

# Cabinet

## Agenda

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**Date:** Monday, 15th October, 2012  
**Time:** 2.00 pm  
**Venue:** Committee Suite 1, 2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road,  
Sandbach CW11 1HZ

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

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

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

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

3. **Public Speaking Time/Open Session**

In accordance with Procedure Rules Nos.11 and 35 a total period of 10 minutes is allocated for members of the public to address the Committee on any matter relevant to the work 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.

In order for an informed answer to be given, where a member of the public wishes to ask a question of a Cabinet Member three clear working days notice must be given and the question must be submitted in writing at the time of notification. It is not required to give notice of the intention to make use of public speaking provision but, as a matter of courtesy, a period of 24 hours notice is encouraged.

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Please contact Cherry Foreman on 01270 686463  
E-Mail: [cherry.foreman@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:cherry.foreman@cheshireeast.gov.uk) with any apologies or requests for further information or to give notice of a question to be asked by a member of the public

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 1 - 14)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2012 as a correct record.

5. **Key Decision 12/13-13 Financial Support for Public Transport** (Pages 15 - 68)

To consider options for how to meet the transport needs of local communities within the context of reduced budgets, whilst at the same time minimising the impact on protected equality groups particularly older and disabled people.

6. **Key Decision 12/13-25 Available Walking Routes Policy** (Pages 69 - 92)

To consider the policy for the assessment of walked routes to school.

7. **Key Decision 12/13-19 Review of Leisure Services Delivery Options** (Pages 93 - 98)

To consider the appointment of a consultant to review the range of potential delivery models available for the delivery of leisure services, and to recommend a preferred option.

8. **Key Decision 12/13-24 Public Services Network Connectivity Procurement** (Pages 99 - 104)

To approve the procurement of Public Service Network Connectivity with Cheshire West and Chester Council and other potential public service partners.

9. **Three Year Medium Term Financial Strategy 2013-2016** (Pages 105 - 114)

To consider the latest medium term financial forecasts for the Council and areas for further consideration.

10. **Three Year Council Plan 2013-2016** (Pages 115 - 122)

To consider the proposed framework for the development of a new three year Council Plan in parallel with the Council's supporting Medium Term Financial Strategy.

11. **Notice of Motion to Council - Culture Policy** (Pages 123 - 126)

To consider a response to the Notice of Motion referred to Cabinet by the Council at its meeting on 19 April 2012.

12. **Planning Appeal Loachbrook Farm, Sandbach**

To note the urgent action taken by the Leader, the Deputy Leader, and the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Regulatory Services in respect of an appeal against the findings of a Planning Inspector.

Application

11/0736C - Redevelopment of land for up to 200 dwellings, community facilities & associated infrastructure, Loachbrook Farm, Sandbach Road, Congleton.

### Background

Earlier this year the Council mounted a strong appeal at an Inquiry that lasted several days. The Inspectors decision was made on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2012 and, whilst carefully addressing all of the Council's arguments, he granted planning permission to the applicant. Legal opinion has been obtained from the Barrister who represented the Council at the Appeal and her opinion is that on planning grounds the chances of a successful appeal are remote. However, Tewkesbury Council is appealing against an Inspector's decision made on similar grounds and is using wider arguments based upon extensive change of Government Policy as being contrary to published policy on localism.

The Barrister representing Tewkesbury Council, from the same Chambers as the Barrister who represented the Council at the Loachbrook Farm Inquiry, has indicated he could mount similar arguments if Cheshire East chooses to challenge the Loachbrook decision on this basis.

The deadline for an Appeal to be made was Thursday 27 September 2012 and therefore it was not possible for the matter to await the next ordinary meeting of Cabinet.

### **13. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

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

The Committee may decide that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

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

### **14. Key Decision 12/13-17 Appointment of Preferred Contractor, Lyceum Theatre, Crewe (Pages 127 - 138)**

To consider a report of the Strategic Director Places and Organisational Capacity.

### **15. Key Decision 12/13-23 Tatton Park Enterprises (Pages 139 - 144)**

To consider a report of the Strategic Director Places and Organisational Capacity.

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**CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet**  
held on Monday, 17th September, 2012 at Council Chamber, Municipal  
Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe CW1 2BJ

**PRESENT**

Councillor D Brown (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)  
Councillor (none)

Councillors J Clowes, H Gaddum, L Gilbert, J Macrae, R Menlove, B Moran  
and P Raynes.

In addition Councillor K Gregory from Thanet District Council, and Chairman of  
PATROL, was in attendance for agenda item 8 (Minute no 63).

Officers in attendance:

Interim Chief Executive; Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer; Director of  
Finance and Business Services; Head of HR and Organisational  
Development; Head of Early Intervention and Prevention Service; Service  
Manager Revenues; and Strategic Director Places and Organisational  
Capacity.

**59 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Bailey and M  
Jones.

**60 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**61 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION**

There were no questions from members of the public.

**62 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING****RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 August 2012 be  
approved as a correct record.

**63 KEY DECISION CE12/13-20 PATROL NOMINATION TO BE HOST  
AUTHORITY**

Consideration was given to proposals for Cheshire East Council to  
become the host authority to the PATROL (Parking and Traffic

Regulations Outside London) Adjudication Committee, and to the Bus Lane Adjudication Joint Committee.

The Portfolio Holder for Prosperity and Regeneration reported that the second of the three decisions requested had been amended since the publication of the report and was now as follows:

Subject to consultation with, and subject to the approval of the Borough Solicitor, the S151 Officer and the Portfolio Holder for Prosperity and Regeneration, to develop and implement a detailed activity schedule that will anticipate the commencement date for Cheshire East Council becoming the Host Authority to be 1 January 2013.

The report detailed the work that had been undertaken since February 2012, when agreement in principle had been given to undertake the role of host authority. In addition Councillor Gregory answered a number of questions from Councillors in respect of the financial arrangements under which PATROL operated.

#### **RESOLVED**

1. To agree to undertake the role of Host Authority to the PATROL Adjudication Joint Committee and Bus Lane Adjudication Service Joint Committee subject to all legal and financial due diligence being satisfactorily completed in accordance with the proposed timetable. This decision will be communicated to the PATROL Adjudication Joint Committee at their next meeting.
2. Subject to consultation with, and subject to the approval of the Borough Solicitor, the S151 Officer and the Portfolio Holder for Prosperity and Regeneration, to develop and implement a detailed activity schedule that will anticipate the commencement date for Cheshire East Council becoming the Host Authority to be 1 January 2013.
3. To note that by becoming the Host Authority, this will trigger the automatic application of the TUPE Regulations which will affect a transfer of 24 employees (Chief Adjudicator and 23 support staff) from Manchester City Council to Cheshire East Council.

#### **64 KEY DECISION CE12/13-11 CONGLETON TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE - ASSESSMENT OF A NEW LINK ROAD**

Consideration was given to a programme for the development, promotion and delivery of a new transport infrastructure for Congleton to support the towns existing economic base and also any future plans for growth that emerge from the development of the Boroughs Local Plan.

The report included a timescale and details of the resources required to begin feasibility work to examine the available transport options to help deliver improved travel and connectivity to support the sustained economic growth of Congleton and also more widely across the Borough.

## **RESOLVED**

1. That approval be given to the commencement of the work necessary to establish a range of transport infrastructure options that support the sustainable economic growth of Congleton – leading to the identification of a preferred option; this work to include the following:

- 1.1 A Project Plan with key milestones, timescales, gateway reviews and other decision points:

Milestone 1 – Approvals and Governance

Milestone 2 – Preliminary Investigation and Scoping

Milestone 3 – Data Gathering

Milestone 4 – Option Development and Appraisal

Milestone 5 – Consultation

Milestone 6 – Scheme Assessment Report and Preferred route.

2. That the strategic objectives for the study be approved as set out in section 6.1 of this report.
3. That approval be given to the funding and budget necessary to deliver the first four Milestones, noting –
  - ◆ The requirement to make £200,000 additional funding available from the Council's capital programme for 2012/13 in order to deliver Milestone 3 to programme and commence Milestone 4.
  - ◆ The requirement for additional corporate funding to supplement Local Transport Plan resource from 2013/14 onwards. This is anticipated at this stage to be £400,000.
  - ◆ The need to take a formal business case through the Executive Monitoring Board for approval.
4. That approval be given to the procurement of these services through the current Highway Services Contract (Ringway Jacobs) subject to the Highways and Transport Manager being assured of value for money.
5. That the indicative delivery programme and the key milestones for further Cabinet decisions, and the summary of the key decision points and proposed delegation contained within Section 10, be noted.

**65 POYNTON RELIEF ROAD**

Consideration was given to the work necessary to support the investigation of a new preferred route for the Poynton Relief Road which could then be incorporated as a protected line in the emerging Local Plan.

The report included details of the anticipated timescale required to prepare a submission for devolved Local Major Transport Scheme Funding. In addition the work proposed would better inform the continuing dialogue with Stockport Council on the interface of Poynton /Relief Road with the SEMMMS scheme at Chester Road.

**RESOLVED**

1. That Officers be authorised to commence the necessary work to support investigation of a new preferred route for the Poynton Relief Road when funding is identified and available; to include:

- 1.1 A draft Project Plan indicating the following key milestones, timescales and decision points:

Milestone 1 – Approvals, Governance and Funding

Milestone 2 – Preliminary Investigation and Scoping

Milestone 3 – Data Gathering

Milestone 4 – Option Development and Appraisal

Milestone 5 – Consultation

Milestone 6 – Scheme Assessment Report and Preferred route.

2. That the indicative delivery programme and the key milestones for further Cabinet decisions, and the summary of the key decision points contained within Section 10, be noted.

**66 KEY DECISION CE12/13-6 SEMMMS- A6 TO MANCHESTER AIRPORT RELIEF ROAD**

*In accordance with Section 100 (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Chairman agreed that this item could be added as an item of urgent business. Detailed discussions associated with mitigation measures within Cheshire East had been ongoing since early June, and provision had been made within the Forward Plan for a paper to be received. As a consequence of the ongoing discussions the proposed final Business Case submission that would trigger the funding commitment had been delayed. The discussions had now been concluded with the outcome resulting in improved mitigation measures within Cheshire East funded by the project. If the report was delayed until the October cycle further unnecessary delays would be incurred resulting in key milestones associated with the future scheme development being missed.*



Consideration was given to the progress of this scheme and to the Major Scheme Business Case. The Strategic Director for Places and Organisational Capacity gave a verbal update on the outcome of discussions with Manchester City Council and the Combined Authority. He reported that confirmation had been received for additional funding to be provided for the junction arrangement required to create a connection from the A555 at Bramhall Oil Terminal, along with costs associated with the Chester Road connection; contingency funds to support the costs of the Poynton Relief Road relating to the costs involved in the grade separation at the roads interface with Chester Road; and the support of the SEMMMS/A555 design team in developing options and design concepts.

The report set out a project plan for the delivery of the scheme and it was noted that this now required revision; submission of the planning application and the publication of the draft Orders was now expected to be in the Spring of 2013.

The Cabinet was advised that since publication of the report the final two decisions requested had been amended to include the Portfolio Holder for Prosperity and Regeneration. In addition it was noted that in accordance with the recently introduced Council requirement for all major projects and programmes the scheme would be reviewed by the Executive Monitoring Board, the new corporate quality assurance group.

### **RESOLVED**

1. That the verbal update on the outcome of discussions with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and Stockport MBC be noted.
2. That the Scheme's business case, and its submission to the DfT be endorsed, and that this be confirmed to Stockport MBC as the Scheme promoters on behalf of the GMCA.
3. Subject to the final approval of the GMCA to allocate funding from the Earn Back model to the Scheme, approval be given for the authority to sign off the business case to be delegated to Stockport Council's Section 151 Officer on behalf of Cheshire East Council, as one of the three promoting authorities, with regards to the estimated costs and funding of the Scheme.
4. That delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director of Places and Organisational Capacity, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Prosperity and Regeneration, to agree the consultation material regarding the scheme for distribution to Cheshire East households.
5. That delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director of Places and Organisational Capacity, in consultation with the Portfolio

Holder for Prosperity and Regeneration, to establish the arrangements for a Board and Joint Infrastructure Development Fund with the GMCA.

**67 CAR PARK MANAGEMENT - ENVIRONMENT AND PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW**

*In accordance with Section 100B (4) 9b) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Chairman had agreed that this could be added as an item of urgent business. The report needed to be received by Cabinet at the earliest opportunity in order for the recommendations contained within it to be further considered by the Cabinet and, if approved, to be taken into account in the forthcoming budget setting process.*

In accordance with the established procedure Cabinet was requested to receive the report of the Environment and Prosperity Committee Review on car park management in Cheshire East. A number of points were raised relating to particular local issues, and specifically to recommendation (e) of the review. The Portfolio Holder for Environment undertook to ensure they were taken into account by the Cabinet when considering the recommendations that had been put forward.

**RESOLVED**

That the report be received and that the Environment Portfolio Holder come back to a future meeting of the Cabinet with a formal response to each recommendation.

**68 KEY DECISION CE11/12-42 REVIEW OF DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY**

Cabinet considered a number of changes to the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy which had been approved by the Cheshire East Shadow Council in 2008. Since that time, however, changes in non-domestic rate legislation had led to some anomalies, and other areas of the Policy needed to be updated, to prevent loss of revenue and ineligible or fraudulent relief being awarded. It was intended that entitlement to relief then be reviewed every three years.

Corporate Scrutiny had reviewed the report and its comments had been considered by the Cabinet and circulated at the meeting. In respect of the comments concerning possible hardship the Portfolio Holder for Finance requested that an additional recommendation be added as follows:

To identify those organisations who from consultation response or from our knowledge of their activities may require hardship relief, and to assist those organisations with an application where appropriate.

**RESOLVED**

1. That the wording of the policy be amended so that ratepayers, applying for discretionary relief only, must also apply for Small Business Rate Relief if eligible.
2. That 50% Rural Settlement top-up Relief be awarded from 1 April 2011 to ratepayers who qualify for all categories of mandatory rural settlement relief.
3. That all awards of legacy protection be removed and that grant relief be awarded to ratepayers solely in accordance with the Cheshire East Policy.
4. That the Rural Settlement List be updated following recent boundary changes in Cheshire East; that Styal and Kerridge to be added to the list and the settlement of Leighton removed from it following an increase in population.
5. That from 1 April 2012 Cabinet consider applications for discretionary rate relief under S 47 (5A) LGFA 1988 to determine whether applications are in the Council Tax payers' interests.
6. That those organisations who, from consultation response or from our knowledge of their activities, may require hardship relief, be identified and assisted with an application where appropriate.

**69 KEY DECISION CE12/13-15 CONNECTING CHESHIRE SUPERFAST BROADBAND PARTNERSHIP**

Consideration was given to the partnership arrangements proposed for the delivery of this project to provide superfast broadband services in areas of market failure, these being predominantly outlying rural areas. It was proposed that Cheshire East be the accountable body and delivery agent for the project partners of Cheshire West and Chester, Warrington and Halton.

**RESOLVED**

That Council be recommended to approve that:

1. Cheshire East Council enter into a partnership arrangement with Cheshire West and Chester Council, Warrington Borough Council and Halton Borough Council for the delivery of the Connecting Cheshire Superfast Broadband Project.

2. That Cheshire East Council lead the partnership and fulfil the role as the accountable body and principal delivery agent of the Connecting Cheshire Partnership.

**70 KEY DECISION CE12/13-18 DELIVERY OF STREETSCAPE AND PARKING MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES**

Consideration was given to extending the scope of the Highways Services Contract to include streetscape and parking maintenance activities. The activities being considered were predominantly within the highway boundaries or similar in nature to cyclical and routine activities already undertaken within the scope of the Highways Services Contract.

Included in the report were the benefits and risks of extending the scope of the contract in respect of both the financial and service delivery aspects. The proposals were intended to be complimentary to the Council's localism agenda which was one of its key objectives and Ringway Jacobs, the contract holders, were committed to working closely with the Council to achieve localised devolution opportunities and in engaging Town and Parish Councils to form part of the decision making process.

**RESOLVED**

1. That, subject to no challenge being received during the Voluntary Ex-ante Transparency Notice period commonly referred to as the VEAT notice, approval be given to extending the scope of the Highways Services Contract to include Streetscape and Parking Maintenance activities as outlined in 10.2 and 10.6 of the report.
2. That approval be given to the publication of a procurement VEAT Notice
3. That approval be given to the development of a detailed activity programme that will engage with elected members, existing employees and their Trade Union representatives, with a view to achieving a commencement date of 1 January 2013 for the new service delivery arrangements.
4. That it be noted that extending the scope of the Highways Services Contract will trigger the automatic application of the TUPE Regulations which will affect a transfer of a number of existing Council employees within the Streetscape, Parking and Fleet Services to Ringway Jacobs.

*After consideration of this item the meeting adjourned for a 10 minute break.*

**71 KEY DECISION CE12/13-12 AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME PHASE 2**

Approval was sought for the disposal of a number of sites for the provision of affordable housing, these being Phase Two of a programme approved by Cabinet in March 2011 to dispose of eleven sites overall. Of the seven sites that were to have been included in the second phase two were no longer available; permission was sought for them to be replaced.

The Portfolio Holder for Prosperity and Regeneration advised the Cabinet that an additional sentence was to be added to the decision requested for Birtles Road to state “including houses for first time buyers for local occupancy to meet local needs”.

**RESOLVED**

1. That approval be given to dispose of the following sites:
  - Birtles Road, Macclesfield - for the provision of housing with a type of scheme which fits with the character of the locality including houses for first time buyers for local occupancy to meet local needs;
  - Redsands, Nantwich - for the provision of accommodation for residents with support needs to be developed on the current footprint of the existing buildings located on the site to ensure that it is compliant with Policy NE.4.

The final schemes will be reviewed with local Ward Councillors and consulted upon locally prior to sale.

2. That approval be given to seek consent from the Secretary of State for the disposal of the former Lodgefields School site in Crewe.
3. That approval be given for the provision of up to 50% market housing in conjunction with 50% affordable housing on the Lodgefields School site in Crewe to ensure that the site is financially viable and to encourage further interest following the poor response to the Westview site in Crewe within Phase One of the disposals.

**72 CONGLETON TOWN CENTRE - BRIDESTONES EXTENSION AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE DISPOSAL OBJECTION**

Consideration was given to an objection received to the disposal of public open space, located off Princess Street, Congleton, for development as part of an extension to the Bridestones Centre to deliver a retail led, mixed use development.

**RESOLVED**

That, having given consideration to the one objection received in response to the advertisement of the intention to dispose of the open space within the development area, approval be given to the disposal of the Council's legal interest in land located off Princess Street, Congleton as described in paragraph 10.3 of the report to Scarborough Development Group (Congleton) Ltd (SDG) on terms and conditions to be determined by the Director of Finance, the Strategic Director Places & Organisational Capacity, and the Borough Solicitor, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Prosperity and Regeneration.

**73 NOTICE OF MOTION - SOUTH MACCLESFIELD DEVELOPMENT AREA**

In response to a Notice of Motion submitted to the Council on 19 July 2012 consideration was given to an update on the work being undertaken in this area. It was reported that work was due to commence on a masterplan for the site as part of which the land use options and commercial viability would be investigated; a consultancy team had been appointed to support the Council in this process.

**RESOLVED**

That the update report be noted in respect of work being undertaken in respect of the regeneration of the South Macclesfield Development Area.

**74 NOTICE OF MOTION - HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE FUNDING ALLOCATION**

Consideration was given to the response to a Notice of Motion, on the assignment of funding for road maintenance, submitted to the Council at its meeting on 19 July 2012.

It was reported that the Authority had invested in software which allowed local highway officers to view the overall condition of the road network and to provide data to prioritise investment such that the best value solution was delivered. The tools used nationally accredited survey techniques and the output was considered to be both objective and repeatable; it also linked back to the Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance, Well Maintained Roads.

**RESOLVED**

1. That planned maintenance activity continues to be identified and prioritised based on the condition of the network.

2. That the programme for the forthcoming month, as well as the works undertaken in the preceding month, be published on the Service Information Centre (SIC) and is reported at a LAP level.

**75 NOTICE OF MOTION - A500/J16 OF THE M6 MOTORWAY**

Consideration was given to a response to the Notice of Motion submitted to the Council on 19 April 2012 concerning the continuing delay by the Highways Agency in addressing the need for remedial work at the A500/M6 Junction.

The report detailed the current position regarding the development of a key employment site at Basford West and of the outstanding issues to be resolved with the Highways Agency. It was reported that these were the subject of ongoing dialogue, at the highest level, between all the parties concerned and Cabinet were advised that a letter had recently been sent to the Chief Executive of the Highways Agency.

**RESOLVED**

That the Council continues to work with the developer and the Highway Agency to secure an agreement of both the design and delivery of the improvement scheme at the earliest opportunity and that further consideration be given to how best to progress the commencement of the work required.

**76 NOTICE OF MOTION - BENEFIT AWARENESS**

Consideration was given to a Notice of Motion submitted to the Council at its meeting on 19 July 2012 regarding benefit awareness particularly among older people.

The report detailed the proactive work undertaken by staff across the Council to promote the take up of Pensions Credit, and of other benefits as well as of general financial assistance, to ensure customers had access to their full welfare entitlement. Financial support was also given to community and voluntary bodies. A Welfare Rights Group had been established in May and new health and wellbeing duties both provided an opportunity to promote the take up of benefits locally.

**RESOLVED**

That the report, and the actions taken to promote benefit awareness, be noted.

**77 NOTICE OF MOTION - SUSPENSION OF EMPLOYEES ACCUSED OF MISCONDUCT**

Consideration was given to a response to the Notice of Motion submitted to the Council at its meeting on 19 July 2012 on the use of suspension for disciplinary offences. The report detailed the procedures the Council already had in place to ensure that each case was considered properly and on its own merits.

**RESOLVED**

That the report be noted and that no further action be taken in response to the Notice of Motion.

**78 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED**

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

**79 KEY DECISION CE12/13-11 CONGLETON LINK ROAD RGF BID**

Consideration was given to a report of the Strategic Director of Places and Organisational Capacity.

**RESOLVED**

1. That retrospective approval be given to the submission of a funding bid for Regional Growth Fund (RGF).
2. That the indicative delivery programme for the project and the timetable for RGF spend be noted, including recognition of the potential risks to delivery and the indicative requirements for Cheshire East Council funding should the bid be successful.

**80 KEY DECISION CE12/13-12 AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME PHASE 2**

Consideration was given to a report of the Strategic Director of Places and Organisational Capacity.

**RESOLVED**

That approval be given to dispose of the following sites for the provision of affordable housing, at



- Hole Farm, Brook Lane, Alderley Edge - subject to Crichel Downs.
- Gawsworth - subject to agreement with the tenant

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 5.10 pm

D Brown (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)

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## **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

### **REPORT TO: Cabinet**

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**Date of Meeting:** Monday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2012  
**Report of:** Strategic Director, Places and Organisational Capacity  
**Subject/Title:** Financial Support for Public Transport  
**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Rod Menlove

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#### **1.0 Report Summary**

- 1.1 Cheshire East Council currently commits over £3 million a year to supporting public transport, and £450,000 a year for demand responsive transport. The adopted Business Plan (2012-15) for Cheshire East Council anticipates a reduction of £0.5m in the Council's support for public transport, subject to a full public consultation on the equality impacts. This report sets out a series of options for how best to meet the transport needs of local communities within the context of reduced budgets. Even if the recommendations in this report are adopted, Cheshire East will still commit to financial support of £2.4m a year for public transport, and increase the amount it spends on demand responsive transport to promote rural accessibility, inclusivity for older and disabled residents, and expand the service into evenings and weekends.
- 1.2 The proposals have been developed, informed and influenced by three key sources of evidence and assessment: 1) the Council's adopted public transport support criteria which fully reflect the key themes and aspirations contained within the Local Transport Plan; 2) passenger journey data provided by local bus operators; and 3) the results and analysis of the recent public consultation exercise and focus group discussion.
- 1.3 The report explores the potential to reduce the Council's financial support whilst minimising the impact on protected equality groups, particularly older and disabled people. Even with the anticipated budget reduction, the Council will still be committing to a substantial level of subsidy for public transport contracts as well as additional support for concessionary travel, infrastructure expenditure, publicity and information.

