, however there has been considerable research which demonstrates the links. 45% of accidents occur in the home, and accidents are among the top ten causes of death for all ages. Approximately 10% of all falls in older people will result in an injury, of which half will have a fracture with the most common fractures being wrist, spine, hip, humerus and pelvis. The forecast for falls in the Central and Eastern Cheshire PCT area is outlined in the table below:

Year	Population Forecast 65+	Estimate of Fallers @ 30%	Falls with Injury @ 10%	Falls with Fracture @ 5%
2007	78,670	23,601	2,360	1,180
2011	86,800	26,040	2,604	1,302
2016	100,100	30,030	3,003	1,502
2021	109,000	32,700	3,270	1,635

Source: CECPT Annual Public Health Report 2009

- 10.3 Local data suggest that around 3,500 to 4,000 older people attend Accident & Emergency Departments (A&E) each year as a result of a fall. Out of a total of 55,103 people attending A&E at East Cheshire NHS Trust between April 2007 and March 2008, 1,484 (2.7%) were fallers over the age of 70 and 51% of these were admitted onto a ward, and 22% to fracture clinic, A&E review or GP follow up.

- 10.4 Cold and damp homes increase the risk and effects of cardiovascular, respiratory and rheumatoid diseases, as well as hypothermia and mental ill health. Young children, older people, and people with illness or disability are more likely to suffer the effects of cold and damp housing.
- 10.5 An interim Private Sector Assistance Policy was adopted in 2009 prior to vesting day of Cheshire East Council. This interim policy brought together the best practice from the predecessor local housing authorities, pending a private sector housing condition survey across Cheshire East. The interim policy set out the financial assistance available to vulnerable homeowners to assist them to address poor housing conditions.
- 10.6 The final report from the house condition survey was published in 2011. Key findings from the survey included:
- Overall, housing conditions in Cheshire East are better than the national picture, with 72.4% of properties meeting the Decent Homes standard.
 - However, the now defunct target set by the previous Government that at least 70% of vulnerable households in the private sector should be living in a decent home has not been reached, with 64.8% found to be living in decent homes. An estimated 11,000 vulnerable households in Cheshire East are not living in a decent home, and they do not have the financial resources to address their housing conditions.
 - There are an estimated 16,400 (11.7%) households living in fuel poverty, and having to spend at least 10% of their income on heating their homes. Crewe has the highest incidence of fuel poverty at 14.1% of the households in private sector housing.
 - Energy efficiency improvements for households in fuel poverty were estimated at £27.3million; £15.7million of this amount was needed for households on low incomes.
 - Excess cold and falls on stairs were the most frequently found severe risks to health and safety.
- 10.7 Further work on the financial impact of private sector housing conditions estimated that poor housing is costing health services in Cheshire East £4.3million per annum. Preventative work to improve housing conditions will assist the avoidance of costs associated with health and social care. Falls leading to hip fractures are estimated to cost £28,600 in health and social care costs. Speedy adaptations and repairs to prevent falls, such as improved lighting, handrails and grab rails, are around 400 times cheaper than the cost to statutory services of a hip fracture. In 2006/7, 503 people were operated on for hip fractures within the Central and Eastern Cheshire PCT area; the estimated cost to statutory services of emergency admission, treatment and support exceeds £14million. Many of the risk factors associated with falling can be potentially modified through multi-factorial risk assessments and interventions targeted at those at risk, including low cost environmental modifications in the home.

10.8 A number of problems were identified with the Interim Policy:

1. The method of entering into an unsecured loan agreement with the applicant which is then recorded as a local land charge was a lengthy, complicated process, which was leading to significant delays in approving applications for assistance.
2. There were numerous different types of assistance, which caused confusion for applicants, and there was little or no take-up of some types of assistance.
3. Applicants were experiencing difficulty funding their 50% contribution to some types of assistance, resulting in the works not being carried out.
4. The value of assistance available, together with the interest free loans repaid on sale of the property, made the policy economically unsustainable, in light of the abolition of the Regional Housing Pot in the Comprehensive Spending Review and the pressures on Local Government funding.

10.9 Despite the inherent problems in the Interim Policy, 345 households have benefited from assistance with major repairs, as well as 4238 households where we have contributed towards the cost of insulation, renewable energy or energy efficient boilers.

10.10 The draft Policy has been developed to take account of the problems identified in the Interim Policy, the findings of the house condition survey, and to contribute to priorities set out within the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Council's Corporate Plan, to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in decent, affordable and appropriate accommodation. We have also taken account of the pending Green Deal which will provide financial support for energy measures.

10.11 The draft Policy seeks to address four key objectives:

1. Removing the most severe health and safety risks for vulnerable homeowners
2. Tackling fuel poverty
3. Enabling people with disabilities to live independently
4. Bringing empty homes back into economic use, to increase the supply of affordable housing

10.12 Delivery of the draft Policy will deliver a range of positive outcomes for residents in Cheshire East, including reduced risk of home accidents, improved health and well being, improved economic well being, reduced fear of crime and increased opportunities to access suitable housing.

10.13 Financial assistance will be offered to residents in three different formats:

Interest free repayment loans

Applicants will make regular monthly repayments until the loan is repaid. No interest is applied to the loan, and the term of the loan will be agreed between

the Council and the applicant, according to how much they can comfortably afford to repay each month, but will not exceed ten years. This allows the Council to recover the loan in a timely manner, and we have found that older people in particular prefer to repay loans rather than have a long standing debt. The loan is secured on the property until the loan is repaid.

Equity share loans

Applicants will not make regular repayments; instead, the Council's percentage share is secured on the property until the property is disposed of. The redemption amount is based on the value of the property at the time of sale. For example, where a property is valued at £100,000 and the person borrows £10,000, the Council takes a 10% stake in the property. When the property is sold, the Council's stake is 10% of the sale price, so if the property is sold for £110,000, the Council receives a repayment of £11,000.

Non-repayable grants

Small grants will be offered in the following circumstances:

- where there is a serious risk to health and safety,
- to facilitate the transfer of care from hospital to home (hospital discharge),
- To support people with disabilities to move to more appropriate accommodation,
- to incentivise the provision of good quality private rented housing through the Cheshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme, and
- to top-up a Warm Front grant where the costs of the works exceeds the Government's maximum grant

10.14 The draft Policy addresses the issues outlined in Paragraph 10.3, by:

1. Replacing unsecured loan agreements recorded as local land charges with legal charges registered at the Land Registry to provide greater security of the Council's interest and simplify and expedite the application process.
2. Condensing and revising the types of assistance, providing greater clarity to applicants.
3. Revising the value of assistance on offer – in some cases we have reduce the maximum grant / loan available, and have also revised circumstances where we require applicants to contribute 50% of the costs.
4. Amending the method of repayment, by replacing interest free loans repayable on the sale of the property with a choice of interest free monthly repayment loans and equity share loans.

10.15 The draft Policy provides for the following types of assistance:

1. **Safe & Warm Assistance** – a loan of up to £10,000 for vulnerable owner-occupiers to carry out major repairs which threaten their health and safety. Vulnerability is defined by low income in accordance with

Government guidance on the Decent Homes Standard. The loan is repayable as either an interest-free repayment loan or as an equity share loan.

2. **Urgent Works Assistance** – a grant of up to £1,000 for vulnerable owner-occupiers where there is imminent risk to health and safety or there is another urgent need to carry out the work quickly. Vulnerability is defined by the Decent Homes Standard and/or where the resident has a chronic or terminal illness.
3. **Disabled Facilities Grant** – a mandatory grant provided under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 for up to £30,000 towards disability adaptations. The grant is means-tested, except where the disabled person is a child.
4. **Additional Disabled Facilities Assistance** – a loan of up to £10,000 to enable people who couldn't otherwise afford their contribution towards a Disabled Facilities Grant to go ahead with the adaptations to their home. The loan is repayable as either an interest-free repayment loan or as an equity share loan.
5. **Disability Relocation Assistance** – a grant of up to £3,000 to assist disabled people to move to a more suitable home, where their property is not suitable for adaptation
6. **Landlord Accreditation Assistance** – a grant of up to £1,500 to improve privately rented accommodation. Access to this grant will be restricted only to landlords who have been accredited as providing good management and property standards.
7. **Empty Homes (Occupiers) Assistance** – a loan of up to £10,000 to assist owners of empty properties to bring them back into use for their own use. The loan is repayable as an interest-free repayment loan.
8. **Empty Homes (Landlords) Assistance** – a loan of up to £10,000 to assist owners of empty properties to bring them back into use as rented accommodation. Access will be restricted to accredited landlords. The loan is repayable as an interest-free repayment loan.
9. **Improve and Lease Assistance** – a loan of up to £10,000 for improvements to empty properties that the owner agrees to lease to a Registered Provider for letting as social housing. The loan is repayable as an interest-free repayment loan.
10. **Warm Front Contribution Assistance** – a grant of up to £500 to assist people who are unable to afford their contribution towards a Government-backed Warm Front grant.

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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**Private Sector Housing
Financial Assistance Policy
2011**

**DRAFT FOR
CONSULTATION**

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Introduction

The Private Sector Housing Financial Assistance Policy sets out the forms of financial assistance which are available from Cheshire East Council to assist vulnerable homeowners, owners of private rented property and disabled people to improve or adapt their properties.

Cheshire East Council shares the Government's view that the prime responsibility for maintaining and improving housing rests with the owner, but acknowledges that there are occasions where it is necessary to intervene, including where vulnerable people are unable to afford to carry out urgent repairs that are affecting their health and safety.

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002 removed most of the prescriptive housing renewal grant legislation in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, and introduced a wide ranging discretionary power for local housing authorities to develop different forms of financial assistance to meet local needs. It therefore provides an opportunity for us to contribute further towards the Council's aim of tackling health inequalities.

To provide financial assistance for housing repairs and improvements, the local housing authority must first adopt and publish a policy setting out how it intends to use this general power to award assistance. An Interim Private Sector Assistance Policy was adopted in 2009, pending the development of a robust evidence base that would be used to inform strategic decisions about the type of investment required in private sector housing. This Policy replaces the Interim Private Sector Assistance Policy.

A Private Sector House Condition Survey was carried out in 2010 as a means of maintaining a detailed picture of housing conditions in Cheshire East. The survey provides us with a robust evidence base to inform our investment decisions. This evidence, alongside our experience of delivering financial assistance through the Interim Private Sector Assistance Policy, and regard to Mortgage Sales Guidance for Local Authorities and an evaluation of loan finance to improve housing conditions for vulnerable owner occupiers, published by Communities and Local Government in April 2007, has informed this Policy.

Key Issues for Private Sector Housing

Housing Conditions:

- Overall, private sector housing conditions in Cheshire East are better than the national average, with 72.4% of dwellings meeting the Decent Homes Standard, compared to 65.6% across England.
- However, an estimated £224.4million needs to be spent on repairs and improvements to bring properties up to the Decent Homes Standard:

Reason	Total Cost (£ million)	Average Cost per dwelling (£)
Category 1 Hazard	£105.1	£3,520
Repair	£62.7	£5,470
Amenities	£29.1	£15,620
Thermal comfort	£27.5	£1,680
Total	£224.4	£5,560

Source: 2010 House Condition Survey

- The majority of properties failing the Decent Homes Standard failed on one criterion (61.7%), and 30.3% failed on two or more criteria. In the majority of cases (72.5%) of properties failing on two or more criteria, the failures related to heating and insulation issues.
- The primary reason for failure of the Decent Homes Standard was Category 1 hazards (74% of non-decent dwellings), followed by Lack of Thermal Comfort (40.5%).
- The most frequently found Category 1 hazard is Excess Cold (56.2% of all Category 1 hazards), followed by Falls on Stairs (36.4%), Falls on the Level (18.3%), and Entry by Intruders (8.7%).
- Category 1 hazards were most frequently found in pre-1919 properties (39.6% of pre-1919 properties), and excess cold was the most common form of hazard (27.1%).
- 7.8% of private sector housing failed the 'reasonable state of repair' element of the Decent Homes Standard, with the highest rate found in Macclesfield (12.9%), followed by 9.7% in Crewe. Post-war construction in rural communities contributes to lower rates of disrepair (4.2%).
- 92.1% of properties in Cheshire East had a central heating system, which is above the national average of 89.7%. The presence of central heating in privately rented properties (86.4%) was slightly lower than owner-occupied properties (93.5%). Nearly 10% of privately rented properties had electric storage heaters, and nearly 2% had portable heating only.

- The average SAP rating in Cheshire East is 56, compared to a national average of 50. Poorest SAP ratings are found in pre-1919 properties (45) and properties built 1919-1944 (49). Properties built after 1990 had average SAP ratings of 66.
- Properties in Cheshire East are generally better insulated than the national picture: 63.7% of properties in Cheshire East had 200mm or more loft insulation, compared to 20% in England.
- 42.9% of the private rented sector has less than 200mm of loft insulation, with 15.6% having no loft insulation at all. Only 5.3% of owner-occupiers had no loft insulation.

Low Income and Vulnerable Households:

- Vulnerable households are measured by receipt of certain means tested or disability related benefits. There are an estimated 31,130 vulnerable households living in private sector housing, of which 10,950 are living in non-decent homes (35.2% in Cheshire East, compared to 39.4% nationally).
- Low income is most associated with younger and older households: 46% of 65+ year olds and 28% of 16-24 year olds had household incomes of less than £10,000, compared to 19.8% across all ranges.
- 33.2% of properties where the household income is less than £15,000 were classified as non-decent.

Area	Tenure	Vulnerable households in non decent dwellings	Percent vulnerable households in decent dwellings	Percent vulnerable households in non decent dwellings	Shortfall for vulnerable occupiers
Crewe	Owner Occupied	1,710	68.0%	32.0%	110
	Privately Rented	530	62.0%	38.0%	110
Macclesfield	Owner Occupied	1,130	72.0%	28.0%	-80
	Privately Rented	1,970	48.2%	51.8%	830
Market Towns	Owner Occupied	3,600	65.3%	34.7%	480
	Privately Rented	760	69.3%	30.7%	20
Rural	Owner Occupied	1,130	61.6%	38.4%	250
	Privately Rented	120	83.4%	16.6%	-110

Cheshire East	Owner Occupied	7,570	66.7%	33.3%	760
	Privately Rented	3,380	59.9%	40.1%	850
Total		10,950	64.8%	35.2%	1,610

Source: 2010 House Condition Survey

- The rates by tenure show that owner occupied dwellings had a higher decency rate (66.7%) and a dwelling shortfall of 760, whilst the much smaller privately rented sector had a lower decency rate (59.9%) and a higher shortfall (850 dwellings).
- The private rented sector in Macclesfield has the highest proportion of vulnerable households in non-decent housing (51.8%).

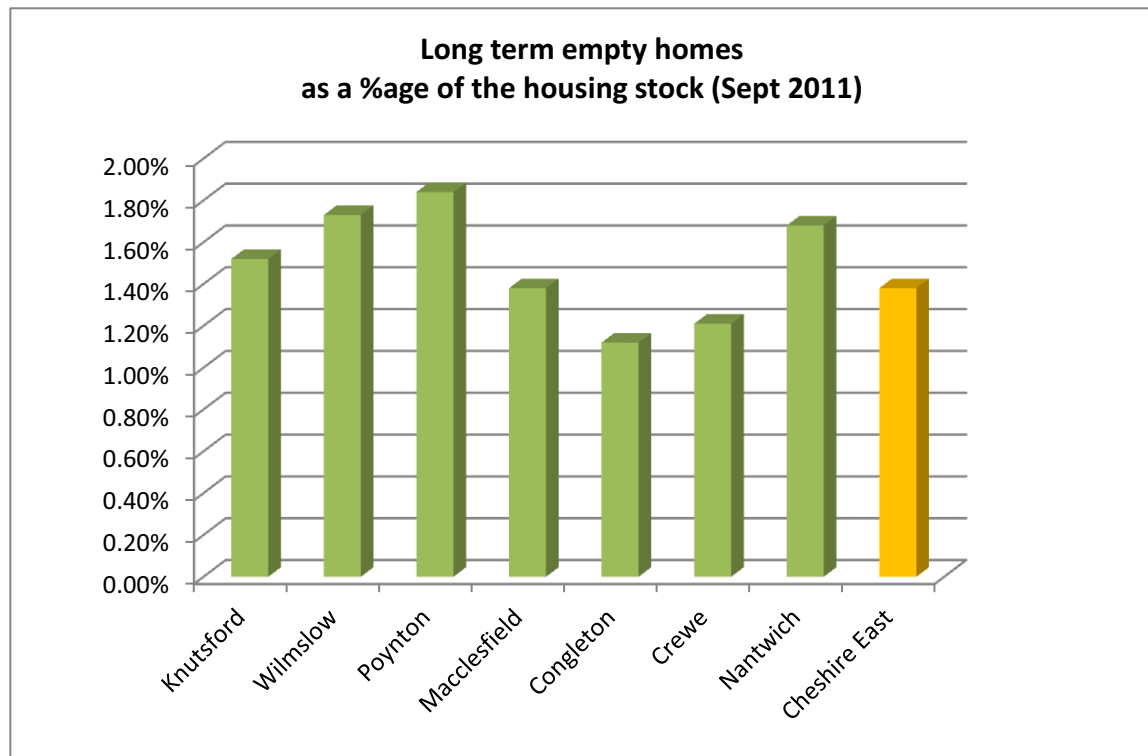
Fuel Poverty and Thermal Comfort:

- There are an estimated 16,400 (11.7%) households in fuel poverty in Cheshire East, compared to 15.4% nationally. Crewe has the highest incidence of fuel poverty (14.4%).
- 44% of all the households in Cheshire East with an income of £10,000 or less are living in fuel poverty.
- Excess cold was the most frequently found Category 1 hazard. The highest rates of failure for excess cold are associated with owner occupied dwellings (82.4%), those aged 65 and over (40.1%) and pre-1919 dwellings (44.4%).
- Poor thermal comfort was most likely to be found in properties that were built before 1919 (21.7%, compared to an average of 11.2% for Cheshire East), privately rented (16.3%) and occupied by the under 25 age group (18.8%). The under 25 age group were most likely to be living in properties with poor thermal comfort (18.8%, compared to 11.2% across all age groups).
- The estimated cost of energy efficiency improvements to properties where the households are in fuel poverty is £27.3million, of which £15.5million is for households in receipt of benefits.

Empty Homes:

At 22nd September 2011, there were 2,269 long term empty homes across Cheshire East, a reduction of 1,402 from 1st April 2009.

Empty homes are fairly evenly distributed across Cheshire East, and represent 1.38% of the total housing stock.



Analysis of empty homes data and local surveys demonstrate that there are three main contributory factors to the level of empty homes:

- The current economic climate has led to empty homes being on the market for longer than a six month period (28% of long term empty homes in Congleton LAP in 2010 were for sale or to let).
- A combination of empty specialist housing such as older people's accommodation, new build homes in a struggling market, and Registered Providers' decommissioned sheltered stock awaiting remodelling is inflating the level of long term empty homes.
- 94% of owners in Congleton in 2010 expressed willingness to bring their long term empty homes back into use, but quoted the affordability of major repairs as the main barrier.

An ageing population:

- The 2010 House Condition Survey found a higher proportion of 65+ year old households than the national picture (33% in Cheshire East, compared to 24.6% in England).
- We know with some certainty that the number of people aged over 65 is set to increase dramatically. By 2027 the 65-84 age group is forecast to increase by 56%, and the 85+ age group to increase by 103%.

- With retirement usually comes a lower, fixed income, which impacts on homeowners' ability to repair and maintain their homes in later life. Rates of non-decency in housing occupied by older people were higher than other age groups, with 33.2% of 55-64 year olds living in non-decent housing, and 30.6% of 65+ year olds.
- Ageing also increases the likelihood of becoming frail and dependent, increasing the need for home adaptations to keep people living independently in their own home. The House Condition Survey estimated that there is current demand for disabled adaptations of around £17.7million.

Health Inequalities:

- Housing is recognised as a key determinant of health, with the condition and suitability of a person's home being closely linked to their health, their care, and their ability to participate in social networks. Poor housing conditions have a causal link to chronic health conditions including heart disease, stroke, respiratory conditions, mental health and arthritis and rheumatism.
- It is estimated that poor housing conditions in Cheshire East are costing the NHS £4.3million per annum.
- Fuel poverty is the most recognised of housing's influence on health, where people are unable to afford to heat their homes to an adequate level without compromising other essential factors for a healthy lifestyle such as healthy eating or participating in social and physical activities.

Deprivation:

- Despite good overall quality of life, there are some parts of Cheshire East where the experience is different. Around 6% of our population (22,700 people) live in neighbourhoods classed as being in the 20% most deprived nationally, based on the 2007 Indices of Multiple Deprivation. There are disparities in economic prosperity, with low incomes and benefit dependency in some neighbourhoods, while average household incomes in parts of Crewe are below the national average at £18,000, while in some parts of Macclesfield the average is £65,000.
- Deprivation is linked to life expectancy, with women living in parts of Crewe having a life expectancy of 77 years, compared to 94 for women in parts of Macclesfield. A reduction in healthy life years will bring forward when people need to divert their household expenditure to meeting the costs of illness and disability, and when they will need support with adaptations to their home.,

Strategic Links

This Policy is informed by and contributes to a number of plans and Strategies:

Sustainable Community Strategy

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Link</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a sustainable future • Prepare for an increasingly older population • Drive out the causes of poor health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing appropriate housing and encouraging environmentally sustainable living • Improving care and support for those who need it • Focusing local actions on the wider determinants of health

Corporate Plan

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Link</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow and develop a sustainable Cheshire East • Improve life opportunities and health for everybody • Enhance the Cheshire East environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring there is sufficient, decent, accessible and appropriate housing • Reducing the level of non decent homes and investing in adaptations • Tackling fuel poverty and increasing energy efficiency of homes

Housing Strategy

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Link</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make best use of the existing housing stock • Meet the needs of vulnerable residents • Meet the housing needs of an ageing population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a range of affordable financial options for home repairs, reducing the fuel poverty, and bringing empty homes back into use • Improving access to suitable housing for people with disabilities • Delivering services to enable older people to live independently

Sub Regional Housing Strategy

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Link</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make best use of the existing housing stock • Meet the housing and accommodation related support needs of vulnerable residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decent homes, energy efficiency and thermal comfort, and empty homes • Older people, people with disabilities and vulnerable adults

Objectives of the Policy

The Policy serves to address four key objectives:

- Removing the most severe health and safety risks for vulnerable homeowners
- Tackling fuel poverty
- Enabling people with disabilities to live independently
- Bringing empty homes back into economic use, to increase the supply of affordable housing

A fundamental aspect underlying these objectives is the improvement in housing conditions across Cheshire East and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to live in decent, affordable and appropriate accommodation.

<u>Objective</u>	<u>Outcomes</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removing the most severe health and safety risks for vulnerable homeowners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduced risk of home accidents ▪ Improved health and wellbeing ▪ Remain living in their own home
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling Fuel Poverty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved health and wellbeing ▪ Afford to heat their homes adequately ▪ Reduced risk of cold and damp exacerbating chronic ill health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling people with disabilities to live independently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remain living in their own home ▪ Reduced risk of injury to disabled person and their carer ▪ Able to participate in everyday activities ▪ Improved health and wellbeing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing empty homes back into economic use, to increase the supply of affordable housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased opportunities to access housing ▪ Improved social cohesion

Framework for assistance

When developing the Interim Private Sector Assistance Policy, consideration was given to the format that financial assistance should take, with a combination of grants and loans being favoured. This Policy will also reflect this same format, by offering financial assistance in the form of repayable loans, but also retaining the 'safety net' of grants for the most urgent situations where people would be at risk if swift action was not taken, and where securing a loan is not feasible.