#### **2.0 Decision Requested**

- 2.1 Endorse the planned investment of £2.4m (gross expenditure) per annum in continuing support for public transport contracts;
- 2.2 Agree the proposal to reduce or withdraw funding subsidies for bus services supported by Cheshire East Council in line with the schedule set out in Appendix 3, resulting in a reduction in gross expenditure of £750,000 per annum, in accordance with the timetable shown in Appendix 5 and the budget reallocations shown in paragraph 7.5;

- 2.3 Authorise the Transport Manager, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services, to make final adjustments to individual contract decisions and timings in negotiation with bus operators, and seek to secure commercial operation of currently-subsidised routes;
- 2.4 Agree the formal establishment of a representative forum to engage on matters relating to flexible transport in particular, and older and disabled residents transport needs in general;
- 2.5 Agree the reinvestment of an additional £150,000 per annum in the provision of flexible, demand responsive transport and consider including this allocation in the 2013/14 business planning process as a permanent recurring reinvestment, not one-off.

### **3.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 The proposals have been developed by merging three key sources of evidence which together provide a robust assessment of the impact. The Council's public transport support criteria (adopted in August 2011) provide a fair, transparent and accountable process to score and rank each current supported transport contract against objective criteria. The criteria reflect wider aspirations for the area contained within the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan. They are also directly linked to the Local Transport Plan, which set out the strategic priorities for transport in Cheshire East – to “create conditions for business growth” and “ensure a sustainable future”. The criteria utilise passenger journey data from local bus operators, such as the number of passenger journeys and proportion of concessionary pass holders to gauge the number and characteristics of those affected.
- 3.2 To look in closer detail at the impact of any changes at a local and individual level, a full and extensive consultation exercise was undertaken across the borough from 27 April until 22 June 2012. The consultation was followed by a focus group discussion with representatives of older and disabled people to assess the impact and potential mitigation measures. The results from the consultation have informed the Equality Impact Assessment (see Appendix 4) to consider the impact of any changes on certain equality groups with protected characteristics, such as older people, people with disabilities, people with mobility or learning difficulties etc.
- 3.3 The council's adopted business plan for 2012-2015 anticipated a reduction of gross annual expenditure on public transport support of approximately £500,000, with reinvestment of approximately £100,000 a year into flexible, demand responsive transport. The current business plan contains budget provision for £100,000 on a one-off basis which is now clear should instead be recurring funding for flexible transport. In the light of emerging financial pressures, it is considered appropriate that Cabinet considers a further reduction in support for public transport, with further reinvestment of part of the additional saving into demand responsive transport.

#### **4.0 Wards Affected**

4.1 All

#### **5.0 Local Ward Members**

5.1 All

#### **6.0 Policy Implications including – Carbon Reduction – Health**

- 6.1 The adopted criteria link directly to the Local Transport Plan and consider the impact on wider policy agendas including economic development, air quality and carbon reduction, which has associated health benefits. The criteria also consider a range of accessibility indicators with an aim to promote equality of access to local services. Finally, the revised criteria ensure the longer term financial sustainability of supported transport contracts.
- 6.2 As part of the council's wider remit to promote public health, active travel such as walking and cycling is favoured over motorised travel. Tackling obesity and associated health problems such as diabetes, heart disease and increased risk of stroke is a key aim. Promotion of active travel (particularly for young people) plays a key role in encouraging healthier lifestyles.

#### **7.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)**

- 7.1 Central government traditionally provided specific funding pots (e.g. Rural Bus Subsidy Grant and Rural Bus Challenge Grant). Those grants have now been absorbed into the Council's Revenue Support Grant. So long as a local authority has undertaken an assessment of unmet need under the Transport Act, it is a matter for members to decide how far they wish to meet those needs, taking into account the revenues available, and having in mind the duty to consider the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of provision. Local transport authorities are therefore free to decide the total budget that they wish to devote to supporting local transport services in the light of the assessment of transport need. Members must also have in mind the requirement to make budgetary decisions based on the need to ensure equality is promoted and inequality minimised as far as is reasonably practicable.
- 7.2 The Council's Business Plan (2012-15) anticipates a reduction of expenditure on local bus support of £0.5m, with a reinvestment of £0.1m in alternatives for those passengers most directly affected by any potential withdrawals of service. The changes that were envisaged in the recent public consultation are expected to lead to savings of approx £0.4m which is the agreed level of saving required. The Council also supports local flexible transport provision. The support for such demand responsive transport is largely constrained by the budget available.

- 7.3 In the light of emerging financial pressures facing the authority, and the process of identifying new and more cost-effective ways of supporting service delivery, budgets devoted to services are kept under constant review. Accordingly, it is appropriate for the Transport Service to recommend the scope for reductions in expenditure and for them to be considered by Cabinet. Upon consideration of the consultation feedback, and taking into account the financial resources available to the authority, it is now considered that overall annual support for public transport be reduced by approximately £0.75m, but a an increase in anticipated annual support for flexible, demand response transport of an additional £0.15m, resulting in a £0.6m net saving.
- 7.4 The current supported routes now recommended for withdrawal have impacts on budgets in both public transport and home to school transport terms. Some services recommended for withdrawal are used for the carriage of children entitled to transport at public expense. Allowance has been made for alternative transport provision for such children, with around 398 children being entitled to transport at taxpayer expense.
- 7.5 The service has calculated the effects of the changes to the Council's budget as follows:

	Current Expenditure	Impact of Business Plan proposals	Impact if recommendations adopted
Gross expenditure – public transport	£3.0m	£3.0m	£3.0m
Anticipated reduction in public transport support	-	(£0.5m)	(£0.75m)
Anticipated increase in flexible, demand responsive transport support	-	£0.1m	£0.15m
Total	£3.0m	£2.6m	£2.4m

## 8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 8.1 The Transport Act (1985) imposes duties on and grants powers to local authorities to establish policies and carry out certain functions in relation to public transport.

### 8.2 Section 63, (1) states:

In each non-metropolitan county of England and Wales it shall be the duty of the county council — (a) to secure the provision of such public passenger transport services as the council consider it appropriate to secure to meet any public transport requirements within the county which would not in their view be met apart from any action taken by them for that purpose.

In addition, section 63 (6) states:

A non-metropolitan county council in England and Wales or, in Scotland, a . . . council shall have power to take any measures that appear to them to be appropriate for the purpose of or in connection with promoting, so far as relates to their area —

(a) the availability of public passenger transport services other than subsidised services and the operation of such services, in conjunction with each other and with any available subsidised services, so as to meet any public transport requirements the council consider it appropriate to meet; or (b) the convenience of the public (including persons who are elderly or disabled) in using all available public passenger transport services (whether subsidised or not).

Finally, section 63(7) states:

It shall be the duty of a county council or (as the case may be) of a regional or islands council, in exercising their power under subsection (6) above, to have regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. It shall be the duty of any council, in exercising or performing any of their functions under the preceding provisions of this section, to have regard to the transport needs of members of the public who are elderly or disabled and to the appropriate bus strategy.

- 8.3 The Council has previously adopted the Local Transport Plan, and associated bus support criteria, to ensure it discharges the statutory obligation to: firstly, establish policies; secondly, secure appropriate public transport to discharge these policies; finally, take into account the needs of members of the public who are elderly or disabled, and has due regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 8.4 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to identify the impacts of any decisions, policies etc on certain protected groups to ensure equality is promoted, and inequality minimised. For example, there must be an assessment made of the impacts on groups or individuals who are disabled, who belong to ethnic or racial groups, on the grounds of age or sex discrimination etc. The results from the public consultation have informed the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), which is, in turn, informing the proposals being recommended for consideration by Cabinet. The full Equality Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix 4.

## **9.0 Risk Management**

- 9.1 In recommending how best to achieve the savings identified in the Business Plan, there is a need to manage implementation carefully to minimise the reputational risk to the authority in withdrawing, or providing alternative ways of delivering, public transport services which are relatively low priority in comparison to other services. In addition, there are risks that reduced financial support for public transport may lead to threats to the viability of individual bus routes or indeed whole companies, especially in the light of changes to central government public transport grants. Finally, there are risks that the council may be challenged that it has not adequately discharged its statutory duties in

respect of consultation or the level of support given to meeting local transport needs.

## **10.0 Background and Options**

- 10.1 Currently 85% - 90% of the bus network in Cheshire East is operated commercially and the remaining 10% - 15% is subsidised by the Council. Cheshire East Council currently spends £3.0m on subsidising local bus services, which are not commercially viable but have previously been considered to be necessary to meet transport needs that would otherwise be unmet. In addition, the Council provides £450,000 of funding to support flexible, demand responsive transport. Finally, the council spends an additional £3.95m on public transport support, such as through concessionary fares, infrastructure, information and publicity etc.
- 10.2 The statutory duties contained in the Transport Act for local transport authorities to support services which are deemed to meet transport needs that would otherwise be unmet does not include a clear definition of what this means in practice. There is a specific duty to identify the needs of older and disabled residents; such duty is also contained in the Equality Act, which imposes an overriding duty upon the authority to ensure that inequality is minimised and equality promoted through its policies and actions.
- 10.3 The Council currently adopts a variety of measures to try to promote equality and minimise inequality through its transport policies. For example, the Council spends around £450,000 a year on supporting flexible, demand responsive transport that is used mainly by older people, or by people with a disability such as blindness / partial sight, physical disability, infirmity etc. The public consultation exercise has been specifically designed so that a full understanding of older and disabled residents' needs is gained, and how well the Council's support is meeting those needs.

### Local Transport Plan (2011-26)

- 10.4 Cheshire East's Local Transport Plan (LTP) is framed around the seven priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy so that the role of transport in delivering the economic, environmental and social ambitions for the area is clearly understood. The LTP provides the strategic framework for transport in the borough and aims to shape investment in local highway and public transport networks over the next 15 years.
- 10.5 The LTP sets out the strategic priorities for transport in Cheshire East, which are to "create conditions for business growth" and "ensure a sustainable future". As part of the first implementation plan, new public transport support criteria were developed to prioritise investment in local public transport services in line with the overall strategic priorities for transport.

### Public Transport Support Criteria

- 10.6 In August 2011, Cabinet adopted new locally determined support criteria, specific to Cheshire East, which provides a framework to guide decision-



making on future investment in local bus, rail and community transport services financially supported by the Council. The criteria aim to provide a fair, transparent and accountable process to manage contracts within budget constraints, provide maximum value for money and support wider strategic considerations.

- 10.7 The criteria enable existing contracts to be tested against three main objectives listed below:
- **LTP Priority Themes** – Public transport has a role to play in “creating conditions for business growth” and “ensuring a sustainable future” by supporting access to employment and economic regeneration, as well as encouraging modal shift towards greater use of public transport.
  - **Accessibility** – It is important to consider the level of travel choice and alternative travel options available to avoid communities becoming socially isolated and excluded. Community consultation has identified a desire for improved integration between different modes of transport, particularly bus and rail services.
  - **Financial Considerations** – The current financial challenges, which are expected to continue over the coming years, require the need to ensure maximum value for money. In addition, there is a statutory duty to consider the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the supported network. Cost per passenger is an important factor to consider, as well as whether a service attracts external funding from other sources, the number of passengers using the service and the commercial potential.
- 10.8 The criteria have been translated into a scoring mechanism which ranks contracts in priority order ranging from “most meets strategic needs to “least meets strategic needs”. It then follows that when seeking greater value for money from the supported network, it is those contracts that score lower relative to other services that are considered first. The full list of contracts ranked in priority order to assess the relative ranking and hence priority attached to each service is included at Appendix 1.
- 10.9 Many of the services with lower scores which are considered “lower priority” are school day services that operate during term time only for children who live too close to school for children to be entitled to transport at taxpayer expense or are attending a school that is not the nearest suitable educational establishment.

### Public Consultation & Focus Group

- 10.10 In order to gain an understanding of the impacts that reduced support and potential changes to “lower priority” services might have on public transport users, particularly older and disabled residents, the Council undertook an 8 week consultation between 27 April and 22 June 2012.
- 10.11 A questionnaire was constructed to record formal feedback and collect both quantitative and qualitative evidence. Both paper and electronic versions of

the survey were available. Objective information (e.g. how often do you use a bus, which bus do you use etc) was captured, as well as more subjective data, such as a description of personal impact should subsidy be withdrawn from a particular route.

- 10.12 The consultation included a series of 10 consultation events held at various locations across the Borough. Officers from Cheshire East Transport were available to answer both generic questions (e.g. how to complete the questionnaire) and specific questions, such as the potential impact on individual bus service users, and alternatives should subsidy be withdrawn. These sessions were held in a variety of locations and at different times of day to enable a reasonable opportunity for people to engage face-to-face on various transport issues.
- 10.13 Consultation material was made available in all libraries and customer contact centres. Direct email and postal information was sent to an extensive list of consultees, ranging from community groups and voluntary organisations to businesses and neighbouring authorities. Publicity was provided to bus companies to place on vehicles, parish council clerks were provided with information and the Council's website was used to prominently display and promote the consultation. Finally, the material was brought to the attention of all Cheshire East Council members. It is considered that this attempt to bring the consultation to the notice of as many people as possible has resulted in a reasonably high level of responses.
- 10.14 Following the consultation and the initial analysis of the results, it was decided to arrange a targeted focus group session with representatives of older people and disability groups (e.g. Age UK, Cheshire East 50+ Network, Disability Resource Exchange and Iris Vision Resource Centre). This provided an opportunity to explore the impacts of any changes on these protected equality groups and deepen our understanding of what measures may help mitigate adverse impacts.
- 10.15 The focus group session provided a highly valuable forum to discuss issues with representative groups and we recommend that this level of engagement continues on an ongoing basis, with appropriate Cheshire East Council Member involvement.

### Consultation Results & Analysis

- 10.16 1,610 responses were received. It is important to note that a higher proportion of older residents, those with a limiting long term illness or disability, and those without access to a car took part in the consultation than found in the adult population of Cheshire East. This is to be expected, as it reflects the profile of bus users both in the borough and across the country.
- 10.17 A number of headline statistics from the overall survey results are listed below with a full report of the consultation results included as Appendix 2.
- Analysis shows a general distribution of respondents throughout Cheshire East

- The majority of respondents are older people (60% are aged 65+)
- 45% consider themselves to have a limiting long term illness or disability
- 44% of respondents did not have access to a car within the household
- More than two thirds of respondents use bus services at least once a week
- The main journey purpose is for access to shops and services
- Consultation feedback was received on the majority of supported bus services
- Overall more than half of respondents said they would not use flexible transport

10.18 For these statistics to be meaningful in informing and influencing the proposals, it is important to analyse responses in relation to each individual bus service. This level of analysis reveals that the scale of impact in withdrawing subsidy can vary considerably, particularly when considering the needs of older and disabled people as protected equality groups.

10.19 Whilst all consultation responses for each currently supported service have been fully considered, the analysis of impacts by each individual bus service has focused on the contracts with lower scores against the Council's support criteria. These are considered lower priority relative to other services. Of these services, twenty-one are school day services which operate during term time and are predominantly "single-purpose" in providing access to school only.

#### Impact Assessment - School Day Local Bus Services

10.20 Cabinet have previously been advised of the relatively low strategic priority accorded to public transport support for "school day" public transport. The journeys supported by the Council provide access to school during term time only – generally providing one journey to school in the morning and a return journey in the afternoon. In school holidays these journeys are not available. There are few passengers other than schoolchildren; nevertheless, the equality impact on both the children and any other passengers affected should subsidy be withdrawn must be taken into account.

10.21 These services generally received low response rates – indeed eight services received no response or feedback from the public. Each of the consultation responses for these school-day services has been analysed in detail and a summary of the responses for each service is included as Appendix 3A. Those who would be most affected by the withdrawal of support for school day services are children who live too close to school to be entitled to transport at taxpayer expense, or are attending a school that is not the nearest suitable educational establishment. As such, there is no additional statutory requirement to consider their needs, other than in the context of the promotion of sustainable school travel. Any children who are travelling on these public bus services and are eligible for transport assistance under the Council's adopted Home to School Transport Policy would be found alternative travel arrangements by Cheshire East Transport. The financial impacts of this are set out in paragraphs 7.4 and 10.24.

10.22 The Council's support for public bus services which carry school children not eligible for home to school transport is a significant benefit – however, this

level of provision is not available to all. There is currently inequity in the way school day public bus services are supported in some areas but not others, which is a result of historical arrangements and decisions prior to Local Government Reorganisation.

- 10.23 Upon detailed examination of consultation responses of users of these school day services, it is not considered that older and disabled people would be adversely affected by withdrawal support for school day services. There are very few non-student users, and for those people who do use the service for general public transport purposes, demand responsive transport is considered to be a suitable alternative.
- 10.24 The reduction in recharge to Children's Services would be approximately £0.8m a year. Alternative provision for the 398 children entitled to transport at taxpayer expense is estimated to cost £0.5m a year. The net saving in terms of Children's Services is therefore around £0.3m a year.
- 10.25 It is therefore recommended that:
- all financial support for such services should now cease;
  - that appropriate alternative provision be found for children entitled to transport under the Council's Home to School Transport Policy;
  - that – in the interests of economy and efficiency – should it be found to be more cost effective to continue to support public transport than secure private hire transport – that Cheshire East Transport be authorised to depart from the policy to ensure the Council's statutory responsibilities for home to school transport are fulfilled.

#### Impact Assessment – General Local Bus Services

- 10.26 There are 20 other supported bus services which achieve the lowest score and ranking when measured against the council's adopted support criteria. These supported journeys are mainly evening journeys, Sunday journeys and other specific weekday journeys. A route by route assessment detailing the specifics of the Council's support for each service and the potential impact / outcome should subsidy be withdrawn is included at Appendix 3B.
- 10.27 Detailed analysis and consideration of consultation responses has taken place following the conclusion of the public consultation period. This has helped identify not only potential adverse consequences for older and disabled residents, but also valuable information on potential mitigation measures, such as use of demand responsive transport for essential journeys, timetabling changes etc.
- 10.28 Nevertheless, Cabinet are advised that there are likely to be adverse impacts should subsidies be reduced or withdrawn. It is important to point out that the duties imposed on the council by the Equality Act 2010 do not mean that a policy cannot be pursued or a decision reached which has adverse impacts – Cabinet are entitled to make such decisions where it is reasonable to do so, having taken into account the Equality Duty and in recognition of the impacts on protected groups. Cabinet must take into account the duties to:

- **eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- **foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

10.29 With these duties in mind, a detailed commentary on likely impacts and mitigation of adverse impacts is contained within Appendix 3B. Cabinet is asked to note that it is not inevitable that a withdrawal of subsidy from a particular contract will inevitably result in adverse impacts. For example, some routes have alternative bus services relatively close by that are suitable for many passengers needs. Changes to timetables – for example, migration from hourly to bi-hourly – may not have a substantial impact; nor minor route changes.

10.30 For many of the general public transport services that are currently supported, only part of the total route or timetable is supported. For example, service 85 Newcastle – Crewe service is operated commercially for the majority of the day, but the early morning journey is subsidised by the council. It is likely that withdrawal of subsidy may result in particular additional journey or journeys being withdrawn by the current contractor, but that the remainder of the service will operate largely unchanged.

10.31 Nevertheless, there are risks that withdrawals of subsidy may impact on elements of service that are not subsidised. There are, in fact, a range of possible responses to subsidy withdrawal that contractors may make, including:

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| - | continuation of service unchanged   | C |
| - | continuation of service, but with amended timetable or route to concentrate on most commercially viable aspects | C |
| - | operator amends other routes or timetables to partially retain service  | O |
| - | operator withdraws route or journey that was previously subsidised  | O |
| - | operator withdraws commercial as well as subsidised route   | O |

It is therefore important that dialogue with operators is continued throughout the process of potential subsidy withdrawal so that their likely response is anticipated and planned for. Should operators be unwilling to continue to operate services if subsidy is withdrawn, the council will seek alternative sources of funding, such as from Parish Councils, schools, local employers etc who may be willing to contribute to retention of part or all of the service affected, It would be for each Parish Council or local employer to decide if they are able or willing to commit to the level of funding currently provided by

CEC. It is not possible at this stage to accurately predict what service reductions may result, and the Council is in continuing discussions with bus companies to gain a clearer understanding of their intentions.

#### Flexible / demand responsive transport

- 10.32 For many older and disabled residents, demand responsive transport is not only appropriate for their travel needs, it can often be the main or only way their travel needs can be met. Conversely, for other public transport users, demand responsive transport is difficult to use or impossible – for example, it is not suitable for daily commuting purposes. Flexible transport is not therefore a panacea for all impacts that may result from reductions in public transport subsidy. It has a vital role to play for some users, a valuable role for many others, but is unsuitable for many more.
- 10.33 It is most relevant in addressing the needs of older (especially frail older) residents, and people with physical disabilities. It is therefore a key way of addressing the council's equality duties should mainstream public transport services no longer exist if subsidy is withdrawn. The council currently spends around £450,000 supporting flexible transport. It is recommended that an additional £150,000 a year is committed to minimise the impact of possible public transport shortfalls in rural areas. It should be noted that flexible transport is currently available to residents across the borough, so long as certain qualifying criteria are met, and the additional investment will enable more residents the opportunity to have greater choice over the days of travel in their particular locale.
- 10.34 Further engagement with representative groups is taking place to shape the council's procurement of demand responsive services. Members should note that currently there is only limited usage of flexible transport by people other than older and disabled residents, and that there is significant potential to address issues such as evening and weekend transport for young people in particular.
- 10.35 Cabinet are asked to note that should subsidies be reduced or withdrawn, and bus companies no longer decide to operate bus services as a result, this may have an impact on wider council aspirations. For example, in rural areas, this may have an impact on access to local services, healthcare, employment etc. It may also impact on the ability of rural dwellers to access social and leisure activities, increasing the risk of isolation and possible exclusion. The support criteria adopted by the council reflect these issues, and the additional funding for demand-responsive transport will be used to minimise the impacts should bus routes be withdrawn.

#### Comparison with other local authorities

10.36 The CIPFA “Near Neighbour” statistical model indicates authorities that are closely comparable to Cheshire East in terms of demography, geography, relative affluence etc. The nearest neighbours to Cheshire East from this model are shown below:

1	Cheshire West
2	Wiltshire
3	Solihull
4	Bath and North East Somerset
5	Stockport
6	Central Bedfordshire
7	Shropshire
8	North Somerset
9	York
10	Trafford
11	Warrington
12	East Riding of Yorkshire
13	Herefordshire
14	South Gloucestershire
15	Bedford

10.37 In a comparison of expenditure on public transport and demand responsive transport, care must be exercised to ensure conclusions drawn are valid. In the list above, for example, some authorities discharge their transport duties through a Passenger Transport Executive covering more than one authority area. In addition, the statistical model is not targeted specifically at transport costs, and variability even amongst near neighbours is therefore an inherent part of the comparison. Finally, local authority expenditure on transport is highly variable, since it depends on a range of factors such as:

- local public transport market L
- impact of prior year funding decisions I
- level of concessionary reimbursement L
- average fare levels A
- local prioritisation of expenditure L
- integration with home to school / social care transport I

10.38 The comparison yields the following details:

Comparator	Public transport expenditure - 2010/11	Public transport expenditure per capita - 2010/11	If recommendations adopted - expenditure per capita
York	999,000	4.94	
North Somerset	1,127,000	5.31	
East Riding of Yorkshire	1,963,000	5.80	
Bath & North East Somerset	1,260,000	7.01	
Bedford	1,198,000	7.45	
Warrington	1,500,000	7.54	
Cheshire East	2,917,000	8.02	6.37
Cheshire West and Chester	3,009,000	9.19	
Shropshire	2,736,000	9.33	
South Gloucestershire	2,577,000	9.73	
Central Bedfordshire	2,602,000	10.20	
Herefordshire	2,251,000	12.55	
Wiltshire	6,804,000	14.80	

Source – CIPFASTATS.Net – Highways and Transport expenditure

10.39 As can be seen in the table above, Cheshire East spends around the average amount per head in comparison with other local authorities. The recommendations – if adopted - would reduce the amount spent per head, and Cheshire East would potentially become an authority that spends relatively less than other comparator authorities. However, the data above relates to the 2010/11 financial year, and it is highly likely that the expenditure in comparator authorities has also reduced in the intervening period. Cheshire East would still spend an amount per head on transport that is broadly in line with the average of its comparator authorities. It should also be noted that some local authorities have removed **all** financial support from public transport in their areas, preferring instead to invest in demand responsive transport to ensure the needs of older and disabled residents are met.