By offering repayable assistance, property owners will be able to take financial responsibility for the maintenance of their properties, in line with the Government's view, whilst receiving assistance at the time they need it most. Once repaid, the financial resources can be recycled and used to assist further vulnerable people in Cheshire East.

The Council must have regard for the homeowners' ability to make repayments. Therefore, where loan assistance is provided, vulnerable households will be offered a choice of repayment options. As the loan will be secured on their property, applicants are strongly advised to seek their own independent legal and financial advice, and the costs of professional advice can be included in the loan application.

Assistance will be offered to applicants in one or more of the following formats in accordance with this Policy:

- **Interest free loan:** The Council offers the financial assistance on a repayable basis over a period of no more than ten years, but without any interest or additional premium upon repayment.
- **Equity share loan:** The Council offers the financial assistance in exchange for a share in the value of the property. There are no regular repayments, and no interest is added to the loan. The loan becomes repayable when the property is sold or transferred, and the repayment will be based on the value of the property. For example, where a property is valued at £100,000 and the person borrows £10,000, the Council takes a 10% stake in the property. When the property is sold, the Council's stake is 10% of the sale price, so if the property is sold for £110,000, the Council receives a repayment of £11,000.
- **Non-repayable grant:** In exceptional circumstances the Council may offer assistance as a non-repayable grant. The grant is only repaid if any grant conditions are breached.

Overview of Assistance

Assistance	Target Group	Maximum Assistance	Type of Assistance	Eligibility criteria	Means tested?
Safe & Warm	Owner occupiers	£10,000	Repayment loan or Equity Share loan	Qualifying means tested, disability or armed forces benefits, or age 60+	✓
Urgent Works	Owner occupiers	£1,000	Grant	Qualifying means tested or armed forces benefits, or ill health	✗
Disabled Facilities Grant	People with disabilities	£30,000	Grant	Assessed as needing adaptation by Occupational Therapist	✓ (excluding children)
Additional Disabled Facilities	People with disabilities	£10,000	Repayment loan or Equity Share loan	Eligible for Disabled Facilities Grant	✗
Disability Relocation	People with disabilities	£3,000	Grant	Eligible for Disabled Facilities Grant	✓
Landlord Accreditation	Landlords	£1,500	Grant	Member of Cheshire Landlord Accreditation scheme	✗
Empty Homes – Occupiers	Intended owner occupiers	£10,000	Repayment Loan	Property empty for 12 months, or determined as high priority	✗
Empty Homes – Landlords	Landlords	£10,000	Repayment Loan	Property empty for 12 months, or determined as high priority	✗
Improve and Lease	Owners of empty homes	£10,000	Repayment Loan	Property empty for 12 months, or determined as high priority	✗
Warm Front Contribution	Owner occupiers	£500	Grant	Eligible for Warm Front grant	✗

‘Safe & Warm’ Assistance
A loan of up to £10,000 for homeowners
to carry out essential home repairs

1. Eligible Applicants

- 1.1 Any person who has a qualifying owner’s interest in the property and is over the age of 18, and has lived in the property to be improved as their only residence for at least 12 consecutive months at the date of application, **and**
- 1.2 Is in receipt of one of the following income-related benefits:
- i. Income Support;
 - ii. Council Tax Benefit;
 - iii. Income Based Job Seekers Allowance;
 - iv. Pension Credit Guarantee;
 - v. Income related Employment and Support Allowance;
 - vi. Child Tax Credit (with maximum assessable income of £15,050, or other such amount as prescribed in Housing Grants Regulations from time to time);
 - vii. Working Tax Credit (with maximum assessable income of £15,050, or other such amount as prescribed in Housing Grants Regulations from time to time); **or**
- 1.3 Is in receipt of one of the following disability related benefits, and assessed as having a low income:
- i. Attendance Allowance;
 - ii. Disability Living Allowance;
 - iii. Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit;
 - iv. War Disablement Pension
 - v. Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Guaranteed Income Payment; **or**
- 1.4 Is over the age of 60, and assessed as having a low income.
- 1.5 Low income will be determined through the use of the Test of Resources set out in the Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996 (as amended), and is where the applicant is assessed as being unable to afford the full cost of the eligible works and associated costs.

2. Eligible Properties

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

2.3 No financial assistance will be available where repairs and improvements works have previously been completed on the property through private sector housing schemes as follows:

- i. Within the last five years, repairs and improvements financed by 'Safe & Warm Assistance' under this Policy have been completed; **or**
- ii. Within the last five years, repairs and improvements financed by 'Decent Homes Assistance' under the Interim Private Sector Assistance Policy 2009 have been completed; **or**
- iii. Within the last ten years, repairs and improvements financed by 'Decent Homes Plus Assistance', 'Landlord Renovation Assistance' and 'Empty Homes Assistance' under the Interim Private Sector Assistance Policy 2009 have been completed.

3. **Eligible Works**

3.1 The following types of works are eligible for assistance:

- i. Works to repair or provide an efficient form of heating
- ii. Repairs that will eliminate a Category 1 hazard
- iii. Repairs that will eliminate a Category 2 Band D or E hazard, where an occupier of the property is a member of a vulnerable group for that hazard as defined in the HHSRS guidance
- iv. Repairs to make the property weather-tight
- v. Measures to reduce the consequences of flooding, in areas designated by the Council as at risk of flooding
- vi. Facelift works as part of an area based renewal or regeneration scheme
- vii. Assistance to pay a Warm Front contribution in excess of £500

3.2 Assistance will not be given where there are other suitable forms of financial assistance available, for example Warm Front, energy supplier schemes, or household insurance.

3.3 Works that have been started or completed prior to an application for assistance will not be considered.

3.4 Eligible works will be determined by a Private Sector Housing officer.

3.5 Ineligible works are listed at Appendix D.

4. **Amounts**

4.1 The maximum amount of assistance is £10,000.

4.2 Where applicants are assessed as having to make a financial contribution following a Test of Resources, the amount of assistance to be provided for eligible works will be reduced by an amount equivalent to the assessed

contribution.

4.3 The Council will not approve a request for assistance of less than £1,000, except where the request is for assistance to pay a Warm Front contribution.

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

- i. Reasonable cost of eligible works
- ii. Any VAT on the reasonable cost of eligible works
- iii. Eligible fees

4.5 Eligible fees that may be included as part of the application for assistance are:

- i. Specialist, technical and/or structural reports that are required by the Council
- ii. Building Control fees for eligible works
- iii. Support service and technical fees provided by Care & Repair
- iv. Technical and professional fees for services provided by the Private Sector Housing team
- v. Legal fees and disbursements incurred as a result of setting up the loan
- vi. Valuation fees
- vii. Financial advice
- viii. Lenders' fees for registering a second charge

4.6 A technical and professional services fee of £100, or 5% of the reasonable cost of the eligible works excluding VAT, whichever is the greater, will be included as part of the loan, for services provided by the Council to facilitate the application process.

4.7 Where applications for assistance are submitted through Care & Repair, the Private Sector Housing team's technical and professional services fee will be waived in lieu of any fees for Care & Repair. A fee of £100, or 10% of the reasonable cost of eligible works excluding VAT, whichever is the greater, can be included as part of the application.

5. **Application Process**

5.1 Applicants must complete an initial enquiry form for assistance. Where an enquiry is determined as eligible for assistance, the Council will issue an application pack.

5.2 Applications must be made on the Council's official application form, and accompanied by at least two written quotations on contractors' letter headed paper for each item of eligible work, and any other information that the Council considers necessary to be able to consider an application for assistance.

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

5.4 Before an application is approved, the applicant and the Council must enter into a loan agreement.

5.5 The Council will advise whether an application for assistance has been approved or refused in writing, together with the value of the assistance that has been approved. Where an application for assistance is refused, the Council will provide a written statement of the reasons for refusal, and details of any appeals procedure.

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

6.1 Works must be carried out by a contractor whose quotation was accepted as part of the application for assistance. Any request to change the contractor must be made in writing. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld by the Council.

6.2 The eligible works must be started within three months and completed within six months of the date of approval. Requests for additional time to start or complete the works must be made in writing before the end of the relevant period. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld by the Council.

6.3 In the event of unforeseen work or an increase in costs arising during the course of the works, the amount of the loan may be increased, subject to the maximum loan amount as set out at paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2. The minimum amount of additional assistance that will be considered is £100. Additional fees will be incurred for the registration of an amended legal charge.

6.4 Conditions relating to payment of assistance are listed at Appendix F.

7. **Conditions of Assistance:**

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

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

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

- 7.3 The applicant must live in the property as their only residence.
- 7.4 A valid policy for buildings insurance sufficient to reinstate the building must remain in force until the assistance is repaid, with the Council's interest in the property noted on the policy.
- 7.5 Where an applicant has provided false or misleading information in their application for assistance or in their request for payment, the approval of assistance will be withdrawn and a demand made for repayment of any monies already paid.
- 7.6 The Council may by written notice require the applicant to provide a statement within 21 days showing how the conditions of assistance are being fulfilled.
- 7.7 Further applications for financial assistance for repairs to the same property will not be considered under this Policy and subsequent versions of this Policy, for a period of ten years from the certified date of completion.

Urgent Works Assistance

A grant of up to £1,000 for homeowners to carry out urgent home safety measures

1. Eligible Applicants

1.1 Any person who has a qualifying owner's interest in the property, and is over the age of 18, and has lived in the property to be improved as their only residence for at least 18 consecutive months at the date of application, **and**

1.2.1 Is in receipt of one of the following income-related benefits:

- i. Income Support
- ii. Council Tax Benefit
- iii. Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- iv. Pension Credit Guarantee
- v. Income related Employment and Support Allowance
- vi. Child Tax Credit (with maximum assessable income of £15,050, or other such amount as prescribed in Housing Grants Regulations from time to time)
- vii. Working Tax Credit (with maximum assessable income of £15,050, or other such amount as prescribed in Housing Grants Regulations from time to time), **or**

1.2.2 Is in receipt of one of the following Armed Forces related benefits:

- i. War Disablement Pension
- ii. Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Guaranteed Income Payment, **or**

1.2.3 Has one of the following health conditions (or a member of the household has one of the following health conditions) and is referred by a health or social care professional:

- i. Respiratory disease (for example, COPD, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, severe asthma)
- ii. Cardiovascular disease (for example, heart disease and stroke)
- iii. Cancer
- iv. Terminal illness

2. Eligible Properties

2.1 The property must be situated in Cheshire East.

3. Eligible Works

3.1 The following types of work are eligible for assistance:

- i. Urgent works to reduce or eliminate an imminent risk to health and safety, for example Band A Category 1 hazards, or repairs to heating or hot water;
- ii. Essential repairs to facilitate the transfer of care from hospital or other care facility, to home.

3.2 Assistance will not be given where there are other suitable forms of financial assistance available, for example Warm Front, energy supplier schemes, or household insurance.

3.3 Works that are completed prior to the application for assistance will not be considered.

3.4 Eligible works will be determined by a Private Sector Housing officer.

3.5 Ineligible works are listed at Appendix D.

4. **Amounts**

4.1 The maximum amount of assistance is £1,000.

4.2 The maximum amount will include the cost of eligible works, any VAT on eligible works, and eligible fees.

4.3 Eligible fees that may be included as part of an application for assistance are specialist and technical reports, such as electrical or gas safety reports, as requested by the Council.

5. **Application Process**

5.1 Applications must be made on the Council's official application form, and accompanied by at least one written quotation on contractors' letter headed paper, and any other information that the Council considers necessary to be able to consider an application for assistance.

5.2 The Council will advise whether an application for assistance has been approved or refused in writing, together with the value of the assistance that has been approved. Where an application for assistance is refused, the Council will provide a written statement of the reasons for refusal, and details of any appeals procedure.

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

6.1 Works must be carried out by a contractor whose quotation was accepted as

part of the application for assistance. A request to change the contractor must be made in writing. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld by the Council.