## 11.0 Access to Information

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



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Appendix 1 - Prioritisation of Current Subsidised Bus Routes

Service No.	Route Description	Journeys Supported by the Council	Contract Index out of 100	Recommendations
891	Middlewood - Poynton High School	Schooldays	23	Re co m m e n d e d  fo r  Wi th dr a w al of Su pp or
20	Crewe - Hanley	Sundays and Public Holidays	24	
K80	Congleton - Eaton Bank School	Schooldays	24*	
K95	Congleton - Eaton Bank School			
K96	Congleton - Eaton Bank School			
68	Coppenhall - St.Thomas More/St. Marys	Schooldays	26	
100	Middlewich - Northwich, St.Nicholas High	Schooldays	27	
K44	Weston - Shavington/Malbank Schools	Schooldays	27	
69	Bradfield Green - St.Thomas More/St. Mary's	Schooldays	28	
79	Rode Heath - Alsager	Schooldays	30	
95	Goostrey - Holmes Chapel	Schooldays	30	
78	Crewe - Malbank School	Schooldays	33	
77	Betley - Brine Leas	Schooldays	36	
K98	Park Lane - Congleton High	Schooldays	37	
71	Tytherington - Poynton High	Schooldays	37	
71	Aston/Wrenbury - Malbank/St.Thomas More	Schooldays	38	
K78	Mossley/Congleton - All Hallows	Schooldays	38	
63	Swanwick - Brine Leas/St.Annes/St.Thomas More	Schooldays	40	
E41	Lach Dennis - Holmes Chapel School	Schooldays	40	
737	Weston - Shavington/Crewe	Schooldays	41	
108	Leek - Macclesfield	Mondays to Fridays	42	
K79	Congleton - Macclesfield, All Hallows	Schooldays	43	
61	Audlem - Nantwich	Schooldays	44	
85	Newcastle - Madeley - Crewe	Mondays to Fridays (early journey)	51	
378	Stockport - Handforth - Wilmslow	Mondays to Saturdays (evenings)	52	
108	Ashbourne - Leek - Macclesfield	Fridays & Saturdays (evenings)	53	
130	Macclesfield - Manchester	Mondays to Saturdays (evenings)	53	
127	Chesterton - Crewe	Fridays	54	
44	Crewe - Shavington - Nantwich	Mondays to Saturdays (some journeys)	55	
45	Crewe - Marshfields - Nantwich	Mondays to Saturdays (some journeys)	55	
56	Tiverton - Nantwich	Tuesday / Thursday / Saturday	55*	
83	Bulkeley - Chester			
85	Newcastle - Madeley - Crewe	Mondays to Saturdays (evenings)	56	
391	Poynton - Stockport	Mondays to Saturdays	56	
5/6	Macclesfield - Weston Estate	Mondays to Fridays (evenings)	57	
130	Macclesfield - Manchester	Saturdays (early morning)	58	
84	Crewe - Nantwich - Chester	Mondays to Saturdays (evenings)	60	
378	Stockport - Handforth - Wilmslow	Sundays	61	
8	Crewe - Wistaston Green	Mondays to Saturdays (evenings)	62*	
15	Crewe - Sydney - Elm Drive			
45	Crewe - Marshfields			
9/10A	Macclefield - Moss Rose/Bollington	Mondays to Saturdays (evenings)	62	
390	Bramhall - Poynton - Stockport	Mondays to Saturdays	62	
9	Crewe - Rope Green	Mondays to Saturdays	63	
16	Crewe - Sydney	Mondays to Saturdays	63	
38	Crewe - Macclesfield	Sunday evenings	63	

300	Knutsford Town Service	Mondays to Saturdays and Evenings	64
5/6	Macclesfield - Weston Estate	Sundays	65
8	Crewe - Wistaston Green	Sundays	65*
15	Crewe - Sydney - Elm Drive		
45	Crewe - Marshfields		
11	Macclesfield - Bollington	Mondays to Saturdays	66
37	Crewe - Winsford	Mondays to Saturdays (evenings)	66
319	Sandbach - Holmes Chapel - Goostrey	Mondays to Fridays	66
14	Crewe - Elm Drive	Mondays to Saturdays	67*
45A	Crewe - Marshfield		
32	Sandbach - Crewe	Mondays to Saturdays	68
SB1	Sandbach - Cookesmere Lane	Mondays to Fridays	70*
SB2	Sandbach - Sandbach Heath		
SB3	Sandbach - Ettiley and Elworth		
38	Crewe - Macclesfield	Mondays to Saturdays (early & evening)	71
27	Macclesfield - Knutsford	Mondays to Saturdays	72
58	Bakewell - Buxton - Macclesfield	Mondays to Saturdays	72
77	Kidsgrove - Mow Cop - Congleton	Mondays to Fridays	72
315	Alsager - Congleton	Mondays to Saturdays	72*
321	Scholar Green - Newcastle		
6E	Shavington - Leighton Hospital	Mondays to Saturdays (evenings)	73
60	Disley - Macclesfield	Mondays to Saturdays	73*
64	Glossop - Macclesfield		
130	Macclesfield - Manchester	Sundays	73
200	Wilmslow - Manchester Airport	Mondays to Sundays	73
6	Shavington - Leighton Hospital	Sundays	74
19	Macclesfield - Prestbury	Mondays to Saturdays	75
47	Lower Peover - Knutsford - Warrington	Tuesdays & Fridays	75
88	Knutsford - Wilmslow - Altrincham	Mondays to Saturdays	76
39	Crewe - Nantwich, Crewe Flexirider	Mondays to Saturdays	77
392/3	Macclesfield - Poynton - Stockport	Mondays to Saturdays	78
73/75	Nantwich - Wrenbury - Whitchurch/Market Drayton	Mondays to Saturdays	81
14	Macclesfield - Langley	Mondays to Saturdays	83
73/73	Nantwich - Whitchurch	Mondays to Saturdays	83*
51/52/52A/53	Nantwich Town Services		
108	Ashbourne - Leek - Macclesfield	Mondays to Saturdays	83
289	Northwich - Knutsford - Altrincham	Mondays to Saturdays	92
42	Crewe - Middlewich - Congleton	Mondays to Saturdays	96*
78	Nantwich - Sandbach - Alsager - Rode Heath		

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\* For contract purposes these services are combined into a single contract and therefore it is not possible to allocate financial information separately

## **Public Transport Consultation 2012**

### **Introduction**

Cheshire East's Business Plan 2012-15 includes a saving of £500,000 in the support for local bus services. A consultation exercise was undertaken to obtain the views of the public, local businesses, and organisations such as Parish Councils and local interest groups. The consultation period was from 27 April to 22 June 2012 and feedback could be made through an online survey or by completing a paper questionnaire. Emails and letters received during the consultation period were also incorporated into this analysis. News of the consultation was distributed as widely as possible, and a number of public sessions were held to assist respondents.

A total of 1,610 questionnaires were received. Around a quarter were not fully completed, particularly questions about the respondent's characteristics; although this has not unduly hindered analysis, the statistical analysis must therefore be viewed with a degree of caution.

### **Location of Respondents**

Over 1,400 respondents provided their postcode so analysis showed the general distribution of respondents throughout Cheshire East. It is not surprising that residents in the more populated areas of the Authority produced most of consultation responses. Appendix A shows the full list of local areas in Cheshire East.

The highest proportion of responses from any one local area came from Bollington. Areas providing more than 5% of all responses were:

- Bollington – 183 (13.6%)
- Poynton – 136 (10.2%)
- Crewe – 115 (8.6%)
- Sandbach – 95 (7.1%)
- Alsager – 85 (6.4%)
- Macclesfield – 81 (6.1%).

Appendix B shows the list of responses from each local area.

It is not surprising that the more densely populated areas would produce a high proportion of responses. However some urban area did not provide as many responses as their population might suggest. These were:

- Wilmslow – 35 (2.6%)
- Holmes Chapel – 29 (2.2%)
- Middlewich – 24 (1.8%).

Several rural areas provided just one or nil responses. These included Arley, Ashley, Bickerton, Eaton, Mobberley, Morley, Bunbury, Mount Pleasant and Wheelock.

### Use of Supported Bus Services

The bus services included in the consultation are those that receive funding from the Council. They account for around 10% - 15% of all bus services and journeys in the borough.

The service from Macclesfield via Poynton to Stockport (route 392/3) was the service most frequently selected by respondents, followed closely by Macclesfield to Bollington (route 11). Respondents had been asked to select from a list of 80 services which ones they used currently. The top 30 most frequently selected services are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Top 30 Most Frequently Selected Services**

<b>Route No.</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>% of all respondents</b>
392/3	Macclesfield- Poynton- Stockport	222	13.8%
11	Macclesfield- Bollington	217	13.5%
391	Poynton- Stockport	184	11.4%
78	Nantwich- Sandbach- Alsager	167	10.4%
84	Crewe- Chester	140	8.7%
20	Crewe- Hanley	132	8.2%
38	Crewe- Macclesfield	114	7.1%
130	Macclesfield- Manchester	103	6.4%
42	Crewe- Middlewich- Congleton	92	5.7%
9/10A	Macclesfield- Moss Rose/Bollington	87	5.4%
27	Macclesfield- Knutsford	79	4.9%
37	Crewe- Winsford	79	4.9%
72/73	Nantwich- Whitchurch	74	4.6%
6	Shavington- Leighton Hospital	64	4.0%
319	Sandbach- Holmes Chapel- Goostrey	63	3.9%
315	Alsager- Congleton	61	3.8%
32	Sandbach- Crewe	58	3.6%
88	Knutsford- Wilmslow- Altrincham	58	3.6%
60	Disley- Macclesfield	50	3.1%
58	Bakewell- Buxton- Macclesfield	50	3.1%
39	Crewe- Nantwich	47	2.9%
6E	Shavington- Crewe- Leighton Hospital	44	2.7%
51	Nantwich- Cronkinson Oak-Delamere Road	41	2.5%
390	Bramhall- Poynton- Stockport	39	2.4%
378	Stockport- Handforth- Wilmslow	39	2.4%
44	Crewe- Shavington- Macclesfield	31	1.9%
300	Knutsford Town Service	30	1.9%
14	Crewe- Elm Drive	29	1.8%
64	Glossop- Macclesfield	28	1.7%
K80	Congleton area- Eaton Bank School	26	1.6%

Nine of the bus services were not selected by any of the respondents. These were:- 52A (Nantwich-Reaseheath); 56 (Tiverton-Nantwich); 63 (Swanwick-BrineLeas/St.Thomas More); 68 (Coppenhall-St.Thomas More/St.Marys); 69 (Bradfield Green- St.Thomas More/St.Marys); 71 (Aston/Wrenbury- BrineLeas/St.Thomas More); 83 (Bulkeley-Chester); E41 (Lach Dennis-Holmes Chapel School) and K44 (Weston\_Shaving/Malbank Schools).

Twenty of the bus services had responses from more than 6 local areas. A further 12 had responses from 5 or 6 areas. Service 38 (Crewe- Macclesfield) had the greatest number of responses from different local areas, 21.

### Frequency of Use of Services

When asked how regularly they used the bus services the most frequently mentioned response was '2-3 times per week', chosen by 30% of respondents. The full results were:

- Daily (16.4%)
- 2-3 times per week (30.2%)
- Weekly (22.6%)
- Monthly (16.1%)
- Infrequently (14.7%).

Over two-thirds of service users (69%) used bus services at least weekly.

Of the top 10 most frequently mentioned services, route 78 (Nantwich- Sandbach- Alsager) had the highest proportion using the service daily (20.7%). Nine of the top 30 most frequently mentioned services had over 80 per cent of users saying they travelled at least weekly. These were:

- 51 (Nantwich-Cronkinson Oak-Delamere Road) – 98%
- 14 (Crewe-Elm Drive) – 93%
- 300 (Knutsford Town) – 93%
- 37 (Crewe-Winsford) – 87%
- K80 (Congleton Area-Eaton Bank School) – 86%
- 319 (Sandbach-Holmes Chapel-Goostrey) – 85%
- 64 (Glossop-Macclesfield) – 84%
- 315 (Alsager-Congleton) and 11 (Macclesfield- Bollington) – both 81%.

Several services with smaller numbers of responses had the highest proportions using the service daily as Table 2 shows.

**Table 2: Less Used Services with Highest Proportions Using Service Daily**

Route No.	Service Area	% using service daily	Number of responses
71	Tytherrington- Poynton High School	100	2
K78	Mossley/Congleton- All Hallows	100	1
K95	Congleton Area- Eaton bank School	100	6
K98	Park Lane- Brine Leas	100	1
K96	Congleton Area- Eaton Bank School	83	6
15	Crewe- Sydney- Elm Drive	82	11
K98	Park Lane- Congleton High School	80	10

### Times Services Used

Over three quarters of bus service users travelled Monday to Friday off peak (78%) as Table 3 shows. Saturday daytime was the second most frequently mentioned travel time, selected by 42% of users. Least used was Sunday services.

**Table 3: Distribution of Time Travelled By Respondents and Total Number of Responses**

Travel Times	% of respondents	% of responses
Monday - Friday peak time	27.0	15.0
Monday - Friday off peak	78.1	43.3
Monday - Friday evening	13.2	7.3
Saturday daytime	41.7	23.1
Saturday evening	10.0	5.5
Sunday daytime	7.3	4.1
Sunday evening	3.1	1.7
Base for % *	2,707	4,885

\*Respondents had multiple choices on services and times travelled

The travel times of users of the top 10 most frequently used services by respondents followed the same pattern as for all services as Table 4 shows. Users travelling Monday-Friday off peak ranged from 84% for Service 392/3 to 70% for Service 38.

**Table 4: Main Travel Times for Top 10 Most Frequently Selected Services**

Service No.	Service Area	M-F peak %	M-F off peak %	M-F evening %	Sat. Daytime %	Respondents
392/3	Macclesfield- Poynton- Stockport	19	84	7	39	211
11	Macclesfield- Bollington	26	83	9	48	207
391	Poynton- Stockport	24	81	21	39	177
78	Nantwich- Sandbach- Alsager	24	82	6	39	161
84	Crewe- Chester	28	76	15	57	131
20	Crewe- Hanley	28	76	12	48	123
38	Crewe- Macclesfield	32	70	26	42	108
130	Macclesfield- Manchester	33	81	15	45	98
42	Crewe- Middlewich- Congleton	28	82	7	32	88
9/10A	Macclesfield- Moss Rose/Bollington	14	73	30	42	79

Some services had results that were significantly different to the average. These included:

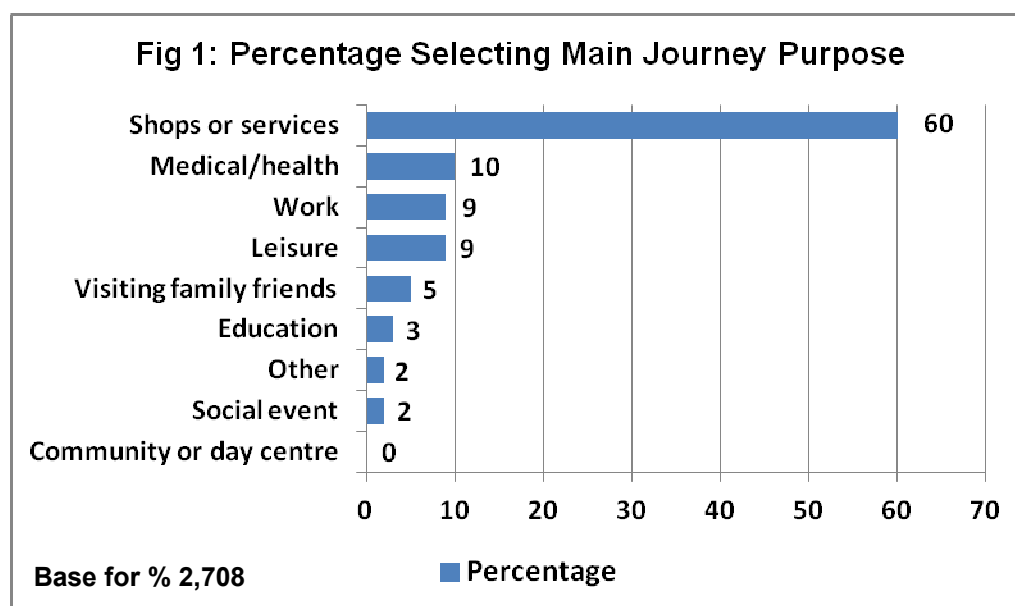
- 300 (Knutsford Town) – 48% used service on Saturday evenings
- 5/6 (Macclesfield Estate) – 44% used service on Saturday evenings



- 378 (Stockport-Handforth-Wilmslow) – 38% used service on Sunday daytimes.

### Reasons for Travelling

The overwhelming main purpose of bus service journeys for all of the selected services was 'shops and services' amounting to 60% of all main journeys. 'Medical/health' (10%), 'work' (9%) and 'leisure' (9%) were the other main purposes. Figure 1 shows the results for all respondents. Respondents could comment on up to 3 separate services.



The main responses for the top ten most frequently mentioned services are shown in Table 5 below.

- Three quarters (74.4%) of users of service 11 (Macclesfield- Bollington) chose 'shops and services' as their main purpose
- Almost one-fifth (19.4%) of users of service 130 (Macclesfield- Manchester) used it to get to work
- Service 78 (Nantwich- Sandbach- Alsager) was used for medical/health visits (31.9%)
- Service 84 (Crewe- Chester) was used for leisure (20.6%).

**Table 5: Main Purpose of Journeys for Top 10 Most Frequently Selected Services**

Service No.	Service Area	Shops and services %	Work%	Medical /health %	Leisure %	Base for %
392/3	Macclesfield- Poynton- Stockport	65.4	8.5	8.5	8.1	211
11	Macclesfield- Bollington	74.4	10.1	5.3	3.9	207
391	Poynton- Stockport	61.4	10.2	8.0	10.8	176
78	Nantwich- Sandbach- Alsager	48.8	6.3	31.9	5.6	160

84	Crewe- Chester	61.1	6.1	2.3	20.6	131
20	Crewe- Hanley	66.4	6.4	14.4	6.8	125
38	Crewe- Macclesfield	49.5	17.8	4.7	11.2	107
130	Macclesfield- Manchester	41.8	19.4	13.3	14.3	98
42	Crewe- Middlewich- Congleton	52.8	14.6	16.9	4.5	89
9/10A	Macclesfield- Moss Rose/Bollington	51.9	11.4	10.1	12.7	79

Users were also asked for what other purposes they travelled by bus. Table 6 shows the responses for all reasons combined, as well as main and other purposes separately. 'Shops and services' (46%) and 'medical/health' (23%) continue to be the most frequent purposes for travelling when considering all reasons. 'Leisure' and 'visiting family and friends' were chosen by a higher proportion of users for other purposes and, overall, are greater than journeys to 'work' combined.

**Table 6: Proportion of Respondents Choosing Each Purpose When Using Bus Services**

Purpose	All Purposes %	Main Purposes %	Other Purposes %
Shops or Services	46	60	27
Medical/Health	23	10	42
Leisure	21	9	36
Visiting family and friends	16	5	30
Social event	11	2	23
Work	7	9	5
Other	5	2	10
Education	4	3	6
Community/day centre	1	0.1	2
Base for %	4,740	2,712	2,028

### Impact of Changes in Services

It was important to ascertain the views of users of the impact of any change in the services provided to them.

Users were asked to rate the significance of each of eight possible changes for their selected services from 0 (zero) having 'no impact' to 5 having 'high impact'. Three of the possible changes had over half of the service users stating it would have a 'high impact' on them. The rates of high impact were:

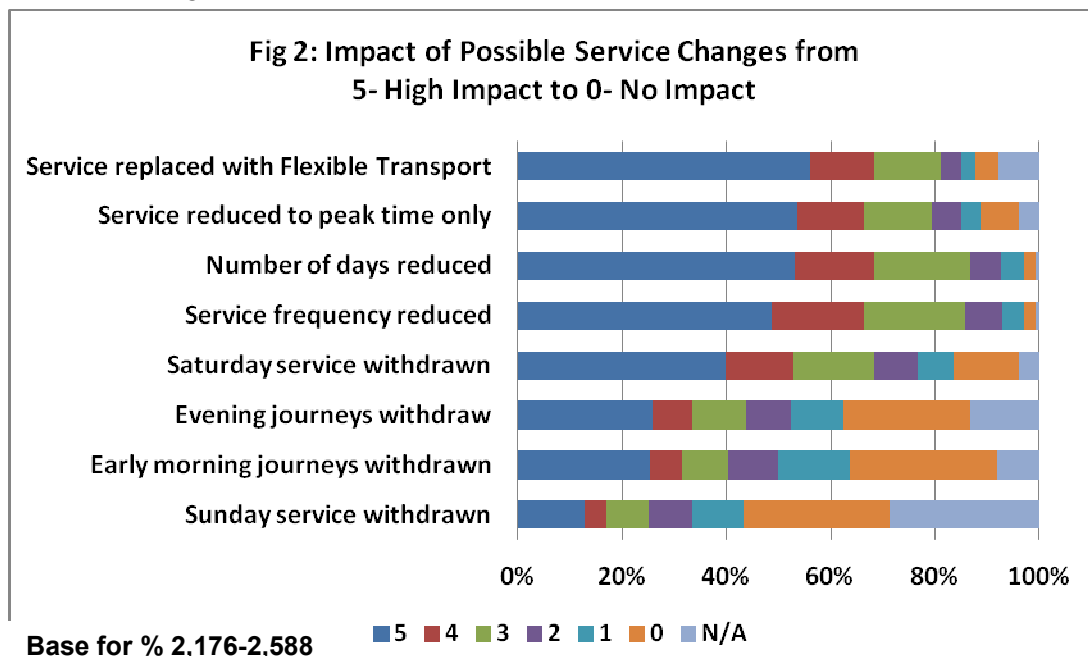
- Service replaced with Flexible Transport (56.1%)
- Service reduced to peak time only (53.6%)
- Number of days reduced (53.1%)

- Service frequency reduced (48.8%)
- Saturday service withdrawn (39.9%)
- Evening journeys withdraw (25.7%)
- Early morning journeys withdrawn (25.4%)
- Sunday service withdrawn (12.7%).

Figure 2 shows the range of impacts on each of the 8 timetable changes overall.

For some services there were significantly higher proportion of respondents saying loss or reduction in service would have a high impact on them. These included:

- Service 392/3 (Macclesfield- Poynton- Stockport) - evening services withdrawn (38%) and Sunday services withdrawn (26%)
- Service 78 (Nantwich- Sandbach- Alsager) – service frequency reduced (59%)
- Service 84 (Crewe- Chester) – Saturday service withdrawn (50%)
- Service 319 (Sandbach- Holmes Chapel- Goostrey) - service frequency reduced (71%)
- Number of days reduced – Service 300 (Knutsford Town Service) 85%, Service K80 (Congleton Area- Eaton bank School) 79%, Service 14 (Crewe- Elm Drive) 73%.