- 6.2 The eligible works must be started and completed within one month of the date of approval. Requests for additional time to start or complete the works must be made in writing before the end of the relevant period. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld by the Council.
- 6.3 In the event of unforeseen work or an increase in costs arising during the course of the works, the amount of the grant may be increased, subject to the maximum grant as set out at Paragraph 4.1.
- 6.4 Conditions relating to payment of assistance are listed at Appendix F.

7. **Conditions of Assistance**

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

Disabled Facilities Grant

A mandatory grant of up to £30,000 to help people with disabilities to achieve independent living in their own home

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

1. Eligible Applicants

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

2. Eligible Properties

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

3. Eligible Works

- 3.1 The works must be necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled person.
- 3.2 It must be reasonable and practicable to carry out the works, having regard to the age and condition of the property.
- 3.3 The works must be for at least one of the following purposes:
 - a) Facilitating access by the disabled person to and from the dwelling, qualifying houseboat or caravan, or the building in which the dwelling is situated;
 - b) Making the dwelling, qualifying houseboat or caravan, or the building in which the dwelling is situated, safe for the disabled person and other persons residing with them;
 - c) Facilitating access by the disabled person to a room used or usable as the principal family room;
 - d) Facilitating access by the disabled person to, or providing for them, a room used or usable for sleeping;
 - e) Facilitating access by the disabled person to, or providing for them, a room in which there is a lavatory, or facilitating for the disabled person the use of a lavatory;
 - f) Facilitating access by the disabled person to, or providing for them, a

room in which there is a bath or shower (or both), or facilitating for the disabled person the use of a bath or shower;

- g) Facilitating access by the disabled person to, or providing for them, a room in which there is a wash hand basin, or facilitating for the disabled person the use of a wash hand basin;
- h) Facilitating the preparation and cooking of food by the disabled person
- i) Providing or improving any heating system in the dwelling to meet the needs of the disabled person
- j) Facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of a source of power, light or heat by altering the controls or the position of the controls, or providing additional controls
- k) Facilitating access around the dwelling, qualifying houseboat or caravan for the disabled person to enable them to provide care for another person who is normally resident there
- l) Facilitating access to and from the garden for the disabled person
- m) Making access to and from the garden safe for the disabled person
- n) Such other purposes as may be specified by order of the Secretary of State.

3.4 Works that are started or completed prior to the approval of the application for grant assistance will not be considered.

3.5 Eligible works will be determined by a Private Sector Housing officer in consultation with Social Services.

4. **Amounts**

4.1 The maximum amount of grant allowed will be £30,000, or other such amount determined by the Secretary of State.

4.2 Applicants will be subject to a Test of Resources in accordance with the Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996 (as amended) to determine whether all or any assistance will be made available. Where the applicant is in receipt of a means-tested benefit or the adaptations is for a disabled child under 16 years of age or a young person in full-time education under 20 years of age, there will be no Test of Resources.

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

4.4 The maximum amount of grant will include the cost of eligible works, any VAT on eligible works, and eligible fees.

4.5 Eligible fees that may be included as part of the application for assistance are listed at Appendix C.

- 4.6 A technical and professional services fee of £100, or 5% of the cost of the eligible works excluding VAT, whichever is the greater, will be included as part of the loan, for services provided by the Private Sector Housing team as part of the application process.
- 4.7 Applicants can use the services of an approved Home Improvement Agency to make an application. A fee of £100 or 10% of the cost of the eligible works excluding VAT, whichever is the greater, may be included as part of the application for assistance. In these circumstances, the Council's technical and professional services fee will be waived.

5. **Application Process**

- 5.1 Applicants must submit a valid application, consisting of:
- i. a completed application form, together with evidence of welfare benefit entitlement, income, savings, shares and capital
 - ii. details of the works to be carried out,
 - iii. two written quotations for each type of work from contractors, unless otherwise directed by the Council,
 - iv. owner's, tenant's, and/or occupier's certificate,
 - v. details of any charges for preliminary services and fees, and
 - vi. proof of ownership and /or written consent of all owners.
- 5.2 The Council must satisfy itself that the works are necessary and appropriate by consulting with the Social Services department, and will assess whether the proposed works are reasonable and practicable, and will carry out a Test of Resources to determine financial eligibility.
- 5.3 The Council will approve or refuse the application for grant assistance in writing not later than six months from the date of a valid application, together with the value of the grant that has been approved. Where an application for assistance is refused, the Council will provide a written statement of the reasons for refusal, and details of any appeals procedure.

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

- 6.1 Works must be carried out by a contractor whose quotation was accepted as part of the application for assistance. A request to change the contractor must be made in writing. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld by the Council.
- 6.2 The eligible works must be started and completed within twelve months of the date of approval, or other such date stipulated by the Council. Requests for additional time to carry out the works must be made in writing before the expiry date. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld by the Council.

6.3 In the event of unforeseen work or an increase in costs arising during the course of the works, the amount of the grant may be increased, subject to the maximum grant as set out at Paragraphs 4.1 to 4.3.

6.4 Conditions relating to payment of assistance are listed at Appendix D.

7. **Conditions of Assistance**

7.1 In accordance with the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996: Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of grant) General Consent 2008:

7.1.1 If the applicant disposes of the property within 10 years of the certified date of completion, and the applicant has a qualifying owner's interest in the property, the amount of assistance in excess of £5,000 will become repayable, subject to a maximum amount repayable of £10,000.

7.1.2 The Council may, at its discretion, waive any demand for repayment of assistance once it has considered:

- i. the extent to which the grant recipient would suffer financial hardship were they to be required to repay all or any of the grant;
- ii. whether the disposal of the premises is to enable the grant recipient to take up employment, or to change the location of their employment;
- iii. whether the disposal is made for reasons connected with the physical or mental health or well being of the grant recipient or of a disabled occupant of the premises; and
- iv. whether the disposal is made to enable the grant recipient to live with, or near, any person who is disabled or infirm and in need of care, which the grant recipient is intending to provide, or who is intending to provide care of which the grant recipient is in need by reason of disability or infirmity.

7.2 Requests for exemptions to repayment must be made in writing.

7.3 The Council reserves the right to remove equipment, such as lifts, when it is no longer required by the disabled person. Where it is clear that the equipment will not be reused due to its age or condition the Council may waive its right to recover such equipment.

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

Additional Disabled Facilities Assistance

***A loan of up to £10,000 for homeowners to ‘top-up’
a mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant to enable
the eligible adaptations to be completed***

1. Eligible Applicants

- 1.1 Any person who has a qualifying owner’s interest in the property, and is over the age of 18, and who qualifies for and is awarded a Disabled Facilities Grant.

2. Eligible Properties

- 2.1 The property must be situated in Cheshire East.
- 2.2 The property must be registered at the Land Registry.
- 2.3 The property must be the only or main residence of the disabled person for whom the adaptation is intended.

3. Eligible Works

- 3.1 Adaptations that meet the purposes specified in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (refer to ‘Eligible Works’ under Disabled Facilities Grants), where:
- i. The cost of the eligible works, VAT and fees exceeds the maximum Disabled Facilities Grant, or
 - ii. Following a Test of Resources, the applicant is unable to afford their assessed contribution
- 3.2 Assistance will not be given for works that are in addition to the eligible mandatory works, for example where an applicant carries out further home improvements in addition to the adaptation being funded by a Disabled Facilities Grant, or provides for the adaptation in a different way to that recommended by the Council.
- 3.3 Works that are started or completed prior to the approval of the application for assistance will not be considered.
- 3.4 Eligible works will be determined by a Private Sector Housing officer in consultation with Social Services.

4. Amounts

- 4.1 The maximum amount of assistance is £10,000.
- 4.2 The amount will be calculated as the total amount of assistance required in excess of the maximum permitted Disabled Facilities Grant, and / or the total amount of assistance required to meet the applicant's assessed contribution for the Disabled Facilities Grant, combined with any eligible fees.
- 4.3 Eligible fees that may be included as part of the application for assistance are:
 - i. Legal fees and disbursements incurred as a result of setting up the loan
 - ii. Financial advice
 - iii. Lenders' fees for registering a second charge

5. **Application Process**

- 5.1 Applications will only be considered in conjunction with an eligible mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant application.
- 5.2 Applications must be made on the Council's official application form, and be accompanied by any information that the Council considers necessary to be able to consider an application for assistance.
- 5.3 Before approving an application, the Council will have regard to the applicant's ability to repay the assistance. The Council will take into account any charges already secured on the property, bankruptcy checks, the level of equity available in the property, and any information obtained in the course of its checks which reveal financial difficulties within the last 6 months. The Council will not award assistance to an applicant where the existing charges registered on the property combined with the amount of financial assistance requested would reduce the available equity in the property to 10% or less of the property value.
- 5.4 Before an application is approved, the applicant and the Council must enter into a loan agreement.
- 5.5 The Council will advise whether an application for assistance has been approved or refused in writing, together with the value of the assistance that has been approved. Where an application for assistance is refused, the Council will provide a written statement of the reasons for refusal, and details of any appeals procedure.

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

- 6.1 Works must be carried out by a contractor whose quote was accepted as part of the application for assistance. A request to change the contractor must be made in writing. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld by the Council.

6.2 The eligible works must be started and completed within twelve months of the date of approval, or other such date stipulated by the Council. Requests for additional time to carry out the works must be made in writing before the expiry date. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld by the Council.

6.3 In the event of unforeseen work or an increase in costs arising during the course of the works, the amount of the loan may be increased, subject to the maximum amount as set out at Paragraph 4.1. The minimum amount of additional assistance that will be considered is £100. Additional fees will be incurred for the registration of an amended legal charge.

6.4 Conditions relating to payment of assistance are listed at Appendix F.

7. **Conditions of Assistance**

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

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

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

7.3 The applicant and / or the disabled person to whom the Disabled Facilities Grant application relates must live in the property as their only or main residence.

7.4 A valid policy for buildings insurance sufficient to reinstate the building must remain in force until the assistance is repaid, with the Council's interest in the property noted on the policy.

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

7.6 The Council may by written notice require the applicant to provide a statement within 21 days showing how the conditions of assistance are being fulfilled.

Disability Relocation Assistance

A grant of up to £3,000 to assist people with disabilities with the costs of moving home

1. Eligible Applicants

1.1 Any person over the age of 18 who is, or is applying on behalf of, a disabled person who has been assessed by the Social Services department as being in need of adaptations that would meet the criteria for purposes that a Disabled Facilities Grant may be made, **and**

1.2.1 Is in receipt of one of the following income-related benefits:

- i. Income Support;
- ii. Council Tax Benefit;
- iii. Income Based Job Seekers Allowance;
- iv. Pension Credit Guarantee;
- v. Income Related Employment and Support Allowance;
- viii. Child Tax Credit (with maximum assessable income of £15,050, or other such amount as prescribed in Housing Grants Regulations from time to time);
- ix. Working Tax Credit (with maximum assessable income of £15,050, or other such amount as prescribed in Housing Grants Regulations from time to time); **or**

1.2.2 Is in receipt of one of the following disability related benefits, and assessed as having a low income:

- i. Attendance Allowance;
- ii. Disability Living Allowance;
- iii. Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit;
- iv. War Disablement Pension;
- v. Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Guaranteed Income Payment; **or**

1.2.3 Is assessed as having a low income.

1.3 Low income will be determined through the use of the Test of Resources set out in the Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996 (as amended), and is where the applicant is assessed as being unable to afford the full cost of the eligible expenses.

2. Eligible Properties

2.1 The current property (that is, the property that the disabled person is moving from) must be situated in Cheshire East, **and**

- 2.2.1 It must not be reasonable or practicable to adapt the current property, **or**
- 2.2.2 The new property (that is, the property that the disabled person intends to move to) offers a better suited solution for the disabled person, and the solution offers better value for money for the Council.
- 2.3 The new property must be appropriate to the needs of the disabled person, and any necessary adaptations to the new property must be reasonable and practicable.
- 2.4 The new property must be intended to be the only or main residence of the disabled person.
- 2.5 There are no restrictions on the tenure or location of the new property.
- 2.6 Eligible properties will be determined by a Private Sector Housing officer in consultation with Social Services.

3. **Eligible Expenses**

- 3.1 Assistance will be given towards reasonable costs associated with moving home, including:
 - i. Removal costs
 - ii. Legal costs including fees for searches
 - iii. Home Information Pack costs
 - iv. Disconnection and reconnection of household appliances
 - v. Removal and reinstallation of disability equipment
- 3.2 Expenses that have been incurred prior to the application for assistance will not be considered.
- 3.3 Eligible expenses will be determined by a Private Sector Housing officer.

4. **Amounts**

- 4.1 The maximum amount of assistance is £3,000.
- 4.2 Where applicants are assessed as having to make a financial contribution following a Test of Resources, the maximum amount of eligible expenses will be reduced by an amount equivalent to the assessed contribution.

5. **Application Process**

- 5.1 The disabled person must be assessed by the Social Services Department to determine what adaptations are necessary and appropriate to meet their

needs, and the current property will be assessed to determine whether the proposed adaptations are reasonable and practicable.

- 5.2 Applications must be made on the Council's official application form, and be accompanied by any information that the Council considers necessary to be able to consider an application for assistance.

6. **Payment of Assistance**

- 6.1 Payment of assistance will only be made upon receipt of a valid invoice or receipt for the eligible expenses. An invoice or receipt will not be considered valid where it is in the name of the applicant or a member of the applicant's family.
- 6.2 Where requests for further assistance for unforeseen expenses or additional eligible costs incurred as a result of the transfer are received, the Council will only approve additional assistance where the additional sum requested combined with the original loan do not exceed the maximum permitted assistance (that is, £3,000, or a lower amount if the applicant is assessed as having a financial contribution).

7. **Conditions of Assistance**

- 7.1 The transfer to the new property must take place within 6 months from the date of approval. Requests for additional time to complete the transfer must be made in writing before the expiry of the 6 month period. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld by the Council.
- 7.2 Where an applicant has provided false or misleading information in their application for assistance or in their request for payment, the approval of assistance will be withdrawn and a demand made for repayment of any monies already paid.

Landlord Accreditation Assistance

A grant of up to £1,500 for accredited landlords to improve their properties

1. Eligible Applicants

- 1.1 Any person who has a qualifying owner's interest in the property and is over the age of 18, **and**
- 1.2 Is a current member of the Cheshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme.

2. Eligible Properties

- 2.1 The property must be situated in Cheshire East.
- 2.2 The property must be either currently occupied or available to let.
- 2.3 No financial assistance will be available where repairs and improvements works have previously been completed on the property through private sector housing schemes as follows:
 - i. Within the last five years, repairs and improvements financed by 'Safe & Warm Assistance' under this Policy have been completed; **or**
 - ii. Within the last five years, repairs and improvements financed by 'Decent Homes Assistance' under the Interim Private Sector Assistance Policy 2009 have been completed; **or**
 - iii. Within the last ten years, repairs and improvements financed by 'Decent Homes Plus Assistance', 'Landlord Renovation Assistance' and 'Empty Homes Assistance' under the Interim Private Sector Assistance Policy 2009 have been completed.

3. Eligible Works

- 3.1 The following types of work are eligible for assistance:
 - i. Energy efficiency measures to reduce fuel poverty and reduce carbon emissions
 - ii. Works to bring the property up to the Decent Homes Standard
 - iii. Fire safety measures
 - iv. Home security measures
- 3.2 Assistance will not be given where there are other suitable forms of financial assistance available, for example Warm Front, energy supplier schemes, or household insurance.

3.3 Works that have been started or completed prior to an application for assistance will not be considered.

3.4 Eligible works will be determined by a Private Sector Housing officer.

3.5 Ineligible works are listed at Appendix D.

4. **Amounts**

4.1 The assistance allowed will be 50% of the cost of eligible costs up to a maximum amount of assistance of £1,500.

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

- i. Reasonable cost of eligible works
- ii. Any VAT on the reasonable cost of eligible works
- iii. Eligible fees

4.3 Eligible fees that may be included as part of the application for assistance are:

- i. Specialist, technical and/or structural reports that are required by the Council
- ii. Building Control fees for eligible works
- iii. Technical and professional fees for services provided by the Private Sector Housing team

4.4 A technical and professional services fee of £100 will be included as part of the grant, for services provided by the Council to facilitate the application process.

5. **Application Process**

5.1 Applicants must complete an initial enquiry form for assistance. Where an enquiry is determined as eligible for assistance, the Council will issue an application pack.

5.2 Applications must be made on the Council's official application form, and accompanied by at least two written quotations on contractors' letter headed paper for each item of eligible work, and any other information that the Council considers necessary to be able to consider an application for assistance.

5.3 The Council will advise whether an application for assistance has been approved or refused in writing, together with the value of the assistance that has been approved. Where an application for assistance is refused, the Council will provide a written statement of the reasons for refusal, and details of any appeals procedure.

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

- 6.1 Works must be carried out by a contractor whose quote was accepted as part of the application for assistance. A request to change the contractor must be made in writing. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld by the Council.
- 6.2 The eligible works must be started and completed within three months of the date of approval. Requests for additional time to carry out the works must be made in writing before the expiry date. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld by the Council.
- 6.3 In the event of unforeseen work or an increase in costs arising during the course of the works, the amount of the grant may be increased, subject to the maximum amount as set out at Paragraph 4.1.
- 6.4 Conditions relating to payment of assistance are listed at Appendix F.

7. **Conditions of Assistance**

- 7.1 Where an applicant has provided false or misleading information in their application for assistance or in their request for payment, the approval of assistance will be withdrawn and a demand made for repayment of any monies already paid.
- 7.2 The grant must be repaid if, within two years following the certified date of completion of the works, any of the following events occur:
- The property is unoccupied for three calendar months or more
 - The property is sold or transferred
 - The applicant ceases to be a member of the Cheshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme
 - A successful insurance or legal claim is made relating to circumstances which led to the need for the eligible works
- 7.3 The Council may by written notice require the applicant to provide a statement within 21 days showing how the conditions of assistance are being fulfilled.
- 7.4 The Council will not consider an application for financial assistance under this Policy or subsequent versions of this Policy for the same property for a period of five years.
- 7.5 The Council will not approve an application for financial assistance under this Policy or subsequent versions of this Policy from the same applicant for a period of one year.

Empty Homes (Occupiers) Assistance

A loan of up to £10,000 for owners to carry out repairs to occupy an empty home

1. Eligible Applicants

- 1.1 Any person who has a qualifying owner's interest in the property and is over the age of 18.

2. Eligible Properties

- 2.1 The property must be situated in Cheshire East.
- 2.2 The property must be registered at the Land Registry.
- 2.3 No financial assistance will be available where repairs and improvements works have previously been completed on the property through private sector housing schemes as follows:
 - iv. Within the last five years, repairs and improvements financed by 'Safe & Warm Assistance' under this Policy have been completed; **or**
 - v. Within the last five years, repairs and improvements financed by 'Decent Homes Assistance' under the Interim Private Sector Assistance Policy 2009 have been completed; **or**
 - vi. Within the last ten years, repairs and improvements financed by 'Decent Homes Plus Assistance', 'Landlord Renovation Assistance' and 'Empty Homes Assistance' under the Interim Private Sector Assistance Policy 2009 have been completed.
- 2.4 The property must have been unoccupied for at least twelve consecutive months prior to the date of application, or determined as a high priority by the Council. Priority will be determined through the use of a scoring matrix.

3. Eligible Works

- 3.1 The works must be to repair or renovate the dwelling, to bring it up to the Decent Homes Standard. Details of the Decent Homes Standard are set out at Appendix E.
- 3.2 Assistance will not be given where there are other suitable forms of financial assistance available, for example Warm Front, energy supplier schemes, or household insurance.

3.3 Works that have been started or completed prior to an application for assistance will not be considered.

3.4 Eligible works will be determined by a Private Sector Housing officer.

3.5 Ineligible works are listed at Appendix D.

4. **Amounts**

4.1 The maximum amount of assistance is £10,000.

4.2 The Council will not approve a request for assistance of less than £1,000.

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

- i. Reasonable cost of eligible works
- ii. Any VAT on the reasonable cost of eligible works
- iii. Eligible fees

4.4 Eligible fees that may be included as part of the application for assistance are:

- i. Specialist, technical and/or structural reports that are required by the Council
- ii. Building Control fees for eligible works
- iii. Support service and technical fees provided by Care & Repair
- iv. Technical and professional fees for services provided by the Private Sector Housing team
- v. Legal fees and disbursements incurred as a result of setting up the loan
- vi. Financial advice
- vii. Lenders' fees for registering a second charge

4.5 A technical and professional services fee of £100, or 5% of the reasonable cost of the eligible works excluding VAT, whichever is the greater, will be included as part of the loan, for services provided by the Council as part of the application process.

4.6 Where applications for assistance are submitted through Care & Repair, the Private Sector Housing team's technical and professional services fee will be waived in lieu of any fees for Care & Repair. A fee of £100, or 10% of the reasonable cost of eligible works excluding VAT, whichever is the greater, can be included as part of the application.

5. **Application Process**

5.1 Applicants must complete an initial enquiry form for assistance. Where an enquiry is determined as eligible for assistance, the Council will issue an

application pack.

- 5.2 Applications must be made on the Council's official application form, and accompanied by at least two written quotations on contractors' letter headed paper for each item of eligible work, and any other information that the Council considers necessary to be able to consider an application for assistance.
- 5.3 Before approving an application, the Council will have regard to the applicant's ability to repay the assistance. The Council will take into account any charges already secured on the property, bankruptcy checks, the level of equity available in the property, and any information obtained in the course of its checks which reveal financial difficulties within the last 6 months. The Council will not award assistance to an applicant where the existing charges registered on the property combined with the amount of financial assistance requested would reduce the available equity in the property to 10% or less of the property value.
- 5.4 Before an application is approved, the applicant and the Council must enter into a loan agreement.
- 5.5 The Council will advise whether an application for assistance has been approved or refused in writing, together with the value of the assistance that has been approved. Where an application for assistance is refused, the Council will provide a written statement of the reasons for refusal, and details of any appeals procedure.

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

- 6.1 Works must be carried out by a contractor whose quotation was accepted as part of the application for assistance. A request to change the contractor must be made in writing. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld by the Council.
- 6.2 The eligible works must be started within three months and completed within six months of the date of approval. Requests for additional time to start or complete the works must be made in writing before the end of the relevant period. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld by the Council.
- 6.3 In the event of unforeseen work or an increase in costs arising during the course of the works, the amount of loan may be increased, subject to the maximum loan amount as set out at Paragraph 4.1. The minimum amount of additional assistance that will be considered is £100. Additional fees will be incurred for the registration of an amended legal charge.
- 6.4 Conditions relating to payment of assistance are listed at Appendix F.

7. **Conditions of Assistance:**

- 7.1 The loan must be secured by way of a legal charge recorded at the Land Registry.
- 7.2 The loan must be repaid in accordance with Appendix A: Interest Free Repayment Loan.
- 7.3 The applicant must live in the property as their only residence, within three calendar months of the certified date of completion.
- 7.4 A valid policy for buildings insurance sufficient to reinstate the building must remain in force until the assistance is repaid, with the Council's interest in the property noted on the policy.
- 7.5 Where an applicant has provided false or misleading information in their application for assistance or in their request for payment, the approval of assistance will be withdrawn and a demand made for repayment of any monies already paid.
- 7.6 The Council may by written notice require the applicant to provide a statement within 21 days showing how the conditions of assistance are being fulfilled.
- 7.7 Further applications for financial assistance for repairs to the same property will not be considered under this Policy and subsequent versions of this Policy, for a period of ten years from the certified date of completion.

Empty Homes (Landlords) Assistance

A loan of up to £10,000 for landlords to carry out repairs to occupy an empty home

1. Eligible Applicants

- 1.1 Any person who has a qualifying owner's interest in the property and is over the age of 18, **and**
- 1.2 Is a member of the Cheshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme.