When given the opportunity almost 1,500 respondents wrote comments on the impact possible changes to bus services would have on them. Some comments dealt specifically with aspects of possible changes but many were concerned with stating the impact of any loss to existing services. The views of older respondents (55+) plus all those with a disability were compared with younger respondents. Table 7 shows the most frequently made comments.

**Table 7: Comments on High Impact of Service Changes**

Comments	Older 55+ and those with a disability	Younger
Needed for shops/services/social activities	25%	20%
Needed for hospital visits and early appointments	24%	5%
No car /needed for all travel	18%	19%
Badly affected by more limited service, poorer, less regular service would deter users, need convenient service	11%	3%
Bus is lifeline, would be isolated, must be regular service to be of use	10%	7%
Have health problems including mobility, walking	10%	1%
Needed to get to work	7%	41%
Needed to get to school/college/classes	1%	20%

A high proportion of younger respondents relied on bus services to get to their place of work, several mentioning that shift work meant that they needed to use early and late services. Older respondents used buses to access services with many mentioning they shopped regularly to avoid carrying heavy bags. There was concern, mainly among older respondents, about the difficulty in making medical appointments to fit in with bus services. A concern for many older respondents was that they would be isolated and that a regular bus service was their lifeline.

A few of the comments outlining concerns about reduced bus services are shown:

*Bus services are the only form of transport available - walking is not an option as it's over 1 mile to the village. I rely on this form of transport across all aspects of my life, without it I would be practically housebound.* Older resident using a least strategic service

*Semi disabled – can't drive - very reliant on local bus service for work, education, leisure. Train is not a practical option. Work at different times of day so need transport throughout the day. Ageing population surely means we need more public transport as often people have to stop driving due to health issues.* Younger resident using a least strategic service

*I use the bus regularly; it's a life line service. I don't drive any more due to poor eyesight. No alternative transport to use.* Older resident using a least strategic service

The views of older respondents using services that least meet strategic needs were not significantly different to the same groups using all other services.

## **Flexible Transport Services**

### **Introduction**

There is currently limited flexible transport provision across the borough. The Council supports some services, available primarily for residents with physical disabilities, across the borough. Nevertheless, coverage is not universal, and had not been reviewed or revised for some years. In April 2012, a pilot flexible transport service was launched in the north of the borough that is available to the general public, and in the south of the borough a temporary arrangement was introduced whilst the consultation process was undertaken. The purpose of both these types of services is to provide access to the nearest town for essential facilities and services, such as basic shopping needs, accessing healthcare and social facilities, banking and financial services, etc.

It is recognised that - should the proposals for reductions in subsidy for public transport be implemented - there may be adverse impacts on the ability of some residents to access local services. Whilst not a replacement for public transport, flexible transport services can meet some transport needs that otherwise would not be met. This is especially the case for residents who might have difficulty using public transport due to physical disability, do not have public transport available in the local area, or may need special assistance with occasional journeys (e.g. to and from health care appointments).

### **Travel Preferences**

When asked if flexible transport was introduced into their area which would be their preferred day to travel, there were no significant differences in the responses for any weekday travel. Responses ranged from Tuesday (8.8%) to Monday (6.7%). A smaller proportion chose Saturday (4.8%) or Sunday (2.4%). The greatest proportion (53.4%) said they would not use flexible transport as they did not consider it met their travel needs.

- Respondents from Bollington were significantly more likely to say that they would not use flexible transport (65%).

Respondents aged 75+ were more likely to say that they would use flexible transport (71%) and that they would prefer to travel during the week rather than at weekends. All of the holders of a concessionary pass under the National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) who answered the question said they would use flexible transport.

Certain groups of users were significantly more likely to say they would not use flexible transport. These were:

- Men (66%) compared to women (45%)
- Able bodied people (60%) compared to users with a LLTI or disability (49%)
- Full time employed (81%) compared to retired (45%).

A total of 1,040 responses were received to this question.

## Travel Times

Respondents who had selected a particular day to travel by Flexible Transport were asked what time of day they would prefer to travel. 'Weekday off peak (09.30 to 1530)' was by far the most popular time selected by 76%. 'Weekday peak times' was chosen by 12% with 'evening' and 'weekend day time' by 6% each. Some groups of respondents had a higher proportion wanting to travel on weekdays off peak.

- Aged 65+ (86%)
- Females (80%)
- LLTI or disability (87%)
- Retired (85%)
- Concessionary pass holder (84%).

## Concessionary Pass Holders and Flexible Transport Services

Older and disabled people are entitled to free off-peak travel on fixed route bus services under the ENCTS. This is not the case for flexible transport services. Users were asked to prioritise services within the flexible transport service scheme by choosing one of 3 options the Council could implement for concessionary pass holders on flexible transport services.

The options and proportions supporting them were:

- Free travel, but with a limited frequency of service (e.g. once per week / fortnight) (24%)
- Apply a part subsidy and part passenger fare, with a moderate frequency of service (e.g. once / twice per week) (53%)
- Apply a full fare and provide the maximum frequency of service possible (22%).

Therefore, 75% of respondents supported the introduction of either a part or full fare.

Three quarters of users answering this question had a concessionary pass under ENCTS and a similar proportion said their current status was retired. Over two-thirds (69%) were female. Table 8 below shows responses for some categories.

- A significantly higher proportion of concessionary bus pass holders chose 'free travel, but with a limited frequency of service' (27%) compared with non pass holders (15%); conversely non pass holders were more likely to choose 'apply a full fare and provide the maximum frequency of service possible' (41% and 18% respectively).

**Table 8: Preferred Option for Council Implementation for Concessionary Pass Holders on Flexible Transport Services**

Service	Males %	Females %	Pass Holder %	No pass %	Aged 16-64 %	Aged 65+ %
Free travel, but with a limited frequency of service	28	21	27	15	18	26
Apply a part subsidy and part passenger fare, with a moderate frequency of service	48	57	55	45	53	54
Apply a full fare and provide the maximum frequency of service possible	24	22	18	41	29	20
Number of users	124	273	326	80	119	279

No analysis is possible of responses by local area as fewer respondents answered this section.

### Views and Suggestions on Flexible Transport Services

Some respondents shared their views and suggestions on how the proposals about Flexible Transport would affect them. There were a higher proportion of comments against the introduction of Flexible transport than support for it, a ratio of 3 to 1. Nearly all respondents making comments were aged 55 plus.

The main comments against Flexible Transport were:

- Do not want to be reliant of Flexible Transport
- Service would not be frequent or flexible enough and unsuitable for workers.

Comments in support of Flexible Transport included:

- Would use Flexible Transport/ be of interest
- Flexible or any transport would improve existing service.

Several respondents commented on keeping and improving the existing bus services with some mentioning that money should be found from other Council services to fund this.

Some examples of comments made included:

*I simply don't think that Flexible Transport is a viable option in a village of 15,000 residents.* Older resident using a least strategic service

*I would not be happy only having access to transport once a week/fortnight, as this would result in a considerable change to my lifestyle and would restrict me massively.* Older resident using a least strategic service

*I live in a rural area - the nearest bus route is 1/2 mile walk down a narrow unlit lane with no pavement so flexible transport would improve life for me. Older resident using a least strategic service.*

## **Community Transport**

### Voluntary Car Schemes

These schemes are very often operated by voluntary, church or community groups and are set up to meet the needs of a specific community. The schemes have a number of drivers to call on who can use their own vehicles to transport residents to hospital/doctors appointments, or to other essential services. Users will register to use the service, book their transport in advance through the organisation and then reimburse the driver's expenses to cover fuel and other costs. There are 10 community car schemes operating in the borough.

About one-quarter (26%) were aware of a voluntary car scheme operating in their local community. A further 11% were not sure and 62% were not aware of any schemes. Those aged 65+ were more likely to have heard of schemes (30%) than other age groups.

In some local areas, a greater proportion of respondents were aware of voluntary car schemes. This is not surprising as schemes do not cover the entire borough. The local areas with greatest awareness, with a minimum of 10 responses, were:

- Holmes Chapel (65%)
- Goostrey (62%)
- Knutsford (57%)
- Poynton (42%)
- Audlem (40%).

Just under one in five (18%) of those aware had used this service, a total of 57 individuals. People most likely to have used the service were those aged 75+ (39%) and those with a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity which limited their activities (32%).

5% (56 individuals) were interested in participating in a local transport scheme.

### Shopmobility

This service operates in towns and is often provided by community and voluntary groups for those with restricted mobility. The scheme allows users to hire out electric mobility scooters for a few hours giving them access to town centre services.

Almost a third (32%) were aware of a shopmobility scheme operating in their local town, 60% were not aware and a further 8% were not sure. Those who were aware of the scheme operating in their local town were asked if they had used it. Overall, 5% had used it. This rose to 8% of those aged 75+ but this is not a significant increase.



The local areas with greatest awareness of Shopmobility, with a minimum of 10 responses, were:

- Macclesfield (73%)
- Brookhouse (69%)
- Congleton (50%)
- Crewe (47%).

### General Views on Council's Proposals

Finally, respondents were asked if they had any general views on how any of the Council's proposals would impact on them or their local community. Over 700 respondents took this opportunity. Many reiterated their concerns about loss or reduction in bus services and some making further suggestions to improve services. The views of older respondents (55+) plus all those with a disability were compared with younger respondents. Table 9 shows the most frequently made comments.

**Table 9: General Views on Council's Proposals**

Comments	Older 55+ and those with a disability	Younger
Essential service, bad effect on social life, independence, Quality of Life, community	22%	15%
Affects the poor and disadvantaged, elderly are isolated	18%	18%
Keep/improve local services to encourage users; reduced services/ days unrealistic	17%	9%
Consider the old; lifeline for rural communities, rely on buses	14%	7%
Flexible Transport/ Community Transport not appropriate/ not flexible/frequent enough/ costly	10%	6%
Workers should be protected and principal routes	2%	19%
Need school bus	0%	16%

Many older and younger respondents mentioned the detrimental effect loss of bus services would have on their community for both very rural areas and those living on the outskirts of towns, for many to great a distance to walk to obtain essential services. They stated how any reduced service would affect the poor and disadvantaged mainly and isolate the elderly. Several mentioned that local facilities such as Post Office, banks and shops have been eroded in recent years making bus services more essential.

Many stated that a reduction in number of days services were provided was unrealistic and that services should be improved to encourage greater use. A small minority mentioned that charges could be made for concessions or some reduction in frequency of service to keep routes open.

Younger respondents, as well as being concerned for their communities, were anxious to protect services taking workers to their employment and buses taking children to school.

A sizeable minority made negative comments about the Council and its priorities, the Government and Bankers being the financial causes of loss of transport services. Many were concerned that reduced services would result in increased use of cars.

A few of the comments outlining general views are shown:

*The government closed most of the Post Offices; people have to travel to the nearest town for many things. Older people can only get out by public transport - if it was cut some people would be prisoners in their homes.* Older resident using a least strategic service

*It would be extremely difficult to get dental and medical appointments etc on a once/twice weekly service. Also social activities would be very hard to continue doing. I would suggest a part subsidy, part passenger fare with maximum frequency of service possible.* Older resident using a least strategic service

*Should not restrict or cut down on the buses I travel on they have already been cut enough as we now have no Sunday service which has made my job difficult as I have no way of getting to work on a Sunday if required.* Younger resident using a least strategic service.

## **Characteristics of Respondents**

Users were asked questions about their characteristics. These are asked so that the views of protected groups can be obtained and included in the report where their views are significantly different from those of all other respondents. The vast majority had responded to the survey as a member of the public (96%). 3% replied on behalf of an organisation, business or other group and 1% as an elected member of a council or Parliament.

About one quarter of all respondents did not provide answers to the following questions.

39% of respondents were male and 61% female, a higher proportion of females than found in the general population which are 49% and 51% respectively.

The age profile of respondents did not match the age profile of the general population but were more likely to reflect the age profile of local bus users. 60% were aged 65+ including 26% aged 75+. In Cheshire East, 24% of the adult population are aged 65+ including 11% aged 75+.

This older age group are less likely to have constant access to their own transport.

The ethnic group mix of respondents was predominately white British with a small number, between 10 and 20, from other ethnic groups.

45% had a long standing illness, disability or infirmity and over four in five of these people said it limited their activities in some way.

The majority of respondents who gave an answer were retired (66%). Over a fifth (21%) were employed either full, part-time or self employed.

Over half (56%) had access to a car either themselves or by someone else in their household. This proportion is considerably lower than the 82% of households in Cheshire East who had access to a car from the 2001 Census of Population data. This left 44% (528 individuals) reliant on other transport.

In general, a higher proportion of older residents, those with a LLTI or disability and those without access to a car, took part in this consultation than found in the adult population of Cheshire East. This may reflect the profile of bus users in the area.

**APPENDIX A Neighbourhood Areas of Cheshire East**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Include Areas</b>		<b>Name</b>	<b>Included Areas</b>
Acton	Acton, Barbridge, Burland, Ravensmoor, Sound		Bosley	Bosley, Gawsworth/ Warren, Highlane, North Rode, Rodeheath
Adlington	Adlington, Wood Lanes		Brookhouse	Brookhouse, Kettleshulme, Pott Shrigley, Rainow
Alderley Edge	Alderley Edge		Bunbury	Bunbury
Allgreave	Allgreave, Burntcliff Top, Langley, Macclesfield Forest, Sutton Lane Ends, Wildboarclough, Wincle		Chelford	Chelford
Alsager	Alsager		Church Lawton	Church Lawton, Lawtongate
Arclid	Arclid, Bradwall Green, Brereton Green		Congleton	Congleton
Arley	Arley, Bate Heath, Pickmere, Sworton Heath		Crewe	Crewe
Ashley	Ashley, Bucklow Hill, Little Bollington, Mere, Rostherne		Disley	Disley
Astbury	Astbury, Brereton Heath, Brookhouse Green, Brownlow Heath, Four Lanes End, Hulme Walfield, Spen Green		Eaton	Eaton, Gleadsmoss, Henbury, Lower Withington, Marton, Siddington, Withington Green
Aston	Aston juxta Mondrum, Bradfield Green, Church Minshull, Minshull Vernon, Rease Heath, Warmingham, Wettenhall, Worleston		Goostrey	Goostrey
Audlem	Audlem		Handforth	Handforth
Barthomley	Barthomley, Weston		Haslington	Haslington
Bickerton	Bickerton, Brindley, Bulkeley, Chorley, Egerton Green, Faddiley, Haughton, Peckforton, Spurstow		Hassall	Hassall, Hassall Green, Lawton Heath, Lawton Heath End
Blakenhall	Blakenhall, Checkley, Chorlton, Hatherton, Hough		High Legh	High Legh
Bollington	Bollington		Higher Poynton	Higher Poynton, Middlewood

Name	Include Areas		Name	Included Areas
Holmes Chapel	Holmes Chapel		Handforth	Handforth
Lower Peover	Lower Peover, Marthall, Ollerton, Over Peover, Peover Heath, Plumley, Smithy Green		Knutsford	Knutsford
Macclesf'ld	Macclesfield		Presbury	Prestbury
Middlewich	Middlewich		Rode Heath	Rode Heath, Scholar Green
Mobberley	Mobberley		Sandbach	Sandbach
Morley	Morley, Morley Green, Styal		Shavington	Shavington
Mount Pleasant	Mount Pleasant, Mow Cop (Cheshire)		Wheelock	Wheelock Heath/ Winterley
Nantwich	Nantwich		Wilmslow	Wilmslow
Nether Alderley	Nether Alderley		Wrenbury	Wrenbury
Poynton	Poynton		Wybunbury	Wybunbury

**APPENDIX B Neighbourhood Areas and Number of Responses**

Acton	5		Handforth	22
Adlington	8		Haslington	4
Alderley Edge	5		Hassall	11
Allgreave	6		High Legh	2
Alsager	85		Higher Poynton	61
Arclid	14		Holmes Chapel	29
Arley	1		Knutsford	47
Ashley	1		Lower Peover	11
Astbury	4		Macclesfield	81
Aston	5		Middlewich	24
Audlem	45		Mobberley	1
Barthomley	5		Morley	1
Bickerton	1		Mount Pleasant	0
Blakenhall	6		Nantwich	66
Bollington	182		Nether Alderley	2
Bosley	2		Poynton	136
Brookhouse	37		Prestbury	11
Bunbury	1		Rode Heath	27
Chelford	9		Sandbach	95
Church Lawton	11		Shavington	14
Congleton	54		Wheelock	0
Crewe	115		Wilmslow	35
Disley	10		Wrenbury	15
Eaton	1		Wybunbury	6
Goostrey	23			

## Appendix 3A: School Day Bus Services – Recommended for Withdrawal of Subsidy

The bus services listed below are supported by the Council and are considered “low priority” in relation to the adopted support criteria – these services are therefore recommended for withdrawal of support (see highlighted column). The table summarises the alternative transport provision for entitled scholars and the financial effect of withdrawal of support.

No.	Route Description	Operational frequency, days and times	Council supported journeys recommended for withdrawal	Other Remaining Journeys	Impact Assessment – Consultation Response	Alternative Provision	Financial Effect of Recommendation
891	Middlewood – Poynton High School	One journey each way school days only	Whole service	None	7 responses were received. Comments include safety concerns in children walking to school and difficulties for parents in maintaining work life balance.	29 entitled scholars would be accommodated on a Home to School Contract	Annual reduction in public transport support of £34,367 (less cost of home to school transport for entitled scholars)
K80	Congleton Area (Fairhouse/ Timbersbrook) – Eaton Bank/ Congleton High School	Two school journeys each way, plus a 1000 journey from Fairhouse to Congleton and 1240 from Congleton to Fairhouse	Whole service	None	18 responses were received. The majority are parents whose children use the service daily to travel to school. Others use the service 2-3 times per week to access shops and services.	The K80, K95 and K96 are on 1 contract and are therefore considered together  10 entitled scholars would be accommodated on a Home to School Contract  Flexible Transport would be an appropriate solution for the 1000 and 1240 journeys	Annual reduction in public transport support of £43,727 (less cost of home to school transport for entitled scholars)
K95	Congleton Area (Padgbury Four Lane Ends) – Eaton Bank School	One journey each way school days only	Whole service	None	6 responses were received. Those who use this service also use the K80 and K96 services.		
K96	Congleton Area (Lower Heath) – Marfields Primary	One journey each way school days only	Whole service	None	6 responses were received. Those who use this service also state that they use the K80 and K95 service.		
68	Coppenhall – St.Thomas More/St Marys Schools	One journey each way school days only	Whole service	None	No responses were received	New commercial service introduced by Routemaster Buses in September 2012. 8 entitled scholars are travelling on this service.	Annual reduction in public transport support of £22,027 (less cost of home to school transport for entitled scholars)
100	Middlewich – Northwich, St.Nicholas School	One journey each way school days only	Whole service	None	2 partial responses were received	New commercial service introduced by Barratts Coaches in Sept 2012. 22 entitled scholars are travelling on this service.	Annual reduction in public transport support of £48,401 (less cost of home to school transport for entitled scholars)
K44	Weston – Shavington/ Malbank Schools	One journey each way school days only	Whole service	None	No responses received	No entitled scholars on this service	Annual reduction in public transport support of £17,157
69	Bradfield Road - St.Thomas More/St Marys Schools	One journey each way Schooldays only	Whole service	None	No responses received	New commercial service introduced by Routemaster Buses in September 2012	Annual reduction in public transport support of £26,734
79	Rode Heath - Alsager	One journey each way Schooldays only	Whole service	None	13 responses were received. Many also use the 315 service which is unaffected by these proposals	39 entitled scholars would be accommodated on a Home to School Contract	Annual reduction in public transport support of £26,000 (less cost of home to school transport for entitled scholars)
95	Goostrey – Holmes Chapel School	One journey each way Schooldays only	Whole service	None	8 responses were received. Many also use the 319 service which is unaffected by these proposals	55 entitled scholars would be accommodated on a Home to School Contract	Annual reduction in public transport support of £35,711 (less cost of home to school transport for entitled scholars)

78	Crewe – Malbank School	One journey each way Schooldays only	Whole service	None	No responses received	15 entitled scholars would be accommodated on a Home to School Contract	Annual reduction in public transport support of £30,264 (less cost of home to school transport for entitled scholars)
77	Betley – Brine Leas	One journey each way Schooldays only	Whole service	None	No responses received	15 entitled scholars would be accommodated on a Home to School Contract	Annual reduction in public transport support of £30,714 (less cost of home to school transport for entitled scholars)
K98	Park Lane – Congleton High School	One journey each way Schooldays only	Whole service	None	9 responses were received from parents whose children use the service daily. Working parents describe the difficulty they would experience in taking their children to school and safety concerns in children walking to school	Likely to be commercially operated from October 2012.  2 entitled scholars would either travel on the new commercial service or be accommodated on a Home to School Contract.	Annual reduction in public transport support of £42,311 (less cost of home to school transport for entitled scholars)
71	Tytherington – Poynton High School	One journey each way Schooldays only	Whole service	None	2 responses were received	13 entitled scholars would be accommodated on a Home to School Contract	Annual reduction in public transport support of £55,742 (less cost of home to school transport for entitled scholars)
71	Aston/Wrenbury – Malbank/ St.Thomas More Schools	One journey each way Schooldays only	Whole service	None	No responses received	42 entitled scholars would be accommodated on a Home to School Contract	Annual reduction in public transport support of £26,741 (less cost of home to school transport for entitled scholars)
K78	Mossley/ Congleton – All Hallows School	One journey each way Schooldays only	Whole service	None	1 response was received	Commercial service introduced by Bostocks from September 2012. 3 entitled scholars are travelling on this service.	Annual reduction in public transport support of £41,303 (less cost of home to school transport for entitled scholars)
63	Swanwick – Brine Leas/St.Thomas More	One journey each way Schooldays only	Whole service	None	No responses received	46 entitled scholars would be accommodated on a Home to School Contract	Annual reduction in public transport support of £43,067 (less cost of home to school transport for entitled scholars)
E41	Lach Dennis – Holmes Chapel School	One journey each way Schooldays only	Whole service	None	No responses received	Commercial service introduced by Byleys Coaches from September 2012. 13 entitled scholars are travelling on this service.	Annual reduction in public transport support of £9,200 (less cost of home to school transport for entitled scholars)
737	Weston/ Shavington - St.Thomas More School	One journey each way Schooldays only	Whole service	None	1 response was received	27 entitled scholars would be accommodated on a Home to School Contract	Annual reduction in public transport support of £30,810 (less cost of home to school transport for entitled scholars)
K79	Congleton – All Hallows School	One journey each way Schooldays only	Whole service	None	3 responses were received	Likely to be commercially operated from October 2012. 4 entitled scholars would either travel on the new commercial service or be accommodated on a Home to School Contract.	Annual reduction in public transport support of £39,987 (less cost of home to school transport for entitled scholars)
61	Audlem – Brine Leas	One journey each way Schooldays only	Whole service	None	21 responses were received with 1 using the service to access education. Respondents also use services 72/73 and 75 which are unaffected by these proposals	55 entitled scholars would be accommodated on a Home to School Contract	Annual reduction in public transport support of £31,619 (less cost of home to school transport for entitled scholars)



## Appendix 3B: General Local Bus Services – Journeys Recommended for Withdrawal of Subsidy

The bus services listed below include journeys supported by the Council which are considered “low priority” in relation to the adopted support criteria and are therefore recommended for withdrawal of support (see highlighted column). The table also summarises the journeys which will remain (if any) and the financial effect of withdrawal of support.

No.	Route Description	Operational frequency, days and times	Council supported journeys recommended for withdrawal	Other Remaining Journeys	Impact Assessment – Consultation Response	Alternative Services / Additional Mitigation	Financial Effect of Recommendation
20	Hanley – Alsager – Crewe Bus Station – Leighton Hospital	Mondays to Sundays (including Bank Holiday)	All Sunday and public holidays journeys between Crewe Bus Station and Leighton Hospital only	All Monday to Saturday journeys between Hanley and Leighton Hospital, and Sundays Hanley to Crewe Bus Station	9 responses were received for Sunday journeys. The majority of comments related to the weekday element of the service which is operated commercially and is likely to be unaffected.  Passengers who are affected are those who use the Sunday service between Crewe bus station and Leighton Hospital	An alternative Sunday service between Crewe bus station and Leighton Hospital is service 6E – which is an hourly service between 1210 and 2110.	Annual reduction in public transport support = £11,072
108	Ashbourne – Leek – Macclesfield	9 journeys per day Mondays to Fridays (8 Saturdays) 1 morning extended to Fallibroome High School on school days only  One additional return journey Friday and Saturday evening only	1 morning journey – Leek to Macclesfield (extended to Fallibroome High School on school days only)  1 return journey (Fallibroome to Sutton/ Langley on school days only)  One return journey Friday and Saturday evening only  Service is also supported by Derbyshire County Council	4 return journeys remain Monday to Saturday between 07.30 and 17.40	6 responses were received. Passengers affected are those who use the school day journeys provided in term time only to access Macclesfield schools  2 responses were received for the supported evening journeys. Surveys carried out by Staffordshire County Council show that the evening journeys have very low passenger numbers in the Cheshire East area	There are 5 entitled scholars travelling on this service who will be accommodated on a home to school transport contract  The 4 daytime return journeys are expected to remain	Annual reduction in public transport support = £40,917 (less cost of home to school transport for entitled scholars)
85	Newcastle – Madeley – Crewe	Monday to Saturday hourly service supplemented with additional services in peak times.	1 early morning journey 0550 from Crewe to Newcastle arriving 0643  4 evening return journeys Mondays to Saturday  Service is also supported by Staffordshire County Council	Daytime services (generally an hourly service from 0650 to 1705)	9 responses were received in relation to the journeys supported by the Council. Passengers most affected are those who use the early morning (0550) and evening journeys to get to work	For early morning and evening journeys in the Crewe area, the Flexi Rider operates on Monday to Friday between 0500 – 0730 and 1815 – 2230  Flexible transport could provide a potential evening alternative for the outlying areas of Weston and Wychwood Park	Annual reduction in public transport support = £12,729

378	Stockport – Handforth – Wilmslow	Monday to Saturday hourly service – peak, off peak and evening journeys, plus hourly off peak on Sundays	4 return evening journeys Monday to Friday and 3 return journeys on Saturday. All Sunday and Bank Holiday journeys.  Service is also supported by Transport for Greater Manchester	Monday to Saturday daytime hourly service	12 responses were received for the supported evening and Sunday journeys, which are generally used for leisure, social and work.	For residents wishing to travel between Wilmslow or Handforth to Stockport there is a high frequency direct train service that runs in the evenings and Sundays & Public Holidays taking approximately 10 minutes.	Annual reduction in public transport support = £23,156
130	Macclesfield – Wilmslow – Manchester	Monday to Friday half hourly daytime service. Saturday & Sunday hourly service	Saturday: 2 morning journeys from Macclesfield (0645 & 0745) and 1 from Handforth (0744)	Majority of Monday to Sunday service remains	37 responses were received for Saturday daytime journeys. The main journey purpose was shops and service, followed by leisure	For residents wishing to travel between Macclesfield and Manchester on Saturday mornings there are trains that leave at 0712 0719 taking approx. 30 minutes via Stockport	Annual reduction in public transport support = £9,068
		Monday to Saturday evening service (2 return journeys)	Monday to Saturday evening service (2 return journeys)		16 responses were received for evening journeys, which are generally used to access work, leisure and social events	For residents wishing to travel between Alderley Edge, Handforth, Wilmslow and Macclesfield there is an evening train service via Stockport (last train 2113)	Annual reduction in public transport support = £38,887
127	Chesterton – Crewe	Friday only service	Friday only service  This service is also supported by Staffordshire County Council	None	No consultation responses were received  Data from Staffordshire County Council shows that during a 6 week period only 5 passengers from Cheshire East used the service	Alternative bus services are available from the Weston area to Crewe (inc. the hourly 85 service). Flexible transport would be an appropriate solution	Annual reduction in public transport support = £2,025
44	Crewe - Shavington – Hough – Nantwich	Mondays to Saturdays – hourly peak/ off peak	All diversions into Hough village. Plus 4 journeys from Crewe (0745, 0845, 1545, 1645) and 4 journeys from Nantwich (0740, 1540, 1640, 1740)	Hourly off- peak service remains but does not serve Hough.	25 responses were received with the main journey purpose being shops and services and work	For Hough village residents, flexible transport would be an appropriate solution.	Annual reduction in public transport support = £22,306
45	Crewe - Marshfields – Nantwich	Monday to Saturday: half hourly service plus Sunday: hourly service between Crewe and Marshfield	Monday to Saturday: departures from Crewe bus station (0712 , 1512, 1612, 1712) and Nantwich Bus Station (0815, 0915, 1515, 1615, 1715)	Off peak services remain	17 responses were received for the daytime peak journeys. The majority use the service for accessing shops and work. Some use the service to access onward connecting journeys from Crewe bus station.	The 45A provides an alternative bus service for part of the route in the afternoons.  In Crewe area, for evening services the Crewe Flexi Rider operates Monday to Friday (1815 – 2230).	Annual reduction in public transport support = £20,903
			Monday to Saturday: 5 evenings return between Crewe and Marshfield journeys starting 1840 last bus 2259		4 responses were received for the evening journeys	For direct route there is frequent, direct train between Crewe and Nantwich	Annual reduction in public transport support = £14.801

56	Tiverton – Bunbury – Nantwich	One return off peak journey 2 days per week (Thursdays and Saturdays)	One return off peak journey 2 days per week (Thursdays and Saturdays)  This service is also supported by Cheshire West and Chester.	None	No consultation responses were received	Flexible transport would be an appropriate solution	Annual reduction in public transport support from both the 56 and 83 services = £8,047
83	Bulkerley – Bunbury - Chester	One return off peak journey 1 day per week (Tuesdays)	One return off peak journey 1 day per week (Tuesdays)  This service is also supported by Cheshire West and Chester	None	No consultation responses were received	Flexible transport would be an appropriate solution offering a feeder to the 84 service	
391	Middlewood – Poynton – Stockport	Monday to Saturday - hourly service (for most of the day) between 0640 and 2235	Monday to Saturday An hourly service (for most of the day) between 0640 and 2235	None	164 responses were received for the 391 service. The main reason for using the bus was access to shops and services, with 10% using it for work.  Most people state that they use the service 2-3 times per week. Many commented that Higher Poynton would be isolated without a bus service.  Comments and suggestions include terminating 391, 392 and 393 services at Hazel Grove – where passengers can connect with the 192 service to Stockport.	It is recommended that the timetables for the 391, 392/393 be reviewed and discussed with the operator to continue to provide a service in these areas in a more cost effective way.  There is an option to curtail service 392/393 at Hazel Grove where high frequency services operate to Manchester and Stockport.  There is a two-hourly train service running from Middlewood to Stockport and Manchester (hourly in peak).  There is currently a voluntary car scheme available one morning a week.	The anticipated saving from the review of existing timetables for the 391, 392/393 is expected to be approximately £110,000.  This review and rescheduling will provide greater value for money and is a more cost effective way of continuing to serve the Middlewood and Poynton communities.
5 /6	Macclesfield – Weston Estate	Monday to Friday evenings  Circular service every half hour between 1805 and 2335	Monday to Friday evenings  Circular service every half hour between 1805 and 2335	None	8 responses were received. The majority use the service to access shops, social and leisure. Comments suggest that the service is also used to connect with other public transport options in Macclesfield.		Annual reduction in public transport support = £17,875
84	Crewe – Nantwich – Chester	All day service operating between Crewe and Nantwich starting at 0635 every 15 minutes and ½ hourly between Nantwich and Chester	4 evening return journeys starting from 1845 and 2145 – final journey between Crewe and Nantwich only 2235. This service is also supported by Cheshire West and Chester	Frequent service between Crewe, Nantwich and Chester up to 1815	16 responses were received for the supported evening journeys which are used for leisure or social event.	There is an hourly train service connects Crewe and Nantwich until 2330 and the Crewe to Chester train operates to midnight	Annual reduction in public transport support = £18,545

8	Crewe – Wistaston Green Circular service	All day ¼ hourly service Mondays t Fridays from 0653 up to 1720 6 return journeys from 1823 to 2323 Hourly service Sundays	6 evening return journeys from 1823 to 2323	Monday to Friday ¼ hourly service and hourly Sunday service remains	2 responses were received for the evening journeys.	For the evening journeys in the Crewe area, Crewe Flexi Rider operates on Monday to Friday 1815 - 2230	Annual reduction in public transport support = £14,801
15	Crewe – Sydney – Elm Drive (circular)	Monday to Saturday. Hourly morning peak and evenings between 1800 and 2300 Sunday and bank holidays between 1100 and 1900	Monday to Saturday Hourly morning peak and evenings between 1800 and 2300	Sunday and Bank Holidays remain Monday to Saturday daytime service provided by service 14/16	9 responses were received with 3 using the service daily in the evening. The main reason was to visit family and friends. Some use for onward connection to the hospital	For the evening journeys in the Crewe area, Crewe Flexi Rider operates on Monday to Friday 1815 - 2230	Annual reduction in public transport support = £14,801
9/ 10A	Macclesfield – Moss Rose / Bollington	9: Monday to Saturday Half hourly service between 0700 and 1800 and hourly between 1855 and 2255 Hourly service Sundays  10A: Half hourly service between 0702 and 1835 and hourly service between 1835 and 2335 Hourly service Sundays	9: Monday to Saturday Hourly evening service between 1855 and 2255  10A: Hourly evening service between 1835 and 2335	9 / 10A: Daily half-hourly service approximately between 0700 and 1830, including hourly on a Sunday	24 responses were received for evening journeys. The main journey purpose is social, leisure or accessing shops and services	The half hourly daytime service until 1830 will remain, including the Sunday service	Annual reduction in public transport support = £20,486
390	Bramhall – Poynton – Stockport	Monday to Saturday Three outbound and two return journeys (off peak mornings and early afternoon)	Monday to Saturday Three outbound and two return journeys (off peak mornings and early afternoon)  This service is also supported by Transport for Greater Manchester	None	35 responses were received. The majority use the service on weekdays at off-peak times to access shops and services.	This is a limited service within Cheshire East and is used by Poynton West residents to get to Poynton village and beyond.  Flexible transport would be an appropriate solution to offer a feeder service for 392 / 393 and on to Hazel Grove.	Annual reduction in public transport support = £6,092
9	Crewe – Rope Green	Monday to Saturday hourly service between 0935 and 2103	6 journeys between 1235 and 1735	3 journeys between 0935 and 1135	10 responses were received. The main journey purpose was medical / health	The morning journeys will remain and with interchange in the town centre service 6 (half hourly) provides access to Rope Green	Annual reduction in public transport support = £18,387
16	Crewe – Sydney	Monday to Saturday, 3 journeys an hour between 0835 and 1735	2 morning journeys (0835 and 0905) and 7 afternoon journeys (from 1425 to 1735). All day Saturday between 0835 and 1735.	Off-peak day time Monday to Friday service 0925 - 1425	12 responses were received. The majority use the service daily during peak and off peak times, as well as Saturday	For the evening journeys in the Crewe area, Crewe Flexi Rider operates on Monday to Friday 1815 - 2230	Annual reduction in public transport support = £17,895
38	Crewe – Macclesfield	Monday to Sunday hourly service for most of the day between 0645 and 2332. Sunday hourly service starting at 0935 to 2331.	5 evening return journeys on Sunday 1835 from Crewe and 1850 from Macclesfield	All day service, hourly for most parts except Sunday evening	6 responses were received. Most people use the service for social events	The daytime and evening journeys will remain on Monday to Saturday, along with the Sunday daytime service.	Annual reduction in public transport support = £20,414

# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM



Equality impact assessment is a legal requirement for all strategies, plans, functions, policies, procedures and services under the Equalities Act 2010. We are also legally required to publish assessments.

## Section 1: Description

Department	Places		Lead officer responsible for assessment		Chris Williams	
Service	Highway & Transport		Other members of team undertaking assessment		Jenny Marston Janet Mills Neil Roberts	
Date	3 September 2012		Version		2.0	
Type of document (mark as appropriate)	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Plan</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Service</b>
Is this a new/existing/revision of an existing document (mark as appropriate)	<b>New</b>		<b>Existing</b>		<b>Revision</b>	
<p>Title and subject of the impact assessment (include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate and how it fits in with the wider aims of the organisation)</p> <p>Please attach a copy of the strategy/plan/function/policy/procedure/service</p>	<p><b>Proposed reductions in public transport support</b></p> <p>The budget proposals anticipate a reduction in funding devoted to subsidising public transport. The adopted support criteria (agreed by Cabinet on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2011) target the support at those services deemed to most meet the strategic needs of the council. The criteria aim to provide a fair, transparent and accountable process to manage contracts within budget constraints, provide maximum value for money and support wider strategic considerations in the Council's Local Transport Plan. These criteria contain specific reference to the needs of older and disabled residents to discharge the council's obligations under the Transport Act 1985.</p> <p>The proposal is to withdraw support for certain services, which when assessed against the adopted criteria, are considered "low priority" relative to other supported services. The majority of bus services in Cheshire East are operated commercially by local bus operators without subsidy from the Council and these services are largely unaffected by any budgetary review.</p>					
Who are the main stakeholders? (eg general public, employees, Councillors, partners, specific audiences)	Transport users, including disabled users, older people, young people. Press & media, businesses, service providers (e.g. health care). Public transport operators					

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

### Section 2: Initial screening

<b>Who is affected?</b> (This may or may not include the stakeholders listed above)	All residents of Cheshire East – subsidised bus services are available to all and therefore potentially all elements of the community are affected.										
<b>Who is intended to benefit and how?</b>	The proposal aims to deliver a balanced budget in 2012/13 by reducing subsidy for public bus services. The key beneficiary is therefore the local taxpayer.										
<b>Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups?</b>	Yes – The impact on older people, disabled people and low income families may prevent access to work and key services – even with mitigation.										
<b>Does it include making decisions based on individual characteristics, needs or circumstances?</b>	No										
<b>Are relations between different groups or communities likely to be affected?</b> (eg will it favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others?)	Following the Council's withdrawal of subsidy, if bus operators decide to stop operating the service this is inevitably an unpopular and unwelcome development which may impact on relations between local communities, as well as between the Council and communities. It has the potential to disadvantage some groups more than others – eg frail older people, disabled residents.										
<b>Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality? Is there a history of unequal outcomes (do you have enough evidence to prove otherwise)?</b>	A higher proportion of public transport users in Cheshire East, tend to be older people, younger people, have a life long limiting illness or disability or are low income. To assist targeted groups, it is proposed to procure community/flexible transport through a competitive tender process to provide coverage across the borough. The aim of the new flexible transport system will be to ensure that residents living in areas where there is no fixed public transport will be able to access flexible transport 1 or 2 days a week.										
<b>Is there an actual or potential negative impact on these specific characteristics? (Please tick)</b>											
<b>Age</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Marriage &amp; civil partnership</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Religion &amp; belief</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Carers</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Disability</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Pregnancy &amp; maternity</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Sex</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Socio-economic status</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Race</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

What evidence do you have to support your findings? (quantitative and qualitative) Please provide additional information that you wish to include as appendices to this document, i.e., graphs, tables, charts		Consultation/involvement carried out	
<p>In order to get a better understanding of the impacts of the withdrawal of the support for certain services a full and detailed consultation process was carried out between April and June 2012. The aim of the consultation was to fully understand the impact of the withdrawal of the subsidy on public transport with the local community and particularly with protected equality groups.</p> <p>Individuals and organisations were able to respond to the consultation by either completing an 'on-line' questionnaire, a paper questionnaire, by emailing or writing to the Council. Surveys were available from all Cheshire East libraries and main offices of the Council or by attending one of the consultation 'drop-in' events held in 10 locations around the borough. Over 1,600 people responded to the consultation, and a detailed report on the consultation feedback is available.</p> <p>In addition to the consultation, a further focus group was held to drill down into the impacts on the older population and disability groups.</p>		Yes	
<b>Age</b>	<p>The consultation suggests that the age profile of bus users does not match the age profile of the general population. 60% were aged 65+ including 26% aged 75+, whereas the overall profile in Cheshire East is that 24% of the adult population are aged 65+ including 11% aged 75+.</p> <p>Older respondents used buses to access services with many mentioning they shopped regularly to avoid carrying heavy bags. There was concern, mainly among older respondents, about the difficulty in making medical appointments to fit in with bus services. A concern for many older respondents was that they would be isolated and that a regular bus service was their lifeline.</p> <p>The consultation showed that older and younger age groups are less likely to have constant access to their own transport. A high proportion of younger respondents relied on bus services to get to their place of work, several mentioning that shift work meant that they needed to use early and late services.</p>	Yes	
<b>Disability</b>	<p>45% of respondents had a long standing illness, disability or infirmity and over four in five of these people said it limited their activities in some way.</p> <p>The focus group discussed that a major concern for the disabled was the fear of isolation and inability to get out of their house.</p> <p>Finally, particular issues surrounding specific disabilities were raised – such as blind and partially sighted people find it difficult or impossible to use some forms of transport such as general public transport. For such people, flexible transport</p>	Yes	

# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

	(with its associated level of additional assistance from drivers) was considered to be more suitable.		
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	This policy is not expected to impact on gender reassignment	N/A	
<b>Marriage &amp; civil partnership</b>	This policy is not expected to impact on marriage & civil partnership	N/A	
<b>Pregnancy &amp; maternity</b>	This policy is not expected to impact on pregnancy and maternity	N/A	
<b>Race</b>	This policy is not expected to impact on race.	N/A	
<b>Religion &amp; belief</b>	This policy has a marginal impact since the withdrawal of support for Sunday services may affect worshippers more than other religious groups.	N/A	
<b>Sex</b>	National data suggests that more women use bus services than men and the Public Transport consultation survey analysis showed that 39% of respondents were male and 61% female, a higher proportion of females than found in the general population which are 49% and 51% respectively.	Yes	
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	This policy is not expected to impact on sexual orientation	N/A	
<b>Carers</b>	This policy is not expected to impact on carers	Yes	
<b>Socio-economic status</b>	The consultation showed that the majority of respondents who gave an answer were retired (66%). Over a fifth (21%) were employed either full, part-time or self employed. Over half (56%) had access to a car either themselves or by someone else in their household. This proportion is considerably lower than the 82% of households in Cheshire East who had access to a car from the 2001 Census of Population data. This left 44% (528 individuals) reliant on other transport.	N/A	
<b>Proceed to full impact assessment? (Please tick)</b>		Yes	<b>Date –</b>

If yes, please proceed to Section 3. If no, please publish the initial screening as part of the suite of documents relating to this issue



## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

### Section 3: Identifying impacts and evidence

This section identifies if there are impacts on equality, diversity and cohesion, what evidence there is to support the conclusion and what further action is needed

Protected characteristics	Is the policy (function etc....) likely to have an adverse impact on any of the groups?  Please include evidence (qualitative & quantitative) and consultations	Are there any positive impacts of the policy (function etc....) on any of the groups?  Please include evidence (qualitative & quantitative) and consultations	Please rate the impact taking into account any measures already in place to reduce the impacts identified <b>High:</b> Significant potential impact; history of complaints; no mitigating measures in place; need for consultation <b>Medium:</b> Some potential impact; some mitigating measures in place, lack of evidence to show effectiveness of measures <b>Low:</b> Little/no identified impacts; heavily legislation-led; limited public facing aspect	Further action (only an outline needs to be included here. A full action plan can be included at Section 4)
Age	<p>Yes – The profile of public transport users includes a significant proportion of older and young people. The consultation feedback report contains further details.</p> <p>Withdrawals of Council support for certain services may result in bus services ceasing to operate or operating in a different way, which may have a disproportionate impact on older people and young people.</p>	<p>Concessionary fare data has been incorporated into the Council's support criteria and those services carrying a high proportion (+50%) of older and disabled people score more highly in the assessment – resulting in greatly likelihood support continues.</p> <p>The existing concessionary fare scheme allows people over the age of 65 to use public transport for free after the 9.30 am. Concessionary fare pass can be used on all</p>	High	<p>The responses from the consultation and focus groups have helped shape the development of a strategy and assist with forming the mitigation measures with the aim to reduce the impact of the changes in subsidies. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and specification of flexible demand responsive transport</li> <li>• Availability of alternative suitable public transport and minor route or timetable amendments</li> </ul>

# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

		<p>commercial bus services ( which cover about 90% of all public service busses in Cheshire East) as well as supported bus services</p> <p>Flexible transport is available free to all concessionary pass holders.</p> <p>Flexible demand-responsive transport is targeted at older (especially frail) people.</p>		
<b>Disability</b>	<p>Yes –.</p> <p>The proposed budget reductions may adversely impact on disabled transport users, as revealed during the consultation process and contained in the consultation feedback report.</p>	<p>The services which carry a high proportion of concessionary fare passengers are scored more highly in the assessment – resulting in mitigation of some potential impacts for disabled people. Approximately 10% of concessionaires qualify by way of a disability, with 90% of usage based on age.</p> <p>Continuation of (and enhancement of) flexible transport is seemed as a key way of mitigating adverse impacts and promoting equality.</p>	High	<p>Continuation of engagement with groups representative of disabled people is seen as key to further actions to mitigate adverse impacts and promote equality. Specifically, the design and operation of flexible demand responsive services is a future action that will mitigate any adverse impacts.</p> <p>Following comments in the consultation process from the Deafness Support society, the council will consider a text and email service to assist deaf people access flexible transport .</p>

# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

				<p>In addition to flexible transport, the council will consider additional support for other forms of community transport, these being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shop mobility</li> <li>• Voluntary car schemes</li> </ul> <p>The council is also working with the Iris Centre, to ensure that the transport needs of blind and partially sighted people are represented and services designed to meet their specific needs.</p>
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	No	No	Low	
<b>Marriage &amp; civil partnership</b>	No	No	Low	
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	No	No	Low	
<b>Race</b>	No	No	Low	
<b>Religion &amp; belief</b>	No	No	Low	

# **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM**

<b>Sex</b>	Yes – Nationally public bus services are generally used more by women than by men – consequently any reduction in bus service provision may have a greater effect on women.	No	Low	No further action is possible to mitigate impacts of subsidy reduction.
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	No	No	Low	
<b>Carers</b>	Yes – Carers of older and disabled people are more likely to be users of public transport. The criteria considers the needs of older and disabled people, this in turn assists in mitigating the impact on carers.	No	Low	Consideration be given to companion bus passes for carers of people with disabilities. In addition, engagement with representative groups is likely to identify specific needs and allow services to be redesigned around these needs.
<b>Socio-economics</b>	The proposal is likely to have an impact on some socio-economic groups, especially low paid, unemployed, pensioners and large families who are more likely to be users of public transport.	No	Medium	
<b>Is this project due to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors? If yes, please indicate how you have ensured that the partner organisation complies with equality legislation (e.g. tendering, awards process, contract, monitoring and performance measures)</b>				