2. Eligible Properties

- 2.1 The property must be situated in Cheshire East.
- 2.2 The property must be registered at the Land Registry.
- 2.3 No financial assistance will be available where repairs and improvements works have previously been completed on the property through private sector housing schemes as follows:
 - i. Within the last five years, repairs and improvements financed by 'Safe & Warm Assistance' under this Policy have been completed; **or**
 - ii. Within the last five years, repairs and improvements financed by 'Decent Homes Assistance' under the Interim Private Sector Assistance Policy 2009 have been completed; **or**
 - iii. Within the last ten years, repairs and improvements financed by 'Decent Homes Plus Assistance', 'Landlord Renovation Assistance' and 'Empty Homes Assistance' under the Interim Private Sector Assistance Policy 2009 have been completed.
- 2.4 The property must have been unoccupied for at least twelve consecutive months prior to the date of application, or determined as a high priority by the Council. Priority will be determined through the use of a scoring matrix.

3. Eligible Works

- 3.1 The works must be to repair or renovate the dwelling, to bring it up to the Decent Homes Standard. Details of the Decent Homes Standard are set out at Appendix E.
- 3.2 Assistance will not be given where there are other suitable forms of financial assistance available, for example Warm Front, energy supplier schemes, or household insurance.

3.3 Works that have been started or completed prior to an application for assistance will not be considered.

3.4 Eligible works will be determined by the Council.

3.5 Ineligible works are listed at Appendix D.

4. **Amounts**

4.1 The maximum amount of assistance is £10,000.

4.2 The Council will not approve a request for assistance for less than £1,000.

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

- i. Reasonable cost of eligible works
- ii. Any VAT on the reasonable cost of eligible works
- iii. Eligible fees

4.4 Eligible fees that may be included as part of the application for assistance are:

- i. Specialist, technical and/or structural reports that are required by the Council
- ii. Building Control fees for eligible works
- iii. Support service and technical fees provided by Care & Repair
- iv. Technical and professional fees for services provided by the Private Sector Housing team
- v. Legal fees and disbursements incurred as a result of setting up the loan
- vi. Financial advice
- vii. Lenders' fees for registering a second charge

4.5 A technical and professional services fee of £100, or 5% of the reasonable cost of the eligible works excluding VAT, whichever is the greater, will be included as part of the loan, for services provided by the Council as part of the application process.

4.6 Where applications for assistance are submitted through Care & Repair, the Private Sector Housing team's technical and professional services fee will be waived in lieu of any fees for Care & Repair. A fee of £100, or 10% of the reasonable cost of eligible works excluding VAT, whichever is the greater, can be included as part of the application.

5. **Application Process**

5.1 Applicants must complete an initial enquiry form for assistance. Where an enquiry is determined as eligible for assistance, the Council will issue an application pack.

- 5.2 Applications must be made on the Council's official application form, and accompanied by at least two written quotations on contractors' letter headed paper for each type of eligible work, and any other information that the Council considers necessary to be able to consider an application for assistance.
- 5.3 Before approving an application, the Council will have regard to the applicant's ability to repay the assistance. The Council will take into account any charges already secured on the property, bankruptcy checks, the level of equity available in the property, and any information obtained in the course of its checks which reveal financial difficulties within the last 6 months. The Council will not award assistance to an applicant where the existing charges registered on the property combined with the amount of financial assistance requested would reduce the available equity in the property to 10% or less of the property value.
- 5.4 Before an application is approved, the applicant and the Council must enter into a loan agreement.
- 5.5 The Council will advise whether an application for assistance has been approved or refused in writing, together with the value of the assistance that has been approved. Where an application for assistance is refused, the Council will provide a written statement of the reasons for refusal, and details of any appeals procedure.

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

- 6.1 Works must be carried out by a contractor whose quotation was accepted as part of the application for assistance. A request to change the contractor must be made in writing. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld by the Council.
- 6.2 The eligible works must be started within three months and completed within six months of the date of approval. Requests for additional time to start or complete the works must be made in writing before the end of the relevant period. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld by the Council.
- 6.3 In the event of unforeseen work or an increase in costs arising during the course of the works, the amount of loan may be increased, subject to the maximum loan amount as set out at Paragraph 4.1. The minimum amount of additional assistance that will be considered is £100. Additional fees may be incurred for the registration of an amended legal charge.
- 6.4 Conditions relating to payment of assistance are listed at Appendix F.

7. **Conditions of Assistance:**

- 7.1 The loan will be secured by way of a legal charge recorded at the Land Registry.
- 7.2 The loan must be repaid in accordance with Appendix A: Interest Free Repayment Loan.
- 7.3 The property must be let to a tenant within three calendar months of the certified date of completion, and remain available to let to tenants throughout the term of the loan.
- 7.4 The property must be available to let at a rate not in excess of Local Housing Allowance.
- 7.5 A valid policy for buildings insurance sufficient to reinstate the building must remain in force until the assistance is repaid, with the Council's interest in the property noted on the policy.
- 7.6 Where an applicant has provided false or misleading information in their application for assistance or in their request for payment, the approval of assistance will be withdrawn and a demand made for repayment of any monies already paid.
- 7.7 The Council may by written notice require the applicant to provide a statement within 21 days showing how the conditions of assistance are being fulfilled.
- 7.8 Further applications for financial assistance for repairs to the same property will not be considered under this Policy and subsequent versions of this Policy, for a period of ten years from the certified date of completion.

‘Improve and Lease’ Assistance

***A loan of up to £10,000 for repairs to empty homes
for owners engaged in a leasing scheme***

1. Eligible Applicants

- 1.1 Any person who has a qualifying owner’s interest in the property and is over the age of 18, **and**
- 1.2 Has entered into an Agreement to Lease the property with a Registered Provider in partnership with the Council.

2. Eligible Properties

- 2.1 The property must be situated in Cheshire East.
- 2.2 The property must be registered at the Land Registry.
- 2.3 No financial assistance will be available where repairs and improvements works have previously been completed on the property through private sector housing schemes as follows:
 - i. Within the last five years, repairs and improvements financed by ‘Safe & Warm Assistance’ under this Policy have been completed; **or**
 - ii. Within the last five years, repairs and improvements financed by ‘Decent Homes Assistance’ under the Interim Private Sector Assistance Policy 2009 have been completed; **or**
 - iii. Within the last ten years, repairs and improvements financed by ‘Decent Homes Plus Assistance’, ‘Landlord Renovation Assistance’ and ‘Empty Homes Assistance’ under the Interim Private Sector Assistance Policy 2009 have been completed.
- 2.4 The property must have been unoccupied for at least 12 consecutive months prior to the date of application, or determined as a high priority by the Council. Priority will be determined through the use of a scoring matrix.

3. Eligible Works

- 3.1 The works must be to repair or renovate the dwelling, to bring it up to the Decent Homes Standard, or other such standard agreed with the Registered Provider. Details of the Decent Homes Standard are set out at Appendix E
- 3.2 Works that have been started or completed prior to an application for assistance will not be considered.

3.3 Eligible works will be determined by the Council.

3.4 Ineligible works are listed at Appendix D.

4. **Amounts**

4.1 The maximum amount of assistance is £10,000.

4.2 The Council will not approve a request for assistance for less than £1,000.

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

- i. Reasonable cost of eligible works
- ii. Any VAT on the reasonable cost of eligible works
- iii. Eligible fees

4.4 Eligible fees that may be included as part of the application for assistance are:

- i. Specialist, technical and/or structural reports that are required by the Council
- ii. Building Control fees for eligible works
- iii. Technical and professional fees for services provided by the Private Sector Housing team
- iv. Legal fees and disbursements incurred as a result of setting up the loan
- v. Financial advice
- vi. Lenders' fees for registering a second charge

4.5 A technical and professional services fee of £100, or 5% of the cost of the eligible works excluding VAT, whichever is the greater, will be included as part of the loan, for services provided by the Council as part of the application process.

5. **Application Process**

5.1 Applicants must complete an initial enquiry form for assistance. Where an enquiry is determined as eligible for assistance, the Council will issue an application pack.

5.2 Applications must be made on the Council's official application form, and accompanied by any other information that the Council considers necessary to be able to consider an application for assistance.

5.3 Before approving an application, the Council will have regard to the applicant's ability to repay the assistance. The Council will take into account any charges already secured on the property, bankruptcy checks, the level of equity available in the property, and any information obtained in the course of its checks which reveal financial difficulties within the last 6 months. The

Council will not award assistance to an applicant where the existing charges registered on the property combined with the amount of financial assistance requested would reduce the available equity in the property to 10% or less of the property value.

- 5.4 Before an application is approved, the applicant and the Council must enter into a loan agreement. The maximum term of the loan is ten years or the period of the lease agreement, whichever is the shorter.
- 5.5 The Council will advise whether an application for assistance has been approved or refused in writing, together with the value of the assistance that has been approved. Where an application for assistance is refused, the Council will provide a written statement of the reasons for refusal, and details of any appeals procedure.

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

- 6.1 Works will be carried out by the Registered Provider, or their nominated contractors.
- 6.2 Conditions relating to payment of assistance are listed at Appendix F.

7. **Conditions of Assistance:**

- 7.1 The loan will be secured by way of a legal charge recorded at the Land Registry.
- 7.2 The property must be leased to the Registered Provider in accordance with the provisions of the agreed lease.
- 7.3 The loan must be repaid in accordance with Appendix A: Interest Free Repayment Loan.
- 7.4 Repayments will be deducted from the rental income generated by the Registered Provider and paid directly to the Council, in accordance with the payment schedule contained within the lease agreement.
- 7.5 A valid policy for buildings insurance sufficient to reinstate the building must remain in force until the assistance is repaid, with the Council's interest in the property noted on the policy.
- 7.6 Should the lease agreement be terminated early for any reason, the outstanding balance of the loan will become repayable immediately.
- 7.7 Where an applicant has provided false or misleading information in their application for assistance or in their request for payment, the approval of assistance will be withdrawn and a demand made for repayment of any

monies already paid.

- 7.8 The Council may by written notice require the applicant to provide a statement within 21 days showing how the conditions of assistance are being fulfilled.
- 7.9 Further applications for financial assistance for repairs to the same property will not be considered under this Policy and subsequent versions of this Policy, for a period of ten years from the certified date of completion.

Warm Front Contribution Assistance:

A grant of up to £500 to top-up a Warm Front grant

1. Eligible Applicants

- 1.1 Any person over the age of 18 who has been awarded a Warm Front grant, where the cost of the works exceeds the maximum grant available.

2. Eligible Properties

- 2.1 The property must be situated in Cheshire East.

3. Eligible Works

- 3.1 Works specified by Warm Front are eligible for assistance.

4. Amounts

- 4.1 The maximum amount of assistance is £500.
- 4.2 Where the applicant's Warm Front contribution exceeds £500 and the applicant satisfies the eligibility criteria for 'Safe & Warm' Assistance, the applicant may apply for Safe & Warm assistance for the portion of the contribution above £500. This will be secured as a legal charge recorded at the Land Registry.
- 4.3 Works that have been started or completed prior to an application for assistance will not be considered.

5. Application Process

- 5.1 Referrals are received directly from Warm Front. The Council will approve or refuse the request for assistance directly to Warm Front.

6. Carrying out and Completion of Works

- 6.1 The works must be carried out by the Warm Front appointed contractor.
- 6.2 Conditions relating to payment of assistance are listed at Appendix F.

7. Conditions of Assistance

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

Transitional Arrangements

From [date to be confirmed], all new applications for assistance will be considered against the criteria set out within this Policy.

All applications for assistance approved under the Interim Private Sector Assistance Policy 2009 will continue to be valid in accordance with the specific conditions of assistance contained within that Policy.

All valid applications received prior to [date to be confirmed] under the Interim Private Sector Assistance Policy 2009, but not yet approved, will be processed in accordance with that Policy, and will be approved or refused by no later than [date to be confirmed – 6 months after new policy implementation].

Applications for assistance falling outside of this Policy

All applications for assistance will be considered against the published criteria. If the application does not meet the criteria, the Council will inform the applicant in writing of the reason why they are being refused assistance.