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

### Section 4: Review and conclusion

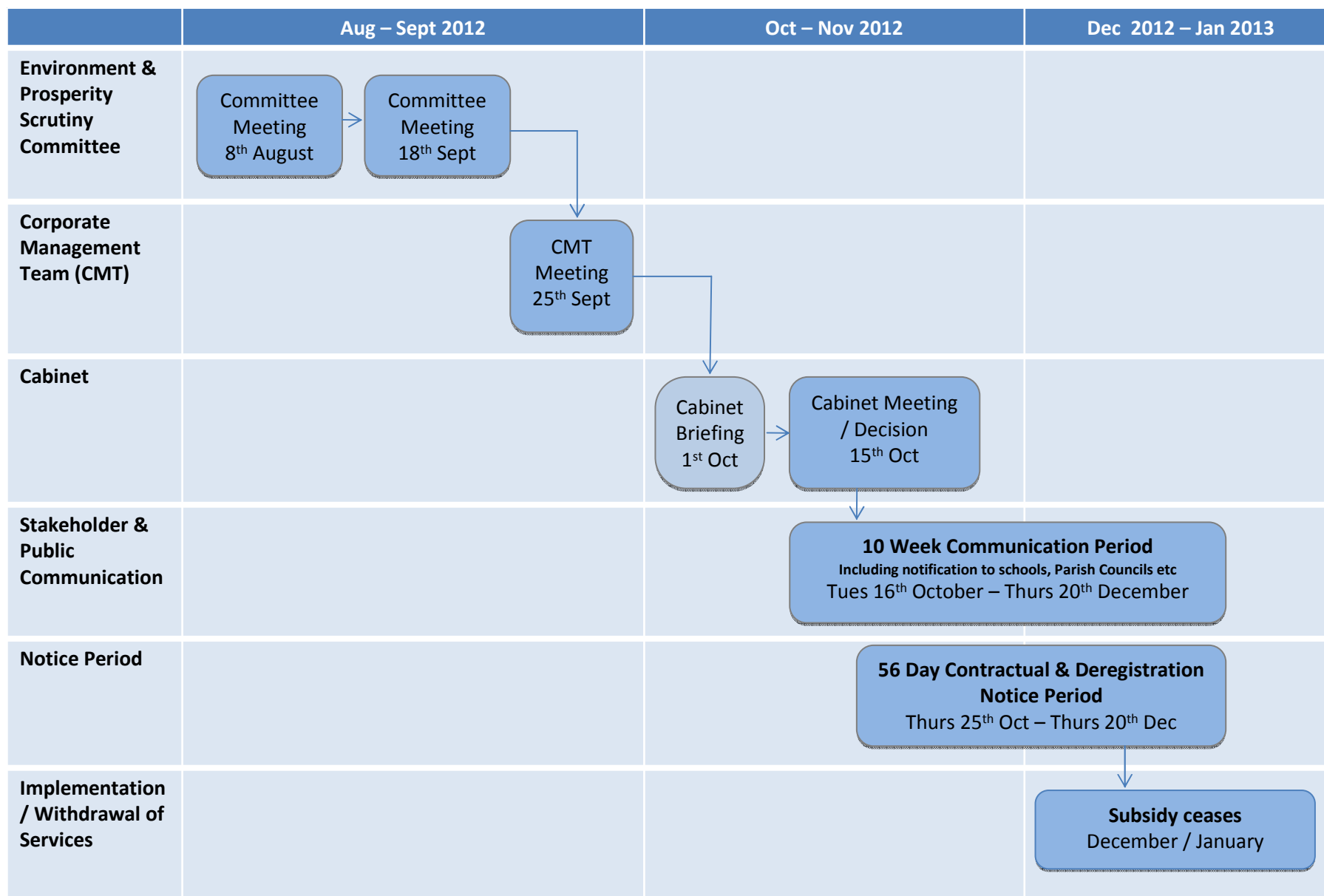
<b>Summary: provide a brief overview including impact, changes, improvement, any gaps in evidence and additional data that is needed</b>			
<p>The impact on older people, disabled people and low income families may prevent access to work and key services – even with mitigation. The full impact of the proposed budget reductions will be determined as a result of detailed consultation. The Council will continue to work with specific groups and focus groups to monitor the impact of the withdrawal of support for certain bus services</p>			
<b>Specific actions to be taken to reduce, justify or remove any adverse impacts</b>	<b>How will this be monitored?</b>	<b>Officer responsible</b>	<b>Target date</b>
Discussions with operators for opportunities for supported services to become commercial, hence no or reduced impact on bus users	Routes where support is no longer offered will be brought to the notice of the public transport sector; registrations received	Chris Williams	1 January 2013
Engagement with groups representative of older and disabled people to inform design and operation of demand responsive transport	Ongoing	Jenny Marston	Ongoing
Procurement of revised flexible demand-responsive transport service	Senior Management monthly team meetings	Chris Williams	31 March 2013
Support for local community transport schemes including flexible transport and voluntary cars	Discussions with users, providers etc.	Neil Roberts	Ongoing
<b>When will this assessment be reviewed?</b>	31 March 2013		
<b>Are there any additional assessments that need to be undertaken in relation to this assessment?</b>	No		

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM



Lead officer signoff	Chris Williams	Date	3 September 2012
Head of service signoff		Date	

## Appendix 5 – Implementation Timetable



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## **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

### **REPORT TO: CABINET**

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**Date of Meeting:** 15 October 2012  
**Report of:** Strategic Director – Places and Organisational Capacity  
**Subject/Title:** Available Walking Routes to School  
**Portfolio Holders:** Cllr Rod Menlove / Cllr Hilda Gaddum

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#### **1.0 Report Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on proposed changes to and clarifications of home to school transport policy. These result from a recent Local Government Ombudsman case, where a local authority in the East Midlands was criticised for the way their policy had been drafted and implemented. This has caused most local authorities to re-examine the approach to their policies and working practices.
- 1.2 Councils are required by law to make travel arrangements to facilitate attendance at school where no suitable, available walking route to school exists. What this means in practice is that if there is no route that a child can walk along in reasonable safety, the council must provide free transport or some other suitable arrangement for the child to get to school. Transport provision should only therefore be offered where walking routes to schools are exceptionally dangerous.
- 1.3 The policy of Cheshire East since LGR is the legacy policy of Cheshire County Council. It has not been reviewed for a number of years, and – notwithstanding the need for change caused by the LGO decision – is therefore ripe for review. Should Cabinet approve a revised policy, this will trigger a process of reassessment of routes currently deemed to be unavailable on road safety grounds. The changes to the policy are relatively minor in nature; it is the reassessment of routes that will potentially have a significant impact.
- 1.4 Cabinet are asked to bear in mind that in the last 25 years, significant developments have taken place in the highway, footpath and Public Right of Way network. Some of these are improvements such as pedestrian crossing installations / pedestrian refuges, town centre bypasses etc, that may result in transport no longer being required. Other issues such as greater traffic density, housing development etc, may result in more children becoming entitled to transport. It is anticipated at this point that there will be a balance of a substantial number of children who will no longer be entitled to transport compared to those who may become newly entitled. This will likely lead to a substantial reduction in home to school transport cost.

## **2.0 Decision requested**

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the policy for assessment of walked routes to school.
- 2.2 Cabinet is also asked to note that – should the policy be adopted – this will trigger a process of reassessment with potential impacts on entitlement to transport at taxpayer expense.

## **3.0 Reasons for recommendations**

- 3.1 In order to ensure the council has adopted all current guidance since the last review of this policy area, a slightly revised policy has been drafted. This revised policy includes specific consideration of the issues raised by the Local Government Ombudsman in a recent case. Case law requires the council to consider the availability or otherwise of walked routes to school, and there have been minor clarifications of the law since the council last considered this policy.

## **4.0 Wards Affected**

- 4.1 All

## **5.0 Local Ward Members**

- 5.1 All

## **6.0 Policy Implications including – Carbon Reduction – Health**

- 6.1 The adopted criteria encourage children to walk to school wherever possible, which has a beneficial impact on health outcomes. Schools are obliged to create a school travel plan that promotes sustainable travel to each school.
- 6.2 As part of the council's wider remit to promote public health, active travel such as walking and cycling is favoured over motorised travel. Tackling obesity and associated health problems such as diabetes, heart disease and increased risk of stroke is a key aim. Promotion of active travel (particularly for young people) plays a key role in encouraging healthier lifestyles.

## **7.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Director of Finance and Business Services)**

- 7.1 There are no direct consequences from adopting the revised policy, as it is merely a restatement and clarification of the existing policy. The process of reassessment of routes may mean that some routes are now considered available, and therefore transport may potentially no longer be offered with

consequent reductions in expenditure. Conversely, some routes may no longer be available, and transport may have to be provided that is not currently offered. It is likely that the balance will be such that cost reductions will ensue, but it is not possible to estimate what the likely level may be.

## **8.0 Legal implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)**

- 8.1 The council is required by both the Education Act 1996 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to make suitable travel arrangements for certain students to attend school. Case law has established that local authorities are required to make arrangements where a child – living closer to school than statutory walking distance – does not have a route available that can be walked in reasonable safety.
- 8.2 For a route to be available, it must be a route to school, along which a child, accompanied as necessary, can walk with reasonable safety. An authority must therefore give regard to a policy and assessment process that determines whether a route can reasonably be classed as available.

## **9.0 Risk Management**

- 9.1 There are no direct risk management issues. In undertaking an assessment of the availability of a particular route and its associated hazards, national road safety guidance is followed.

## **10.0 Background and options**

- 10.1 A child is required to attend school and it is the parental responsibility to ensure this happens. However, councils are obliged to make travel arrangements on behalf of a parent – and hence at public expense – where:
- The child lives beyond statutory walking distance (2 miles for under 8s, 3 miles for over 8s)
  - The child has a physical or mental disability that means it is unreasonable for them to walk to school, even if they live closer than the above distances
  - There is no suitable available walking route.
- 10.2 The council is required to provide travel assistance where a route to school is assessed as “unavailable”. The definition of “available” has been tested in court, including at the House of Lords. For a route to be available, it must be a route to school, along which a child, accompanied as necessary, can walk with reasonable safety. The Lords held that a county council acted reasonably in not providing free transport to a 12-year-old. Her school journey was 2.94 miles from home, via an unlit country track.
- 10.3 The dangers of a route are factors to consider — but if the danger can be eliminated by accompanying the child, then the route may still be available. In this case, it is reasonable to expect the child to be accompanied to school by an appropriate person. For this reason, hazard assessment is restricted to the road safety risks faced, and risks to personal safety and security are not considered.

10.4 In order to determine whether a particular route encompasses hazards that may be sufficient to make a route unavailable, a formal assessment must be undertaken. This assessment must take into account a variety of factors, including:

- Widths of available footway, highway, bridleway etc
- Traffic flows
- Road accident records
- Crossing points
- "Step-offs" from the highway, such as roadside verges
- Street lighting, insofar as it is relevant to road safety

10.5 The assessment process that most local authorities follow is set out in guidance issued by Road Safety GB. The guidelines take into account the extant case law and legislation in this area, as well as government guidance. By following these guidelines, the council is therefore able to demonstrate that it is following nationally agreed practice, and that the latest advice from government, relevant legal issues etc are captured. The guidance contains a recommended route assessment procedure, as well as recommended approaches to detailed issues such as assessing traffic counts.

10.6 Cabinet may wish to note that more than 1,250 students are currently entitled to transport at taxpayer expense through unavailable walking route. This represents around 25% of children entitled to transport, a relatively high proportion in comparison with other local authorities, for whom around 5% of children entitled to transport is the norm. It is likely (although not inevitable) that a reassessment of currently-unavailable routes would lead to a reduction in their number, with likely withdrawals of transport resulting. In addition, the reassessment process may identify routes that could become available, subject to improvements to the footpath or highway network, so that over time more routes may become available.

10.7 Since it is impossible to say for certain in advance what routes may be classified as available and hence transport withdrawn, or conversely what routes may actually be reassessed as unavailable leading to more transport being provided, it is also difficult to establish a detailed timeline. Should Cabinet be minded to agree the proposed policy, then assessment can commence almost immediately. It is proposed that a prioritisation mechanism be adopted:

- Routes most likely to result in a straightforward reclassification
- Routes most likely to lead to elimination of health and safety risks
- Routes most likely to lead to savings
- All other routes
- Ongoing assessment

10.8 The proposed policy is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

## 11.0 Background papers

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

**Author:** Chris Williams  
**Designation:** Transport Manager  
**Email:** [chris.williams@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:chris.williams@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

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## MAINSTREAM HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

### Assessment of availability of routes to be walked

#### **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 The Local Authority has a duty to make arrangements to facilitate attendance at schools and colleges by providing transport in certain circumstances. This document outlines Cheshire East Council's home to school/college transport policy as it relates to the availability or otherwise of routes where a child resides closer to the nearest appropriate educational establishment than the maximum distance allowed for under the overarching home to school transport policy.
- 1.2 This document applies to children living in the Borough of Cheshire East and describes free and assisted transport entitlement to mainstream schools, academies and colleges. This policy does not apply to pupils attending independent schools and colleges. Some children with Special Educational Needs – such as physical mobility difficulties - require specific transport, for which a separate assessment of their needs is undertaken. Under the Equality Act 2010, where necessary, reasonable adjustments for children with mobility or other issues will be given consideration in relation to the type of transport or vehicle that is used, and also in the availability or otherwise of routes.
- 1.3 Assessments do not determine whether a route is “safe” or “dangerous”. All roads may be thought of as presenting some element of road safety risk, whether they are heavily-trafficked urban routes, or more lightly-trafficked rural routes. Instead, the assessment determines whether transport should be provided at taxpayer expense because a particular walking route presents *exceptional* road safety hazards.

#### **2.0 Statutory school age and statutory walking distances**

- 2.1 Statutory school age means the age when a child **must** be in school i.e. the term immediately following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday to 16 years old (i.e. the last Friday in June of the year the child turns 16). [Education Act 1997 Sec 52]
- 2.2 The measurement of the 'statutory walking distance' is measured by the shortest walking route between home<sup>1</sup> and nearest school gate along which a child, accompanied as necessary by a responsible adult, can walk with reasonable safety. If there is no such route, the local authority must provide free transport no matter what distance the child lives from the school.

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<sup>1</sup> Measured to centreline of the road immediately outside the normal residence of the child

- 2.3 The adopted policy of Cheshire East is that, generally, children are expected to walk:
- Up to and including a maximum distance of 2 miles (3.21869 km) if child is attending a primary school
  - Up to and including a maximum distance of 3 miles (4.82803 km) if the child is attending a secondary school
- 2.4 There are additional criteria required by law to be adopted for children whose family or personal circumstances are such that they are entitled to transport even if the above general criteria are not met. These are contained in the overarching home to school transport policy.
- 2.5 Cheshire East Council no longer directly provides travel assistance to children of post-statutory education age. For the avoidance of doubt, no travel assistance is given to children remaining in education irrespective of the availability or otherwise of an available walking route.

### **3.0 Measurement of distances**

- 3.1 Distances are measured by the shortest available walking route from the centreline of the road immediately outside the home address to the nearest school or college entrance. A route is available if it is a route along which a child, accompanied as necessary by a responsible adult, can walk with reasonable safety to school.
- 3.2 Distances are measured in a consistent fashion using computerised measuring systems:
- for in-borough measurements, the council's DataMap software is used.
  - for distances that cross the borough boundary, a mixture of systems may be used, including DataMap, Google Maps or other equivalent system. This is because the DataMap system only currently covers addresses that fall in Cheshire East. These methods may change as new software becomes available.
  - on request, we are able to provide a map of the available route and/or a list of the street/roads/footpaths etc measured in determining the distance between home and school.

### **4.0 Definition of Available routes**

- 4.1 Cheshire East Council's definition of an available route:

Distances are measured by the shortest available walking route



between the middle of the road immediately outside of the home address and the nearest school or college gate. In accordance with the provisions of the Transport Policy, the shortest available walking route is the shortest route which a child, accompanied as necessary, can walk with reasonable safety.

- 4.2 Route availability is assessed using a rigorous and robust assessment process as detailed in the Appendices. Where a route is assessed as unavailable, officers will initially explore using mapping-software to investigate whether an alternative exists and is less than 2 miles (primary) and 3 miles (secondary) before allowing transport.

## **5.0 Withdrawal of transport / offers of transport**

- 5.1 Where a route was previously unavailable and becomes available, reasonable notice of the transport provision to be withdrawn will be issued in writing to the parent. This period will be a minimum of a school term, or 12 weeks where shorter.
- 5.2 Where a parent disputes the assessment of an available route, or a request is made for an assessment where no previous assessment has been undertaken, there is a process of review (see Appendix 1.). Should an initial assessment reveal that no available route exists that presents an acceptable level of short-term risk, the council will normally provide transport until such time as a full assessment has been undertaken.
- 5.3 The council has a duty to ensure all children travel in reasonable safety and comfort. Any behaviour affecting other passengers, the public or the driver that endangers (whether intentionally or unintentionally) themselves or others may lead to transport being withdrawn from a pupil, either temporarily or permanently. In these circumstances, the arrangement and cost of transport will fall to the parent and it will remain the duty of the parent to ensure their children continue to attend school, irrespective of the availability or otherwise of a walking route.
- 5.4 Where a pupil or student has been assessed as eligible for assisted or free transport in error, reasonable notice of the provision to be withdrawn will be issued in writing to the parent. Where information has been provided that – in the opinion of the council – is both false, and has been deliberately or negligently provided, the council reserves the right to cease transport provision with immediate effect.
- 5.5 Where temporary factors are considered to be the reason for a route being assessed as not available (eg through significant planned roadworks temporarily rendering part of the route unavailable, ground conditions during winter months etc) the council may exceptionally consider provision of transport for the period(s) of unavailability. In these instances, notice periods for withdrawal may be shortened from that set out in 5.1 above.

## **6.0 General Points**

- 6.1 All roads – urban and rural – are potentially dangerous. Provision of transport is considered and provided only where road conditions are exceptionally or abnormally hazardous, as set out in the assessment criteria. The council considers that the most appropriate means of ensuring children can safely travel to school is through road safety education, and parents and schools are expected to educate children in road safety matters from an early age.
- 6.2 Parents are responsible in law for ensuring their children receive an appropriate education which in most cases includes ensuring regular attendance at school. The law also requires parents to ensure a child is accompanied on their journey to and from school by an adult if necessary, with no age limit for the child prescribed in law for this responsibility. The council expects parents to make suitable alternative arrangements if they are unable to personally accompany the child.
- 6.3 Parents are responsible for ensuring their children have suitable clothing and footwear, reflective clothing or other visibility aids, torches etc.
- 6.4 It is expected that traffic along assessed routes will abide by all road traffic regulations, including remaining within posted speed limits, obey one-way traffic restrictions, not park in a manner which creates an obstruction to the highway etc. The council is entitled to expect that the police will undertake enforcement action.
- 6.5 In accordance with the law, the council assumes that children are accompanied by an adult as necessary. Routes are not classed as unavailable solely due to any or all of the following factors. They are, however, used to assess risks and hazards that a child may face that can be avoided if the child were to be accompanied as necessary in assessing the availability of a route:
- Lonely routes
  - Moral danger
  - Routes that pass close to canals, rivers, ditches, lakes, ponds etc
  - Routes that require railway crossings if a suitable, authorised crossing is present
- 6.6** General enquiries and specific requests should initially be addressed to:

Address: Cheshire East Transport  
Floor 6, Delamere House  
Crewe  
CW1 2LL

Telephone: 0300 123 5012

Email: [schooltransportenquiries@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:schooltransportenquiries@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

If you require this information in an alternative version such as large print, Braille, tape or help in understanding it in your language, please contact 0300 123 5012, or e-mail: [schooltransportenquiries@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:schooltransportenquiries@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

## **7.0 Exceptional circumstances**

- 7.1 Exceptionally, the council may consider circumstances that affect the availability or otherwise of walking routes in ways not set out in this summary of policy. Requests for consideration should be made to:

School Admissions  
Children, Family and Adult Services  
Cheshire East Council  
Delamere House  
Crewe  
CW1 1LL

Further details available on our website: [www.cheshireeast.gov.uk](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk)

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **SCHOOL TRANSPORT REVIEW (APPEAL) PROCEDURE – AVAILABLE WALKING ROUTES**

#### **1.0 Commencement Date**

1.1 This Procedure has effect from 1 January 2013.

#### **2.0 Review of available walking route**

2.1 If a parent/carer or young person is dissatisfied with the Council's assessed route on the grounds that it contains unacceptable road safety hazards, then a request for reconsideration can be made. There are two grounds for a review:

- (a) If there is a material change in relation to an existing available walking route which may affect the availability of that route; **or**
- (b) If there is a new available walking route assessment.

In either case referred to above, a parent/carer or a young person (or a group of parents/carers) may request that the available walking route be reviewed if they are dissatisfied with the assessment undertaken because it has not taken into account the published national guidance relating to route assessment in force at the time.

2.2 For the purposes of 4.1(a) above, 'a material change' means works (other than temporary works) which have been undertaken since the route was last assessed where those works significantly affect:

- the use of the highway
- the road layout
- the footpath
- the traffic volume
- the speed of traffic

2.3 Any request for a review of the availability of a walking route must be made in writing setting out the material change in question (in the case of an existing route) and why the parents/carers or young person consider that the assessed route is not available. Any supporting evidence relied upon by parents/carers or the young person must be submitted with the review request.

2.4 Receipt of a request for review will be acknowledged within 5 working days.

- 2.5 The review will be undertaken by a nominated officer from the Places and Organisational Capacity Directorate ("the Reviewing Officer") who will have had no previous involvement in relation to the available route assessment.
- 2.6 The Reviewing Officer will consider if there has been a material change in relation to an existing available walking route. If the Reviewing Officer is not satisfied that there has been such a material change, he or she will notify the parents/carers or young person of that fact in writing providing reasons for his/her decision.
- 2.7 In the case of new available walking route assessments or if the Reviewing Officer determines that there has been a material change in circumstances in relation to an existing route assessment then an assessment will be undertaken by the Reviewing Officer who will consider and take into account:-
- a) written material and representations submitted by the parent/carer or young person;
  - b) published national guidance in force at the time.
- 2.8 The assessment of the Reviewing Officer will wherever possible be completed within 20 working days of receipt of the review request (unless there are exceptionable circumstances in which case the assessment will be completed as soon as practicable thereafter). The review outcome will be communicated to the parent/carer or young person in writing by a representative from Cheshire East Transport enclosing a copy of the assessment and wherever possible this shall take place within 5 working days of the assessment being completed.

### **3.0 General**

- 3.1 The decision of the Reviewing Officer is binding on the parents/carers/young person and the council.
- 3.2 There is no further right of appeal or review in relation to the processes set out in 3 and 4 above. A parent/carer or young person may refer the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman if he or she considers that the Transport Policy or this review procedure has not been correctly followed or properly applied in the case. Referrals to the Local Government Ombudsman should be submitted to:

The Local Government Ombudsman  
PO Box 4771  
Coventry  
CV4 0EH  
Telephone: 0845 602 1983  
Fax: 0247 602 0001  
Email: [advice@lgo.org.uk](mailto:advice@lgo.org.uk)

#### **4.0 Requesting a Review**

- 4.1 Parents/carers or young persons wishing to request a review under this procedure should do so by contacting:

The Transport Manager  
Cheshire East Transport  
Highways and Transport  
Floor 6  
Delamere House  
Crewe  
CW1

Tel: 0300 123 5012

Email: [schooltransportenquiries@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:schooltransportenquiries@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **PROCESS FOR ASSESSING WHETHER OR NOT WALKING ROUTES TO SCHOOLS ARE UNAVAILABLE**

#### **1. Definitions**

*A walking route is available if it is a route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, can walk with reasonable safety to school.*

This process is based on the statutory guidance 'Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance' produced by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in 2007 and the Assessment of Walked Routes to School guidelines produced by Road Safety GB in 2012 which provides guidance on the interpretation of both case law and what is generally accepted by many Local Authorities as good practice in assessing various elements of the walking route between home and school.

Specifically, the DfES guidance states, in Part 3, *Travel arrangements for 'eligible children'* and a section covering *Children unable to walk in safety to school because of the nature of the route* covered the following:

81. Where children live within "statutory walking distance" of their nearest qualifying school (or other place where education is provided under section 19(1)), local authorities will be under a duty to make travel arrangements where the nature of the route is such that a child can not reasonably be expected to walk (accompanied as necessary) in reasonable safety.
82. In assessing the comparative safety of a route, a local authority should conduct an assessment of the risks a child might encounter along the prescribed route (including, for example, canals, rivers, ditches, speed of traffic along roads, overhanging trees or branches that might obscure fields of vision for the pedestrian or motorist, etc.). The assessment of a route should take place at the times of the day that pupils would be expected to use the route.
83. Route assessments should feed into the local authority duty relating to sustainable school travel [...] and may inform the local authority's plans for upgrading the infrastructure supporting sustainable school travel.
84. In conducting the risk assessment, local authorities should take a range of factors into consideration, including:
  - the age of the child;
  - whether any potential risks might be mitigated if the child were accompanied by an adult (see also paragraph 86 below);
  - the width of any roads travelled along and the existence of pavements;
  - the volume and speed of traffic travelling along any roads;

- the existence or otherwise of street lighting; and
  - the condition of the route at different times of the year, at the times of day that a child would be expected to travel to and from school.
85. Whilst it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that a child attends school regularly, the local authority should consider whether it is reasonably practicable for the child's parent/carer to accompany the child along a route which would otherwise be classified as too dangerous to walk in reasonable safety.
86. In conducting their risk assessments, local authorities should use data on recorded accidents along potential routes. However, a lack of such accidents should not be taken as conclusive evidence that a route is safe. It may well be that a route is potentially so dangerous that no reasonable person would walk along the route, or allow their children to do so – resulting in such a low level of pedestrian use that there were very few or no recorded accidents.'

## **2. Process**

- (a) A request to assess a route for availability is made to Cheshire East Transport (normally from a parent or school, but also where the council considers transport is being provided for a journey to school that has potentially become available).
- (b) The request is passed to an Assessing Officer nominated or appointed by Cheshire East Transport, who will undertake an initial desktop evaluation of walking routes from the home address to the school. Should available walking routes be identified that are shorter than the statutory walking distance based on the age of the child, then no further assessment is undertaken. Should one or more routes be identified but there is doubt over the availability of the route, initial assessment of the potential route will be undertaken.
- (c) If an initial assessment reveals that there may be hazards that require a full assessment to be undertaken, the council will consider whether to provide transport assistance as an interim arrangement until the full assessment has been completed.
- (d) Evidence already available to the Assessing Officer will be taken into account in the full assessment, and other aspects of assessment may (but will not always) include a site visit, information on traffic volumes (where required and where available) and accident history records.
- (e) A written report of site visit (using a standard format) and other information (such as accident data) will be considered.
- (f) The findings of the process above will be considered by Cheshire East Transport, who will review the assessment and provide a written report on



whether the route is available. The outcome of the assessment will be communicated to the applicant.

- (g) Appeals against decisions can be made in accordance with the process set out in Appendix 1.
- (h) If a route is assessed to be unavailable, then free transport will be arranged with as soon as reasonably practicable. If a route is assessed to be available, but free transport has been provided (because previously the route was assessed as unavailable and remedial works have been undertaken to make the route available), the council will give notice in accordance with the guidance set out in the policy.

### **3. Assessment Report Format**

#### **General**

- This guidance is a general summary of the factors taken into account in the assessment of available walking routes.
- The start and end points of the assessment and the details of the route taken will be provided along with a map of the route assessed. The route will be split up into sections (note these) for the purpose of reporting.
- The time of day the assessment is undertaken will be stated
- The weather and light conditions will be noted.
- Photographs will be taken to exemplify areas likely to be of concern

#### **Section characteristics**

The Assessment will;

- record if there is a footway and if so, the general availability and condition of it. An assessment of the suitability of the footway will be made with photographs of any narrow sections. An assessment will be made as to whether it is available for walking and of sufficient width and quality. The condition and maintenance of the footway maintained and other pedestrian use will be noted.
- define length/names of the roads on the route and any relevant characteristics, for example, whether the route is rural/urban, single/dual carriageway, A/B class, one-way, speed limit, estimated vehicle speeds and whether traffic calmed.
- define road widths and any variations where there is no footway, (noting locations where the road narrows at 'pinch points'). In the absence of footways a note of the forward visibility for sighting times will be made.
- Highlight any feature along the route that may need re-assessment in the future (e.g. likely change in traffic patterns or vegetation that may compromise available footway width)
- Consider whether there are any alternative walking routes.

#### **Crossing – assessment**

The Assessment will:

- consider whether there is a need to cross a main road or significant side road or entrance on the section of route being assessed.
- Make reference to the fact that there are side roads and entrances and specifically note any that are likely to have significant traffic movements and which need to be crossed.

- where roads need to be crossed, consider if, there is at least 4 seconds' sighting time for drivers to see pedestrians and whether waiting time to cross is less than 60 seconds (keeping a record of the average timings).
- Note any crossing facilities on the assessed section (central refuges, zebras, pelicans, etc.)
- note if crossing is recommended to take place at a specific location.

### **Walking at the side of the road assessment**

The assessment will:

- Consider whether there is a footway on the section and if there is an available walking route on both sides of the road
- Consider which side of the road the footway is situated on and whether it has a reasonably even surface and is of sufficient width (generally deemed to be 0.5m, although each case is treated on its own merits and widths may be unacceptable or acceptable if wider or narrower than this guideline.)
- Consider whether 'availability' is likely to remain the same throughout the year and in all conditions
- Consider the characteristics (length, width and 'condition') of the verge or footway. Where no footway (or no continuous footway) exists, a further assessment is undertaken in accordance with the criteria set out below:

On roads of less than 6.5 metres in width extremely hazardous routes will be seen to exist where the traffic exceeds the maximum vehicle numbers per hour shown in the table below for the relevant width of road or where potential escape/refuge from traffic falls below the level set out in the table for relating traffic volumes and individual lengths of road where escape/refuge is not possible. Its purpose is to specify a level of hazard where the council will assume responsibility for transport costs. Below this level the council assumes parents will take this responsibility themselves. The table which measures the availability of verge or refuge against traffic volumes, for roads of different widths, is shown below:

<b>Acceptable maximum length of single sections of road without verges or refuge before broken by a verge or refuge</b>	<b>Acceptable number of vehicles per hour by road width</b>			
	<b>&lt;3.5m width</b>	<b>3.5m - 4.5m width</b>	<b>4.5m – 5.5m width</b>	<b>&gt;5.5m width</b>
10m	201 - 240 max	301 - 360 max	401 - 480 max	501 - 600 max
15m	161 - 200	241 - 300	321 - 400	401 - 500

25m	121 - 160	181 - 240	241 - 320	301 - 400
35m	81 - 120	121 - 180	161 - 240	201 - 300
55m	61 - 80	91 - 120	121 - 160	151 - 200
75m	41 - 60	61 - 90	81 - 120	101 - 150
120m	31 - 40	46 - 60	61 - 80	76 - 100
160m	21 - 30	31 - 45	41 - 60	51 - 75
240m	11 - 20	16 - 30	21 - 40	26 - 50
300m	6 - 10	9 - 15	11 - 20	13 - 25
500m	1 - 5	1 - 8	1 - 10	1 - 12

**Footnotes**

- 1 Where visibility, audibility and escapability factors for pedestrians are substantially worse or better than the norm, the acceptable length of non-verged road will be respectively reduced or increased by one step in the table (above).
- 2 A verge is a minimum area that a pedestrian could use as a refuge which is defined as 1.5 metres in length and 0.5 metres in depth.
- 3 Only single unbroken sections of non verged road will be measured and applied against the table - the cumulative effect on non-verged lengths on an entire route will not constitute the road being classified in its own right.
- 4 Where HGV (ie large lorries) numbers, in the hourly traffic count, are more than 10 and where this constitutes more than 10% of the total traffic volume, extremely hazardous routes will be seen to exist regardless of whether the total traffic volume fails to reach the levels required in the table.

#### **4. Assessment Criteria**

Whilst the following criteria are specific, professional judgement will be exercised to take account of any local circumstances and the merits of any individual case, as required.

<b>Factor Assessed</b>	<b>What is Assessed</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>
The age of the child	<p>The age of the children using the walking route will be assessed.</p> <p>The age of the child is assessed to distinguish between the 2 maximum walking distances from home to school i.e. 2 or 3 miles.</p>	<p>The existence of public transport (bus or rail) or farepaying places on contracted Home to School Transport is not taken into account when assessing a walking route.</p>
Whether any potential risks might be mitigated if the child were accompanied by an adult	<p>The route is assessed on the basis that a responsible adult will accompany the child as necessary.</p> <p>There may be circumstances where this may not be possible i.e. because of disability. Such circumstances would be considered by means of an appeal.</p>	<p>Existing case law about adults accompanying children remains unchanged</p> <p>It is recognised that parents may decide that accompaniment is not required as the child matures; however the legal precedent suggests that parents accompany as necessary until the child reaches normal school leaving age.</p>
The existence or otherwise of street lighting	<p>Where crossing roads or where there is no available footpath the existence or otherwise of street lighting will be considered (where visibility of pedestrians at the side of the road could be compromised).</p>	<p>The existence or otherwise of street lighting is taken into account where this will assist drivers in seeing pedestrians walking in the road or at identified crossing points where no light controlled (Pelican or Toucan) or Zebra crossings exist. If a continuous suitable footway exists then street lighting is desirable but may not be required for a route to be assessed as available.</p>
The condition of the route at different times of the year, at the times of day that a child would be	<p>Site visits will cover the whole route but focus on parts of the route with potential hazards, and will take place at the time in the morning (or afternoon) when children would be travelling to school.</p>	<p>The route will be kept well maintained by landowners and the Highway Authority. Where problems are identified, such as overgrown foliage and damage to footways we will ask landowners to repair this or the Council will repair this and recharge landowners as</p>

<p>expected to travel to and from school</p>	<p>Assessments when undertaken will consider seasonal variations in conditions along a route.</p> <p>Assessments may identify improvements to routes which if undertaken would make the route available, even if the route is deemed to be not available in the interim</p>	<p>appropriate</p> <p>Assessments will consider the condition of the route at different times of the year and in particular the effects of vegetation growth.</p>
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**5. Frequently Asked Questions** (These do not form part of the assessment process)

**What time are the assessments undertaken?** - Assessments usually take place in the morning during the times that children will be travelling to school but assessments may also be undertaken when returning home in the afternoon. Visits are timed, where possible, so that crossing assessments of main roads take place at the times when the number of children travelling to school is highest. Detailed timings and measurements are undertaken.

**What happens if I can't walk with my child?** Any adult can walk with a group of children. We will work with schools to identify other ways of travelling to school through School Travel Plans. Where the walking route is less than 2 miles for children who attend primary school and less than 3 miles for secondary age children the responsibility for ensuring children attend school remains with the parent - this is not a council responsibility.

**What happens if the footpath is really narrow?** There is no minimum width for a footpath to be acceptable for walking. Officers will use their professional judgement on the available width including hedgerows and verges next to the footpath to determine its availability as suitable for walking.

**What if my child has to walk in the dark?** Generally school start and finish times are such that children can walk to school in daylight. There will be a limited number of times when this is before sunrise and after the sun sets i.e. in twilight hours. In these cases it is the parents' responsibility to accompany their child if they feel it is appropriate. You may decide that your child can walk unaccompanied but the legal responsibility remains with parents to make appropriate arrangements to ensure that their child attends school.

**What accident data will be included?** The report will include a general reference to all accidents on the route, additional reference to accidents involving pedestrians, and a detailed reference to pedestrian accidents at designated crossing points.

**What if there isn't a footway?** Even if there isn't a footway the walking route might still be assessed as available. The assessment will take account of traffic flows and whether pedestrians and car drivers have enough time to slow down or pedestrians have time to step off the road onto a verge.

**What do I do if I think the walking route is unsafe?** No walking route can be absolutely safe; the term used in guidance is reasonable safety which would make the walking route available. If you think the route isn't available you have the right to appeal. You must demonstrate that there is a change to the route that would not make it reasonably safe to walk along, or other circumstances that you feel the council should take into account that it hasn't already considered.

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## **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

### **REPORT TO: CABINET**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	15 October 2012
<b>Report of:</b>	Strategic Director Places and Organisational Capacity
<b>Subject/Title:</b>	Review of Service Delivery Options – Leisure Services
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor Rod Menlove

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#### **1.0 Report Summary**

- 1.1 This report describes the background to the current provision of leisure centres with the Borough and seeks Cabinet's approval for a review of the existing model of "in house" delivery. The report briefly outlines the potential options for delivery currently available and in use by other local authorities.
- 1.2 In order to arrive at a preferred future model for Cabinet approval and implementation the report explains that it is necessary to employ a suitable external consultant to quickly evaluate the most efficient and effective delivery mechanism that will also allow the Council to still achieve its corporate priorities.

#### **2.0 Decision Requested**

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the procurement and appointment of a suitable leisure and financial consultant to quickly review the range of potential delivery models available and recommend a preferred option. A virement from existing budgets will cover the cost of this work which is expected to be in the region of £30,000.

#### **Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 There is a need to achieve best value for the services we provide and reduce net operating costs wherever possible. The review of leisure services and the early establishment of the most appropriate operating model will help to achieve this.
- 3.2 The selected consultant will look in detail at the options currently available to the Council and will set out the advantages and disadvantages of each model. The final report will include the likely cost and benefits of establishing a new model and an implementation plan for the preferred option. It is anticipated that this will then be

reported back to Cabinet in December for final consideration and approval.

- 3.3 It is essential that whichever delivery model is established, a detailed performance regime will be needed to ensure services are focused on Council priorities with any 'grant aid' (or reducing *subsidy*) explicitly linked to the achievement of these outcomes.

#### **4.0 Wards Affected**

- 4.1 All Wards are affected.

#### **5.0 Local Ward Members**

- 5.1 All Local Ward Members.

#### **6.0 Policy Implications**

- 6.1 The Council's Sustainable Community Strategy directly identifies the need for a 'wide range of accessible and excellent leisure, sporting and cultural facilities and activities for all people to enjoy'. Further to this, the provision of high-quality leisure facilities and services will contribute directly to key agendas in creating safer communities, supporting active lifestyles and improving the health and wellbeing of our communities, particularly children and young people.
- 6.2 The Council's Business Plan identifies efficiency savings linked to Leisure services, which will be delivered by the operational changes recommended in the report from the specialist consultant

#### **7.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Director of Finance and Business Services)**

- 7.1 The review of service delivery models will enable the implementation of the most efficient, cost effective way of delivering leisure facilities, whilst providing opportunities for the future enhancement of assets. The potential saving that can be achieved will be dependent on the model selected and this will be established as part of the options review by the consultant.
- 7.2 It is anticipated that savings can be identified from a number of sources, including financial benefits from a charitable structure (namely VAT and mandatory business rates relief), savings derived from a greater focus on operational efficiency (including a review of terms and conditions) and greater freedom around income generation. All of these measures could be delivered as part of a partnership with the private sector or a Council established company model.
- 7.3 The total cost of implementation of the preferred model will be confirmed following the work of the specialist consultant. Examples

from other authorities have indicated that this could be in the region of £250 -300k.

## **8.0 Legal Implications**

- 8.1 None directly associated with this report. This will be considered further once the preferred model is known.
- 8.2 Transferring service delivery to an alternative model would involve HR issues including TUPE transfer of existing staff from the Council to the new organisation.
- 8.3 The procurement of consultants to support this process will be discussed with the Procurement Unit and Legal Services to ensure compliance and ensure best value is achieved.

## **9.0 Risk Management**

- 9.1 Early and continued engagement with trade unions and the existing workforce even at this early stage will be key to successfully delivering the outcomes of the review and also in transitioning to a new delivery model.
- 9.2 Irrespective of the model selected the consultant will be required to look into the potential transfer of property leases. This will require input from Legal and Assets Services to ensure the Council's ownership is protected with whichever model is selected and also to provide certainty over future use of the assets for leisure and recreational purposes.
- 9.3 There will be a number of Procurement issues that will need to be considered further as part of the in-depth review including current regulations that address asset and service transfer.
- 9.4 The Council's physical asset stock for leisure is ageing and continues to require increasing spend on both planned and reactive maintenance. In addition, the recent feasibility work on the concept of '*Lifestyle Centres*' suggested significant revenue savings can be made by a programme of capital investment in new facilities and integrating services. The review of service options will need to be mindful of the Council's wider asset strategy, current service reviews and major investment plans and provide clarity around the impact of these on the business case for the range of alternative models.

## **10.0 Background and Options**

- 10.1 The Council's leisure facilities are currently delivered 'in-house' employing over 400 full-time equivalent staff. In line with the need to deliver efficiencies in future service provision, this report outlines

potential options and seeks approval for further detailed work to be undertaken to assess the range of alternative delivery models currently available.

- 10.2 The current service is an amalgamation of those inherited from the three former district councils including fifteen facilities (including 8 joint-use centres shared with high schools): of these, nine sites have swimming pools and two have athletic stadiums. Annual attendance visits for 2011/12 were over 2.7 million with almost 1 million of these being young people under 16.
- 10.3 Gross expenditure was £7.89M in 2011/12 with income of £5.85M in the same year. Council Tax payers currently subsidise the service by just over £2M per annum (or £0.75 per visit). Recent harmonisation of staff terms & conditions has increased the employee costs budget by approximately £650k – 700k (circa 15%) This may rise further as a result of the potential costs through increments in pay. Added to the recent increases in energy bills this will mean that the subsidy level is likely to continue to rise.
- 10.4 It is expected that any proposed model will aim to move this position towards break-even through a combination of cost reductions (including a review of terms and conditions), increased income and taking full advantage of any financial benefits arising from a new business model (including VAT and NNDR)
- 10.5 The establishment of a 'charitable trust' to deliver leisure operations was considered in the early life of CEBC and was deemed to be the preferred delivery model at that time. This option was not progressed due to the difficulties of reducing the Council's overhead costs. However, with the current financial challenges facing the Council and the drive to 'deliver more for less', the time is right to revisit this as well as explore the viability of the range of models now available. The consultant's review will recommend the most appropriate model which gives maximum flexibility to the Council, whilst at the same time reducing the burden to the Council Tax payer.
- 10.6 A significant amount of work has already been carried out to establish the service baseline and its current effectiveness. There are a number of different management options available to operate the Council's leisure facilities including:
  - Community Interest Company
  - Charitable Trust
  - Social Enterprise
  - Joint Venture
  - Public Sector Subsidiary Company
  - Limited Liability Partnership

These will form the basis of the review and will be further expanded on and reported back to Members to agree a preferred model.

- 10.7 Consideration will also be given to the scope of services that could constitute the makeup of the preferred business model, for example the inclusion of the Sports Development service, depending on the appetite for further change.
- 10.8 The transfer of leisure facilities to a new or existing charitable trust has been the preferred option for many Local Authorities and is likely to provide the greatest potential for savings in VAT and Business Rates. However, CEBC has a one-off opportunity to get this right and test the feasibility of a range of current options to ensure we capture the service benefits and improve customer satisfaction for the longer-term.

#### **11.0 Access to Information**

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**CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL****REPORT TO: CABINET**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	15 October 2012
<b>Report of:</b>	Lisa Quinn – Director of Finance and Business Services
<b>Subject/Title:</b>	Public Services Network Connectivity Procurement
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr David Brown

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**1.0 Report Summary**

The national Public Service Network (PSN) Programme is a joint Government and industry programme to revolutionise the efficiency with which National Government, Local Authorities, Police, Fire, Health and the Third Sector procure and utilise voice and data networks and the ICT services that run over them.

**In essence, the PSN will provide a ‘network of networks’** - a secure version of the internet for the UK public sector by defining a set of standards with which industry suppliers will need to comply.

Local Government is currently experiencing rising demands for its services in a time of unprecedented austerity that curtails its finances. A solution for the future of local government lies in a true partnership of public, private and voluntary bodies to deliver effective and appropriate services to our citizens. True collaboration widens our horizon and opens up opportunities for innovations in service provision.

The broad direction of travel for Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West & Chester Council is a move to increased flexibility and agility in the business and the workforce, new delivery models for Council services driven by the localism agenda and mitigating the ongoing financial pressures.

***“There is an overriding need for ICT (Information and Communications Technology) to become an enabler to transformation and not a constraint on activity.”***

Cheshire East ICT Strategy.

**2.0 Decision Requested**

- 2.1 To approve Cheshire East Council procuring PSN Connectivity with Cheshire West and Chester Council and other potential public sector partners through Framework Agreement RM860.
- 2.2 Recommend to full Council the decision made by Cabinet.

### **3.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

To progress the decisions of the following:

- 3.1 JOB (Joint Officer Board): status – APPROVED 13/09/2012.  
Authorisation to proceed with procurement (*recommended PSN compliant option as detailed*).  
**Result: Confirmed**

Confirm further authorisation to proceed route (i.e. EMB, Cabinet etc)  
**Result: EMB, CEC-Cabinet (forward plan).**

Contractual relationship - Lead authority to be nominated for Direct Contract (all other participants to be named as indirect).  
**Result: CWAC as host would normally lead the project but want the option for each authority to contract direct.**

Reference item (ii) above – nominate legal and procurement team resource (CEC or CWAC).  
**Result: CWAC Head of procurement and Head of Legal to deliver resources**

Procurement based on a) “infrastructure as a service” or b) delivery of owned asset.  
**Result: “infrastructure as a service”**

- 3.2 EMB (Executive Monitoring Board Cheshire East): status – Endorsed 17/09/2012 to proceed with procurement.  
**Result: Confirmed (inclusive of tender development resource costs £120k)**

### **4.0 Wards Affected**

- 4.1 All

### **5.0 Local Ward Members**

- 5.1 All

### **6.0 Policy Implications**

- 6.1 The case for investment in PSN Connectivity for Cheshire East has been established in the following key documents:

Cheshire East Council ICT Strategy

Cheshire Public Services Network Connectivity Project Brief v1.0 July 2012



Cheshire Public Services Network Connectivity Business Case v0.3  
July 2012

Cabinet Office

- Public Sector Network Outline Business case v2.8 Nov 2009
- Gov ICT Strategy – Strategic Implementation Plan. Oct 2011
- PSN Connectivity and Services Frameworks
- Customer Guidance Document v1.5 Aug 2012

E-Cheshire

- Connecting Cheshire Business Case v1.0 July 2011

Hudson & Yorke Ltd (Consultants)

- CH001\_Report-WAN Analysis\_V2.0
- CH001\_Report-WAN Business\_V2.0
- CH001\_Report-WAN DueDiligence\_V2.0

**7.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Director of Finance and Business Services)**

- 7.1 The Council approved the investment of £2.7m profiled over two years (£1.3M year 2013/14 and £1.4M year 2014/15) to provide a Public Services Network Connectivity as part of the ICT Strategy Capital Programme for Core System Stability.
- 7.2 Cheshire West and Chester Council will be match funding with the equivalent sum.
- 7.3 The Cheshire East costs associated with the tender procurement phase are £120,000; this is fully funded and identified in the ICT Strategy Capital Programme for year 2012/13.
- 7.4 Target 10-20% savings when considering existing operating expenditure. Contract consolidation in year 2013/14 is expected to achieve 10% reduction resulting in £262,000 savings per annum on circuit costs until the network is changed. The network will be re-engineered over two years and will include 'utility model' billing; this is expected to achieve 20% reduction of the total current operating cost resulting in savings of £645,000 per annum by 2015.
- 7.5 Current, total annual operating costs (Opex) for CEC and CWAC combined:

Staffing	£438,598
Essential maintenance	£160,679
Wide area Network (WAN) Circuits	£2,625,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,224,277</b>

*(note: this does not include accommodation, utility or air-con costs)*

Table 1: Current total annual operating cost for CEC & CWAC combined

Multi-supplier contracts for Wide area Network (WAN) circuits with a variety of terms and end dates also add a considerable overhead and a costly resource requirement to manage.