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

It is recognised that there may be situations where the refusal of assistance would disproportionately disadvantage the applicant. In these circumstances, the Council may waive or alter some or all of the eligibility criteria, minimum or maximum amounts, or conditions of assistance based on the individual circumstances, and approve the application for assistance. All cases will be considered on an individual basis in a fair and transparent way by an Appeals Panel of senior housing officers. The decision of the Appeals Panel will be final in respect of that individual case and will not be binding upon future applications made by that or any other applicant.

Publication of this Policy

This Policy will be made available at the Council's main offices for inspection, and on the website at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/homerepairs. Individual copies are available upon request.

Review of this Policy

This Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Consultation

As part of the preparation of this Policy, internal consultation has been carried with Legal and Finance services. Consultation with other stakeholder and members of the public will be carried out from 5th December 2011 to 24th February 2012. The draft Policy will be made available at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/homerepairs. All comments will be considered before the Policy is submitted to the Cabinet for their consideration.

Service Standards

To be completed

Comments and Complaints

On completion of the assisted works, applicants will be invited to comment on the individual service they have received and on the fairness of the policy and its implementation.

We welcome any suggestions or comments about this Policy. Comments can be made in person, by telephone, email or in writing to any member of the Private Sector Housing team.

Where you believe the Council has failed to provide the level of service expected, we welcome the opportunity to put this right. Please let a member of the Private Sector Housing team know what you are dissatisfied with. If you are still not satisfied, you can use the Council's corporate complaints procedure. A guide to the complaints procedure is available to the public at all Council offices or on the Council's website www.cheshireeast.gov.uk.

Other Private Sector Housing Activities

This Policy is one of a number of tools to improve housing conditions in Cheshire East. Other initiatives include:

Information and Advice for Homeowners, Landlords and Tenants - assisting them to understand their legal rights and responsibilities, and information such as home maintenance tips and employing reputable builders, in a range of formats such as the website, leaflets, information sheets, property surveys and events.

Home Improvement Agency (HIA) – The Care & Repair service provides support to older, disabled and vulnerable people to live independently in a safe, warm and well-maintained home. HIAs provide information, advice and practical support with home repairs and adaptations, assisting people to organise building works.

Handyperson Service – As part of the HIA service, the handyperson service promotes the independence of older and disabled people, by providing ‘that little bit of help’ with repairs and practical tasks that people are no longer able to do for themselves. Handyperson services prevent small repairs spiralling into larger jobs, and make a significant contribution to preventing accidents and falls in the home, and unnecessary admission to hospital.

Enforcement of Housing Standards – Cheshire East Council has statutory responsibilities to keep housing conditions within the local authority area under review, and to ensure that housing meets at least the minimum acceptable standards for occupation. The Council is responsible for enforcing housing standards across all tenures. The principal legislation used is the Housing Act 2004. Part 1 of the Act provides the mechanism for assessing housing conditions, and gives local authorities statutory powers to require, or take action on, the removal of Category 1 hazards, as well as discretionary powers for Category 2 hazards.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) – HMOs are often occupied by groups of people on low incomes who are unable to access other forms of accommodation. Cheshire East Council operates a mandatory licensing scheme for larger HMOs as defined by the Housing Act 2004. We also keep housing conditions in smaller HMOs under review, and are developing a risk based inspection programme of smaller HMOs across the Borough. The licensing scheme and inspection programme aims to remove any poor management practices and provide greater protection for the health, safety and welfare for the occupants. We work in partnership with the Fire Service, and have drawn up a Fire Safety protocol which sets out responsibilities, enforcement powers and consultation arrangements about fire safety in HMOs.

Hotspots – a referral network between agencies in Cheshire East to tackle fuel poverty by maximising income and improving access to heating and insulation schemes, and to promote fire safety. The network is based on a scheme originally set up in Wakefield, and was supported by NEA. Key members of the scheme are the Private Sector Housing team, Benefits service, Energy Savings Trust and Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service, and are supported by a range of front line services.

Landlord Accreditation – Working with Cheshire West & Chester Council and Warrington Borough Council, we have a Cheshire-wide accreditation scheme. Free to join, it provides landlords with public acknowledgement of their good management and property standards and sets them aside from poor and/or unscrupulous landlords. Key to the scheme is landlord development – all member landlords are expected to take part in a training seminar or online training within the first 12 months.

Bringing Empty Homes Back into Use –We are developing a range of options to assist owners of empty homes to bring them back into use, including a private sector leasing scheme, financial assistance, advice and information, and matching prospective buyers with owners. We also have a range of enforcement powers to improve properties as well as bring them back into use, which we will use where voluntary action by owners isn't forthcoming.

Contact details

To apply for assistance under this Policy, please contact the Private Sector Housing service:

Decent Homes Team

By telephone: 0300 123 5017 Option 4
 By fax: 01270 529889
 By email: privatehousing@cheshireeast.gov.uk
 By post or in person: Westfields
 Middlewich Road
 Sandbach
 CW11 1HZ

Care & Repair

By telephone: 0300 123 5017 Option 3
 By fax: 01270 529889
 By email: careandrepair@cheshireeast.gov.uk
 By post or in person:

Municipal Buildings	Town Hall
Earle Street	Market Place
Crewe	Macclesfield
CW1 2BJ	SK10 1EA

Or visit our website: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/homerepairs

To make representations about this Policy, or for more information, contact the Private Sector Housing Manager, Cheshire East Council, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach, CW11 1HZ.

Appendix A

Interest Free Repayment Loans

1. Loans are offered as secured loans. The loan is secured by way of a legal charge registered at the Land Registry, until such time that the loan is repaid in full.
2. All joint owners and, where applicable, anyone with a legal interest in the property must give their consent to the works to be carried out and the registration of a legal charge.
3. The Council may request a written valuation of the property to determine whether there is sufficient equity for its interest in the property to be secure.
4. The applicant must make monthly repayments of the loan in accordance with an agreed schedule. We will calculate the monthly payment so that the loan is repaid to us by the end of the term of the loan. The term of the loan will not exceed ten years.
5. Applicants can repay the loan early at any time.
6. We may withdraw the offer at any time before we make the loan for any of the following reasons:
 - a. The discovery of a defect in the title to the property
 - b. The deterioration of the applicant's financial position
 - c. The supply of false information in connection with the applicant's loan application
7. If the applicant experiences financial difficulty and has problems maintaining the repayments schedule at any time, the Council will, having regard to the applicant's financial circumstances, consider alternative payment options including:
 - a. Recalculating monthly payments to include any arrears
 - b. Extending the period of the loan beyond the maximum loan term of ten years
 - c. Terminating the interest free repayment loan and offering the outstanding balance as an equity share loan
8. The loan will become immediately repayable in the following circumstances:
 - a. Upon sale or transfer of the property
 - b. In the event that the property is no longer the main residence of the applicant
 - c. In the event of a successful insurance claim related to the eligible works
 - d. Upon death of the applicant (or where there is more than one applicant, the death of the last surviving applicant)
 - e. In the event of a breach of a condition of assistance.

Illustration (example only)

Amount borrowed:	24 monthly repayments	60 monthly repayments	84 monthly repayments	120 monthly repayments	Total repaid:
£1,000	41.67	16.67	11.90	8.33	£1,000
£2,000	83.33	33.33	23.81	16.67	£2,000
£5,000	208.33	83.33	59.52	41.67	£5,000
£10,000	416.67	166.67	119.05	83.33	£10,000

Appendix B

Equity Share Loans

1. Loans are offered as secured loans. The loan is secured by way of a legal charge registered at the Land Registry.
2. All joint owners and, where applicable, anyone with a legal interest in the property must give their consent to the works to be carried out and the registration of a legal charge.
3. The Council will request a written valuation of the property suitable for money lending purposes to determine the percentage share and whether there is sufficient equity for its interest in the property to be secure.
4. The principle amount borrowed (the loan) is secured as a percentage share in the property. The percentage share is calculated using the amount of the loan, and the value of the property.
5. The redemption value of the loan will be calculated based on the percentage share of the value of the property at the point of sale. If, at the time of redemption of the loan, the property value is less than when the loan was approved, the repayment amount will be less than the amount borrowed.
6. Applicants can repay the loan early at any time. A written valuation will be necessary to determine the repayment amount.
7. We may withdraw the offer at any time before we make the loan for any of the following reasons:
 - a. The discovery of a defect in the title to the property
 - b. The deterioration of the applicant's financial position
 - c. The supply of false information in connection with the applicant's loan application
8. The loan will become immediately repayable in the following circumstances:
 - a. Upon sale or transfer of the property
 - b. In the event that the property is no longer the main residence of the applicant
 - c. In the event of a successful insurance claim related to the eligible works
 - d. Upon death of the applicant (or where there is more than one applicant, the death of the last surviving applicant)
 - e. In the event of a breach of a condition of assistance.

Illustration (example only)

	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
Amount borrowed	£10,000	£7,000	£5,000
Value of property at date of loan offer	£100,000	£187,000	£150,000
Council's percentage share	10%	3.74%	3.33%
Value of property at date of repayment	£120,000	£200,000	£145,000
Amount repayable	£12,000	£7,480	£4,828.50

Appendix C

Disabled Facilities Grants

Preliminary and Ancillary services and charges

Preliminary and ancillary services and charges which can be included in applications for Disabled Facilities Grants are determined by the Housing Renewal Grants (Services and Charges) Order 1996 (S.I. 1996/2889):

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

Appendix D

Works that are ineligible for assistance

The following works will not be eligible for assistance:

- Works which are covered by a household insurance policy
- Repairs, improvements or replacements to sheds, outbuildings, boundary structures, and other structures that do not form part of the main living accommodation
- Cosmetic items, such as furnishings, internal and / or external decoration, cleaning, gardening or landscaping
- Replacement of doors, windows and other building elements that are in reasonable repair
- Conversion of barns or outbuildings
- Completion or rectification of DIY work
- Extensions
- Loft conversions or internal layout alterations
- Installation of intruder alarm systems.

Appendix E

Decent Homes Standard

A decent home, as defined by the Government, meets the following four criteria:

- a) It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing
- b) It is in a reasonable state of repair
- c) It has reasonably modern facilities and services
- d) It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

Criterion a: It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing

With the implementation of Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 on 6 April 2006, HHSRS replaced the Housing Fitness Standard as the first criterion of the Decent Homes standard. HHSRS is a risk assessment procedure and does not set a standard.

To be decent, a dwelling should be free of category 1 hazards, and the existence of such hazards should be a trigger for remedial action unless practical steps cannot be taken without disproportionate expense or disruption.

Criterion b: It is in a reasonable state of repair

A dwelling satisfies this criterion unless:

- one or more key building components (i.e. those which, if in poor condition, could have an impact on the integrity of the building and cause further deterioration in other components) are old and, because of their condition, need replacing or major repair; or
- two or more other building components (i.e. those that have a less immediate impact on the integrity of the dwelling) are old and, because of their condition need replacing or major repair.

A building component can only fail to satisfy this criterion by being old and requiring replacing or repair. A component cannot fail this criterion based on age alone. A component is defined as 'old' if it is older than its standard lifetime. Components are in poor condition if they need major work, either full replacement or major repair.

Criterion c: It has reasonably modern facilities and services

A dwelling is considered not to meet this criterion if it lacks three or more of the following facilities:

- a kitchen which is 20 years old or less;
- a kitchen with adequate space and layout;
- a bathroom which is 30 years old or less;
- an appropriately located bathroom and WC;
- adequate external noise insulation; and

- adequate size and layout of common entrance areas for blocks of flats.

A kitchen failing on adequate space and layout would be one that was too small to contain all the required items (sink, cupboards cooker space, worktops etc) appropriate to the size of the dwelling, and an inappropriately located bathroom and WC is one where the main bathroom or WC is located in a bedroom or accessed through a bedroom (unless the bedroom is not used or the dwelling is for a single person). A dwelling would also fail if the main WC is external or located on a different floor to the nearest wash hand basin, or if a WC without a wash hand basin opens on to a kitchen in an inappropriate area, for example next to the food preparation area.

Inadequate insulation from external airborne noise would be where there are problems with, for example, traffic (rail, road and aeroplanes) or factory noise.

Inadequate size and layout of common entrance areas for blocks of flats would be one with insufficient room to manoeuvre easily for example where there are narrow access ways with awkward corners and turnings, steep staircases, inadequate landings, absence of handrails, low headroom etc.

A dwelling would not fail this criterion, where it is impossible to make the required improvements to components for physical or planning reasons.

Criterion d: It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

The dwelling should have both efficient heating and effective insulation.

Efficient heating is defined as:

- any gas or oil programmable central heating; or
- electric storage heaters; or
- warm air systems; or
- underfloor systems; or
- programmable LPG/solid fuel central heating; or
- similarly efficient heating systems which are developed in the future.

The primary heating system must have a distribution system sufficient to provide heat to two or more rooms of the home. There may be storage heaters in two or more rooms, or other heaters that use the same fuel in two or more rooms. Even if the central heating system covers most of the house making a dwelling decent, under the HHSRS the home must be warm enough for the occupant.

Heating sources which provide less energy efficient options fail the Decent Homes standard.

Because of the differences in efficiency between gas/oil heating systems and the other heating systems listed, the level of insulation that is appropriate also differs:

- For dwellings with gas/oil programmable heating, cavity wall insulation (if there are cavity walls that can be insulated effectively) or at least 50mm loft insulation (if there is loft space) is an effective package of insulation; and
- For dwellings heated by electric storage heaters/LPG/programmable solid fuel central heating a higher specification of insulation is required: at least 200mm of loft insulation (if there is a loft) and cavity wall insulation (if there are cavity walls that can be insulated effectively).

Further detailed guidance on the definition of a Decent Home, including the lifetime of building components, can be found in '*A Decent Home: definition and guidance for implementation, updated June 2006*' on Communities and Local Government's website www.communities.gov.uk/housing/decenthomes.

Appendix F

Payments

1. Payment of assistance will be only be made where:
 - i. The specified works have been completed in accordance with any statutory requirements and/or the Council's specification, and to the reasonable satisfaction of a Private Sector Housing officer, and
 - ii. The Council's standard payment request form has been completed, and
 - iii. Upon receipt of a valid invoice or receipt for the works. An invoice or receipt will not be considered valid where it is in the name of the applicant or a member of the applicant's family.
2. Requests for interim payments will be considered. The value of interim payments will not exceed the value of the works completed, and will not exceed 90% of the total value of eligible works that have been approved.
3. Where requests for further assistance for unforeseen works or additional eligible costs incurred during the carrying out of the works are received, the Council will only approve additional assistance where the additional sum requested combined with the original loan do not exceed the maximum permitted assistance. Where the approved assistance is Safe & Warm Assistance or Empty Homes Assistance, the applicant and the Council must enter into a revised loan agreement.
4. In the event of a dispute between the applicant and the contractor about the satisfactory completion of works, the Council reserves the right to pay the assistance to the applicant or contractor if the works have been carried out to the satisfaction of a Private Sector Housing officer.

Equal Opportunities and Access

Cheshire East Council recognises that it can improve the quality of life of local residents by seeking to ensure that every member of the public has equal access to its services, facilities, resources, activities and employment.

We want these to be accessible to everyone in the community regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, disability, marital status or sexual orientation.

Furthermore, we are keen to respond to the individual requirements of our customers to develop services that recognise their diversity and particular needs.

If you would like this information in another language or format, please contact us.

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

Cantonese

如欲索取以另一語文印制或另一格式制作的资料，请与我们联系。

Mandarin

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, prosimy dać nam znać.

Polish

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ, ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਮੰਗ ਲਓ।

Punjabi

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو براۓ مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔

Urdu

اگر این اطلاعات را به زبانی دیگر و یا در فرمتی دیگر میخواهید لطفاً از ما درخواست کنید

Farsi

Se deseja obter informação noutra idioma ou formato, diga-nos.

Portuguese

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: ENVIRONMENT AND PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting:	21 February 2012
Report of:	Borough Solicitor
Subject/Title:	Work Programme update

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 To review items in the 2011 Work Programme, to consider the efficacy of existing items listed in the schedule attached, together with any other items suggested by Committee Members.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the work programme be received and noted.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 It is good practice to agree and review the Work Programme to enable effective management of the Committee's business.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health

- 6.1 Not known at this stage.

7.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs

- 7.1 None identified at the moment.

8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 8.1 None.

9.0 Risk Management

9.1 There are no identifiable risks.

10.0 Background and Options

10.1 In reviewing the work programme, Members must pay close attention to the Corporate Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy.

10.2 The schedule attached, has been updated in line with the Committees recommendations on 20 December 2011. Following this meeting the document will be updated so that all the appropriate targets will be included within the schedule.

10.3 In reviewing the work programme, Members must have regard to the general criteria which should be applied to all potential items, including Task and Finish reviews, when considering whether any Scrutiny activity is appropriate. Matters should be assessed against the following criteria:

- Does the issue fall within a corporate priority
- Is the issue of key interest to the public
- Does the matter relate to a poor or declining performing service for which there is no obvious explanation
- Is there a pattern of budgetary overspends
- Is it a matter raised by external audit management letters and or audit reports?
- Is there a high level of dissatisfaction with the service

10.4 If during the assessment process any of the following emerge, then the topic should be rejected:

- The topic is already being addressed elsewhere
- The matter is subjudice
- Scrutiny cannot add value or is unlikely to be able to conclude an investigation within the specified timescale

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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Designation: Scrutiny Officer
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Email: james.morley@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee Work Programme – 13 February 2012

Issue	Description /Comments	Officer	Suggested by	Portfolio	Corporate Priority	Current Position	Date
Planning Enforcement	To give consideration to planning enforcement operations	Steve Irvine	Committee	Safer Stronger	Ensure a sustainable future	Deferred from 22 November	21 February 2012
Parking Charge Scale Proposals	To consider the proposed parking charge scales.	Peter Hartwell	Portfolio Holder	Environmental Services	Ensure a sustainable future	Deferred from 20 December	21 February 2012
Financial Assistance Policy	To consider the decision going to Cabinet in April	Karen Whitehead	Officer	Prosperity	Nurture strong communities	On Target	21 February 2012
Pre-Planning Application Service	To receive a briefing on the pre-planning application service.	Steve Irvine	Chairman	Safer Stronger Communities	Ensure a sustainable future	Deferred from 22 November	21 February 2012
Carbon Management Programme	To receive a briefing to give the Committee background to the CMP	Matthew Waltho/ Colin Farrelly	Chairman	Environmental Services	Ensure a sustainable future	On Target	20 March 2012
Corporate Landlord Model	To receive a report on the Corporate Landlord Model	Caroline Simpson	Officer/Portfolio Holder	Prosperity	Ensure a sustainable future	On Target	20 March 2012
Christmas Bin Collections	To consider a report of the arrangements for bin collections at Christmas	Ray Skip	Chairman	Environmental Services	Nurture strong communities	On Target	20 March 2012
Strategic Tenancy Strategy	To consider the decision going to Cabinet in April	Karen Carsberg	Chairman	Prosperity	Nurture strong communities	On Target	20 March 2012
Allocation Policy Review	To consider the decision going to Cabinet in April	Karen Carsberg	Officer	Prosperity	Nurture strong communities	On Target	20 March 2012

Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee Work Programme – 13 February 2012

Possible Items to Monitor or consider at future Meetings

- Community Transport Review - Suspended
- Local Sustainable Transport Fund
- Localism Act and Policy Implications
- Transfer of Crewe Shop Mobility
- Waste Needs Assessment/Recycling (informing Local Plan process)
Anaerobic Digesters/Silver Bin Recycling/Glass Bring Banks – Cllr Menlove (revisit July 2012 when yearly figures available)
- Street lighting strategy for Cheshire East – Cllr Menlove
- Alfresco Policy – cost breakdown
- Development Management Transformation Project – Possible update on outstanding work
- Building Control/Operational Management – Cllr Bailey
- Lifestyle Centres – Prosperity/Health and Well Being/ Adult Service
- Household Waste Recovery Centres – Menlove – Shared Service

Dates of Future Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee Meetings

21 February 2012, 20 March 2012 and 24 April.

Dates of Future Cabinet Meetings

5 March 2012, 2 and 30 April 2012.

Dates of Future Council Meetings

23 February 2012, 19 April 2012 and 16 May 2012.



FORWARD PLAN 1 FEBRUARY 2012 - 31 MAY 2012

This Plan sets out the key decisions which the Executive expect to take over the next four months. The Plan is rolled forward every month. It will next be published in mid February and will then contain all key decisions expected to be taken between 1 March and 30 June 2012. Key decisions are defined in the Councils Constitution.

Reports relevant to key decisions, and any listed background documents may be viewed at any of the Councils Offices/Information Centres 6 days before the decision is to be made. Copies of, or extracts from these documents may be obtained on the payment of a reasonable fee from the following address:-

Democratic Services Team
Cheshire East Council ,
c/o Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach Cheshire CW11 1HZ
Telephone: 01270 686463

However, it is not possible to make available for viewing or to supply copies of reports or documents, the publication of which is restricted due to confidentiality of the information contained.

A decision notice for each key decision is published within 6 days of it having been made. This is open for public inspection on the Council's Website, Council Information Centres and Council Offices.

The law and the Council's Constitution provides for urgent key decisions to be made. A decision notice will be published for these in exactly the same way.

Forward Plan 1 February 2012 to 31 May 2012

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Relevant Scrutiny Committee	How to make representation to the decision made
CE11/12-22 Farms Estate Policy Review	To determine management policies for Farms Estates.	Cabinet	9 Jan 2012	Internal and external stakeholders including Government Office, National Farmers Union, Tenant Farmers Association, Reaseheath College, Confederation of Young Farmers and CE Council tenants.	Environment and Prosperity 22 November 2011	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)
CE11/12-4 Business Planning Process 2012/2015 - Business Plan	To approve the Business Plan for 2012/2015 incorporating updated budget and policy proposals.	Cabinet, Council	6 Feb 2012	With all Members and a range of local stakeholders including PCT's, Parish Councils, social care representatives, businesses, trades unions, the schools forum and the public.	To be determined but expected to be a scrutiny budget consultation group.	Lisa Quinn, Director of Finance and Business Services

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Relevant Scrutiny Committee	How to make representation to the decision made
CE11/12-31 Crewe Rail Exchange	To consider accepting grant funding from the Dept of Transport and arrangements for the transfer of the necessary land.	Cabinet	6 Feb 2012	Consultations as part of the planning application process.	Corporate; Environment and Prosperity	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)
CE11/12-32 Land at Pym's Lane and Minshull New Road, Crewe	To consider the sale of the freehold interest at Pym's Lane, and to explore the sale of land at Minshull New Road.	Cabinet	6 Feb 2012	N/A	Environment and Prosperity	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)
CE11/12-21 Cheshire Homechoice - Allocation Policy Review	To approve the allocation policy for adoption.	Cabinet	5 Mar 2012	Partner housing providers, Homechoice officers, housing benefits, Police and community safety, tenants and residents.	Environment and Prosperity 21 February 2012	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)
CE11/12-29 Crewe Green Link Road Highway Scheme - Revised Area of CPO	To consider an amended area for the compulsory purchase of land associated with this scheme.	Cabinet	5 Mar 2012	Affected land owners and developers.	Prosperity	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Relevant Scrutiny Committee	How to make representation to the decision made
CE11/12-27 Private Sector Housing Financial Assistance Policy	To approve the policy.	Cabinet	2 Apr 2012	The public and the third sector, including on line consultation.	Environment and Prosperity	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)
CE11/12-30 Strategic Tenancy Strategy	In accordance with the Localism Act to publish a Tenancy Strategy setting out the broad objectives to be taken into consideration by Social Landlords when producing their own policies, and on the granting and reissuing of tenancies.	Cabinet	2 Apr 2012	Registered Providers and their Board Members, Stakeholders. Further guidance awaited from DCLG.	Environment and Prosperity	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)