## **8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)**

- 8.1 The annual value for the contracts underpinning the Wide Area Network (WAN) circuits is £2.625m. Many of these contracts are reported as being out of term and one of the key requirements underpinning the Purpose of Change is noted as being to secure Legal/ Procurement compliant contracts.
- 8.2 ICT Strategy's preferred option for, essentially, recommissioning the services which these contracts covered is to use Framework Agreement RM860. This Framework Agreement comprises 12 suppliers.
- 8.3 The Project team is mitigating the risk of challenges from incumbent suppliers by advanced notification prior to tender of the intention to novate the contracts.
- 8.4 ICT Strategy has confirmed that, even if the Council sought to undertake this commissioning process through a bespoke OJEU procedure, it would not receive compliant bids from any other company than the 12 suppliers accredited at the moment and that any challenge to this proposed procurement process from an outgoing supplier to use a different procurement route than RM860 could be resisted.
- 8.5 In summary, ICT Strategy has confirmed that they have managed the risk of challenge to this process by existing contractors and they have confirmed that using Framework Agreement RM860 represents best procurement practice in all the circumstances.

## **9.0 Risk Management**

- 9.1 The Project will be managed under PRINCE2 methodology and risk and issue logs will be maintained to mitigate the risks.
- 9.2 Appropriate and robust financial accounting and reporting systems will be put in place and these will assist with early identification of any financial variances from the planned expenditure and funding.
- 9.3 Milestone reports will be presented to the Director of Finance, Executive Monitoring Board and Cabinet.
- 9.4 Regular reports on progress and outcomes will be provided to the project board, Head of ICT, Joint Officer Board and Cabinet Portfolio Member.

- 9.5 PSN Connectivity Procurement endorsed by Financial & Contract Procedure Rules will enable the Council back to revert to more legally and procurement compliant contracts.
- 9.6 The Guidance notes for using this Framework Agreement are being followed which recommend the need to obtain the incumbent supplier's assistance with the writing of the Specification which is to be used as part of the Framework Agreement's commissioning process. This is necessary to properly record the changes in specification from the current to the new, to manage exit requirements of the contract and to scope several elements of information that will impact on the prices bid that will be received from the RM860 suppliers. This will include information on transferring employees, historic service levels and arrangements for support during the transition are examples that are listed.

## **10.0 Background and Options**

### **10.1 Background – The Need For Change**

The Councils Wide Area Network (WAN) supports data communications for over 1000 sites (inclusive of main Council offices, depots, libraries, schools, members etc). Usage includes internet connectivity and voice traffic associated with the corporate telephony system; the network also provides secure connection to the Government Secure Extranet and the NHS national spine.

The Wide Area Network (WAN) has grown organically over a number of years with many of its underpinning contracts now out of term, increases in operating expenditure, assets being 'sweated' to end-of-life and non-collaborative / non-commercial service level agreements. This is coupled with an exponential growth in utilisation that is exposing limitations in the network's performance capacity to flex to demand and accommodation changes due to property rationalisation that reflect in its diminishing resilience capability.

It is therefore timely that the WAN is now provided under a consolidated procurement.

### **10.2 Key deliverables and benefits.**

- Service improvement - delivered at reduced operating costs and fully managed to a more commercial model; supported by commercial service level agreement.
- Target 10-20% savings when considering existing operating expenditure.
- Directly supports collaboration across public sector – Fire, Police, Health and the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector.

- Service delivery that supports property rationalisation and enables multi agency occupation.
- Allow flexibility and rapid changes in provision of service; increasingly embrace mobile working.

#### 10.3 The Options Considered:

1. Do Nothing.
2. Procurement for a re-contract of what we already have with single supplier.
3. Procurement using neighbouring authority OJEU compliant framework.
4. PSN compliant network procurement.

#### 10.4 Critical Success Factors:

- Reduced network infrastructure running costs (target of 10-20%+ on network charges and associated services).
- Fully integrated, affordable, resilient and secure network between all public sector partners.
- A strategic plan and vision for developing collaboration further leading to an efficient and future proof network to underpin all public services across Cheshire.

#### 10.5 Recommended option:

- **PSN compliant network procurement.**

*This will see the new Wide Area Network (WAN) procured with a PSN compliant supplier using Government Procurement Service framework (RM860).*

### 11.0 Access to Information

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

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## **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

### **REPORT TO: CABINET**

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**Date of Meeting:** 15<sup>th</sup> October 2012  
**Report of:** Lisa Quinn, Director of Finance & Business Support  
**Subject/Title:** 3 Year Medium Term Financial Strategy 2013/2016  
**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Peter Raynes – Finance Portfolio Holder

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#### **1.0 Report Summary**

- 1.1 This report sets out the latest medium term financial forecasts for the Council and highlights those areas needing further consideration by elected Members in setting an appropriate Financial Strategy. The Council's response to the forecasts will aid Member decision making on the level of resources available to support local services.

#### **2.0 Decision Requested**

- 2.1 To note the unprecedented scale and nature of the financial challenge facing the Council over the next 3 years and beyond.
- 2.2 To note and comment on the financial assumptions which are under consideration by elected Members as part of the Council's budget setting process for this 3 year period.
- 2.3 To agree the proposed approach to balancing the Council's medium term budget, using five key measures and applying 'Our principles to underpin budget decisions' as introduced in the 3 Year Council Plan for 2013-2016.

#### **3.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 The purpose of developing a clear Financial Strategy is to show how the allocation of our limited resources will support delivery of the objectives and priorities set out in our new 3 Year Plan for the Council, despite the financial challenges we collectively face.
- 3.2 There is no doubt that funding for local government will further reduce significantly over the next 5 years, and is likely to continue to reduce beyond this timeframe to 2020. Developing a clear, resourced, longer-term plan, where we agree our purpose, the sort of Council we want to be, the outcomes we want to achieve for local people in Cheshire East, and our priorities for action and investment, will maximise our ability to remain financially resilient despite undergoing significant change.

#### **4.0 Wards Affected**

- 4.1 All wards.

## **5.0 Local Ward Members**

5.1 All ward Members.

## **6.0 Policy Implications including - Carbon reduction - Health**

6.1 The Council's medium term financial strategy has strong links with the resourcing of the Council's objectives around carbon reduction and health improvement. The development of the 3 Year Council Plan will ensure that these issues remain priorities and that there are clear plans in place to address them.

## **7.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Director of Finance and Business Services)**

7.1 These are set out within this report.

## **8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)**

8.1 The development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy will respond to the content of the new 3 Year Council Plan. The Plan will require Constitutional changes which are currently being discussed by the Council; in particular, development of Policy Development Groups, the establishment of an Executive Monitoring Board, and the development of the Health and Wellbeing Board. Other Constitutional changes may emerge as the detail of the 3 Year Plan and the related Financial Strategy is finalised and agreed.

## **9.0 Risk Management**

9.1 It is important to note that, the Council faces significant financial challenges in achieving its desired outcomes. Appetite for risk will need to be developed for different courses of action, particularly in relation to seizing opportunities for introducing new, innovative models of service delivery, and a different range of service providers. A revised approach to risk appetite and management will be further considered by Cabinet and Council as the 3 Year Plan and budget are developed over the next 4 months.

9.2 The steps outlined in this report will significantly mitigate the four main legal and financial risks to the Council's financial management:

- The Council must set a balanced Budget.
- The Council must set a legal Council Tax for 2013/2014.
- The Council should provide high quality evidence to support submissions for external assessment.
- Council borrowing will comply with the Treasury Management Strategy, which is underpinned by the Prudential Code.

9.3 A risk and equality assessment will be carried out by the proposing Directorate or Group for all key proposals as part of the development of detailed action plans for their implementation. This will be in line with our agreed approach to Corporate Risk Management.

## 10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 Local Authority finances in England are undergoing significant changes as part of the Coalition Government's overall deficit reduction programme. National Government grant funding for Local Authorities is reducing rapidly, with more reliance being placed on locally funding local services.
- 10.2 The annual revenue budget for Cheshire East Council is funded by a combination of council tax, service user charges, and (relatively low) Government grants. From April 2013, the level of Government funding will place a greater reliance on local economic growth, through the partial use of local Business Rates income to determine each council's allocation. Overall funding is still expected to reduce, but will vary dependent on local levels of house building and commercial development, which is more unpredictable at a local level. These major changes in national arrangements for resource allocation create a much higher degree of uncertainty for local councils in their future resource planning.
- 10.3 **Table One** (below) sets out the revised financial forecast for Cheshire East Council for the period 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. This updates the information previously published in the Council's Business Plan in February 2012.

**Table One: Funding Available reduces by almost £30m over the Medium Term (-11.4%)**

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>Funding</b>				
Grant Funding	101.2	99.0	93.1	80.8
Council Tax	178.6	163.4	163.4	163.4
Central Adjustments	-27.5	-32.6	-29.9	-20.6
<b>Funding Available to Services</b>	<b>252.3</b>	<b>229.8</b>	<b>226.6</b>	<b>223.6</b>
Directorate Spend	252.3	254.4	233.1	234.2
<b>Funding Gap / (Surplus)</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>10.6</b>
<i>Position as at February 2012</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>13.1</i>	<i>7.4</i>	<i>-</i>
Source: Cheshire East Finance				

- 10.4 The Council approaches budget setting by considering 'Five Measures' that will support balancing the financial position over the medium term.

The Five Measures	
Measure One	Challenge Financial Assumptions
Measure Two	Review Local Taxation
Measure Three	Manage Reserves
Measure Four	Manage Cost Drivers
Measure Five	Manage Income

Each measure requires Members and officers to consider the levels of risk and the impact on local people, whether they are direct service users or not.

## **What is causing the Revenue Funding Gap?**

- 10.5 Before attempting to address the funding gap, it is important to understand the causes behind it. Looking at each of the Five Measures, it is possible to see how changes to local authority funding and certain key local assumptions impact on the overall financial position of the Council.

### **Measure One – Challenge Financial Assumptions**

- 10.6 The overall Funding Available to Services (see Table One) will vary depending upon certain financial assumptions, such as the level of Government Grant, interest rates and the revenue impact of capital spending.

Current assumptions:

- Government Grants represent the funding available from the new Business Rates Retention Scheme plus the Council's allocation of Revenue Support Grant and un-ringfenced specific grants. Ringfenced grants are included within Directorate Spend. The expectation is that grant funding will reduce by 20% over the next 3 years despite the inclusion of the new Council Tax Support Grant.
- No growth in business rates is included and no benefit is expected from any change in employment levels that could reduce expenditure on Council Tax Support.
- No return of any Government contingencies are expected at this stage (ie funding held back by the Government in relation to the New Homes Bonus, Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant (LACSEG) and the safety net, where an element could be returned to councils but amounts and timing are unclear).
- Newly available homes are expected to increase steadily from c.600 dwellings in 2013 to c.800 in 2015, this will impact on the New Homes Bonus available to the Council.
- Central Adjustments are mostly detailed in the February Business Plan and include increases in borrowing costs, maintaining the Reserves Strategy and reductions in the ex-employee pension costs.
- Capital Financing Costs are included in Central Adjustments. The overall Capital Programme relates to projects that usually take more than one year to complete. At the end of each project, the Council will normally own a new asset, or have extended the life of an existing asset. The programme is funded by a combination of borrowing, capital receipts, revenue and external contributions and Government Grants. To support further spending on capital projects will inevitably increase the demand for local borrowing, as each other funding source is reducing. This increases the requirement for capital projects to generate revenue savings or be self-funding.
- Capital financing costs are also reduced by applying returns on Council investments. The Treasury Management Strategy provides information on the Council's approach to investment and is updated at each quarterly review of performance.



- The Capital Programme has been subject to significant review by a Capital Visioning Group, attended by the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Leader of the Council and Director of Finance & Business Services, in September 2012. The purpose of the review was to ensure existing plans align with Council priorities, as well as to free up financial and physical capacity for future investments.
- **Table Two** (below) shows the Capital Programme as reported in the First Quarter Review (August 2012). Overall £41m of expenditure in the existing Capital Programme will be recommended for removal or deferral. Further work will continue to focus on decisions around the most appropriate methods for funding capital expenditure. Adjustments from the Capital Visioning Group will be formally reported as part of the Mid-Year Review (due November 2012).

**Table Two: Work of Capital Visioning Group has reduced the original forecasts**

	Forecast Expenditure 2012/13 £m	Forecast Expenditure 2013/14 £m	Forecast Expenditure 2014/15 £m	Total Expenditure (3 years) £m
Original Forecast	82.0	73.8	29.4	185.2
Reductions	-10.2	-12.5	-1.4	-24.1
Deferrals	-3.7	-9.8	-3.5	-17.0
<b>Revised Forecast</b>	<b>68.1</b>	<b>51.5</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>144.1</b>

Source: Cheshire East Finance

### **Measure Two – Review Local Taxation**

- 10.7 The current view of funding does not include an increase in Band D Council Tax, no increase in the Council's taxbase and no funding from supplementary business rates or Business Improvement Districts. It assumes a net nil position on the Council's collection fund and no impact from changing discount levels.
- 10.8 Income from Council Tax is expected to reduce by £15.2m (8.5%) to reflect the new arrangements for awarding Council Tax Support (formerly Benefit) which will be treated as a discount on the bill. Council Tax Support is partially funded by Government Grant. It is assumed that the impact of the new scheme will be cost neutral, but this is currently subject to consultation.

### **Measure Three – Manage Reserves**

- 10.9 The Council's Reserves Strategy was published alongside the Business Plan in February 2012. The Council manages financial reserves to protect against risk and support investment. The minimum level of reserves reflects emergency requirements, but also the fact that in-year spending may exceed in-year funding. If risk can be reduced then the minimum level will also reduce accordingly. However, the reliance on local funding sources and the overall reducing levels of Government funding means that both risks and investment on innovation may increase in the short to medium term. This uncertainty means that a cautious approach needs to be adopted and reserves should provide a sufficient "cushion" against unforeseen changes which impact negatively on the Council's finances.

10.10 **Table Three (below)** shows an update of the Reserves Strategy following the publication of the Council Statement of Accounts for 2011/2012 and the 2012/2013 First Quarter Review. Earmarked Reserves are set aside for specific, often statutory, purposes. They have been reviewed regularly in the last two years and there is no expectation that significant sums will be released back to General Reserves in the medium term.

10.11 School balances stand at c.£15m at March 2012 representing an increase of £5m on the position as at March 2011. The Council is not able to access these balances and as such they are not reflected below or in the Council's medium term financial planning.

**Table Three: Reserves are due to increase to cover strategic needs**

Detail	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m	2015/16 £m
<b>Estimated Balance @ 1<sup>st</sup> April</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>21.1</b>	<b>27.2</b>
<b>Projected Increases in Reserves</b>				
- Planned Contribution to Reserves	7.6	9.6	6.1	1.6
<b>Projected Use of Reserves</b>				
- Funding Supplementary Revenue Estimates	-0.3			
- Estimated Impact of 2012/2013 Spending	-7.2			
Sub total changes	0.1	9.6	6.1	1.6
<b>Forecast General Reserves @ 31<sup>st</sup> March</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>21.1</b>	<b>27.2</b>	<b>28.8</b>
Risk Assessed Minimum Level <b>**UNDER REVIEW**</b>	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0
<b>(Under achievement of Risk assessed minimum) / Un-Allocated Balance</b>	<b>-3.5</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>13.8</b>
<b>Earmarked Reserves at 31st March 2012</b>	<b>£m</b>			
- Insurance Reserve - Cheshire County Fund	1.7			
- Insurance Reserve - Cheshire East Fund	1.4			
- PFI Equalisation Reserve	0.9			
- Carry Forwards by Service Managers	0.8			
- Invest to Save Reserve	0.7			
- Other items	2.8			
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves (excl Schools)</b>	<b>8.3</b>			

Source: Cheshire East Finance

### **Measures Four & Five – Manage Cost Drivers and Income**

10.12 The Directorate Level Spend, shown in Table One, reflects the position after existing spending plans have been implemented (as contained in the Business Plan agreed in February 2012).

10.13 The assumption is also that spending will reduce sufficiently to cover the Funding Gap from previous years. Budget levels are currently programmed to reduce by 7.2%.

## How can the Council meet the Financial Challenges?

10.14 The previous section has highlighted key issues which have caused a funding gap, and why the overall funding gap has increased since February. The Council must therefore develop a set of actions in relation to each 'Measure' that will assist in closing the gap.

10.15 Options related to each of the Five Measures are set out below.

Measure	Areas for Consideration
<b>Measure One</b> <b>Challenge</b> <b>Financial</b> <b>Assumptions</b>	<p>Additional funding may be possible from the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Business growth (1% business rates growth = £0.3m additional income).</li> <li>- Return of Government contingency funding (up to 13% of current funding levels).</li> <li>- Additional new homes (every additional band D property equates to £1,400 of bonus funding).</li> <li>- Improved employment levels which will reduce the call on Council Tax Support (funding expected of £15.2m but liabilities currently exceed this by £2.2m).</li> </ul> <p>Funding Available to Services can also change if the following areas are adjusted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revenue costs of the Capital Programme. This issue has already been subject to a Capital Visioning Review by the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Finance. The results of this review will be reported in the Mid-Year Review (November 2012).</li> <li>- Contributions to/from reserves.</li> </ul>
<b>Measure Two</b> <b>Review Local</b> <b>Taxation</b>	<p>The Council can review current funding assumptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council Tax Band D (1% change = £1.6m).</li> <li>- Changes in the taxbase (0.1% = £0.16m).</li> <li>- Impact on collection rates can generate a surplus or a deficit.</li> <li>- Some Council Tax discounts can be reduced through the Technical Reforms (up to £3.6m of additional income).</li> <li>- The outcome of the consultation on Council Tax Support to see if a scheme that delivers additional savings could be introduced.</li> <li>- Introducing a business rate supplement for specific purposes (1p on the multiplier = £2.1m).</li> <li>- Introducing business improvement districts for specific</li> </ul>

	purposes.
<b>Measure Three Manage Reserves</b>	<p>The Reserves Strategy 2012/2015 can be reviewed to reconsider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Risks associated with medium term spending plans.</li> <li>- Other emerging risks which may require funding from reserves.</li> <li>- The strategic use of reserves to support innovation.</li> </ul>
<b>Measures Four &amp; Five Manage Cost Drivers &amp; Income</b>	<p>The Council's 3 Year Plan 2013/2016 will almost certainly necessitate major changes to the way services are delivered and funded to achieve the required outcomes.</p> <p>In order to manage the difficult budget setting decisions necessary over the next 4 months, a set of principles have been developed which will be applied consistently to guide these during the budget process.</p> <p>These principles are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We will be policy-led and stick to our decisions.</li> <li>2. We will make decisions based on evidence of need and of what works.</li> <li>3. We are planning for at least 3 years.</li> <li>4. We must be a more productive and affordable organisation.</li> <li>5. We will stop doing some things to focus on those that matter most to local people.</li> <li>6. We will invest in innovative new ways of providing services.</li> <li>7. We will ensure that those who provide services, whether in-house or externally, give real value-for-money.</li> <li>8. We will promote self-reliance and capacity in local communities to reduce demand on public services.</li> <li>9. We will focus our limited resources on prevention and early intervention.</li> <li>10. We will invest in infrastructure to promote local economic growth and access to job opportunities.</li> </ol>

### Developing the 3 Year Council Plan and Financial Strategy

- 10.16 The timetable to deliver the 3 Year Council Plan and the supporting Financial Strategy will be the same for each of the two elements. Over the next few months, the Council will have an open and honest dialogue with residents, local businesses, community organisations and partner organisations, in order to fully develop its 3 Year Plan. As our Purpose states, we want to be "a Council that works in partnership with others to ensure the best outcomes for local people". We can only achieve positive outcomes in Cheshire East if we work in close collaboration on joint approaches with local communities, voluntary and faith organisations, businesses, and the wider public service network locally.

- 10.17 The key stages in developing the 3 Year Council Plan and Financial Strategy are as follows:

**October – December:**

Open dialogue with residents, businesses, town and parish councils, and partners through special events, the Council's website, and other communication channels – to gain support for our proposed approach and to get views on the future role of the Council, its priorities, and how it can change its ways of delivering local services to provide better value-for-money for local people.

**December - February**

Further dialogue on detailed budget proposals and action plans for major services changes which respond to significantly reduced funding, whilst delivering on key priorities. Final 3 Year Plan and Financial Strategy considered by Council on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2013.

**February – March**

Communication with residents, businesses and partners about the final 3 Year Plans and how these will be delivered.

- 10.18 This public-facing dialogue will be accompanied by extensive communication and engagement with all elected Members and staff over the same period.
- 10.19 To support decision making in relation to specific financial issues, in addition to the above, two task groups have also been established:

A **Central Finance Group** consisting of the Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Director of Finance and Business Services will work with services to review all the financial planning assumptions behind these figures.

A **Human Resources Task Group** consisting of the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development and representatives from all major services will review pressures and policies in relation to the Council's staff pay budget.

## **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: Director of Finance & Business Services  
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## **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

### **REPORT TO: CABINET**

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**Date of Meeting:** 15 October 2012  
**Report of:** Kim Ryley, Interim Chief Executive  
**Subject/Title:** 3 Year Council Plan 2013-16  
**Portfolio Holder:** Leader of the Council

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#### **1.0 Report Summary**

- 1.1 This report sets out how the Council will develop a detailed new 3 Year Council Plan for 2013-16 and provides an initial framework for the Plan, to enable wide dialogue with local partners, interested community groups, businesses, and the public on the proposed outcomes and priorities for the Plan, before it is finalised.

#### **2.0 Decision Requested**

- 2.1 To approve the proposed framework of a new 3 Year Council Plan based on the purpose, outcomes, priorities and budget principles set out in this report.
- 2.2 To agree that the priorities for spending review and investment set out in this report are developed into more detailed business cases and action plans for projects, for further consideration by elected Members.
- 2.3 To agree the process for developing the 3 Year Council Plan, in parallel with the Council's supporting Medium Term Financial Strategy, in particular applying the proposed principles for budget decisions set out in this report.

#### **3.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 We are in a time of unprecedented change and uncertainty in local government where we are facing further, significant funding reductions for the foreseeable future, rising demand for some local services, and increasing expectations from residents over providing value for money. This requires the Council – Members and staff – to have a fresh dialogue with our local communities, and with partner organisations, where we re-examine our role and purpose, our priorities for action and investment, and the desired outcomes for local people, on the basis of what will be sustainable in the long term.
- 3.2 There is a growing recognition across local government that the sector must move away from the direct delivery of many services, to more of an enabling and commissioning role. This means that the shape of individual councils will look very different in 3-5 years time, including Cheshire East, with many moving

to implement new models of delivery now, because the status quo will soon become financially unsustainable.

- 3.3 As we consider the next phase of development for Cheshire East Council, it is vital that we have an open, honest and robust dialogue with our local communities, businesses and other public services. We must identify how we can form more effective partnerships and alliances to pool resources and expertise, to achieve the outcomes we all want to see in our communities, in terms of a better quality of life for all local people.
- 3.4 We are no strangers to change in Cheshire East, with our current journey beginning with local government reorganisation 3 years ago. But we need to be sure that we have both the capacity and capabilities to put in place the major programmes of change and improvement now needed over the next 3 years. It is vital that we quickly face the challenge of reduced funding and increasing demand, and develop a clear plan of action to respond to these competing pressures. That is what the new 3 Year Council Plan will provide. Supported by our new Medium Term Financial Strategy, it will ensure our key priorities are properly resourced and that we are financially stable. As much as reduced funding is a major challenge, it is also an opportunity - to re-examine what we do, and ensure that how we work across the whole local public service network provides excellent value for money for local people.
- 3.5 The next phase of progress and development for Cheshire East Council will have implications for elected Members, both in their individual role as community leaders, and the Council's collective role as decision maker about the allocation of limited public resources. Without doubt, we will need to be a more productive organisation in 3 years time, getting more from less with fewer staff, and it is important that this change is delivered in a clear and managed way, that does not put at risk the quality of those services most valued by local people.
- 3.6 This report sets out the path for developing our new 3 Year Council Plan between now and February 2013, with a focus on ensuring that elected Members, staff, residents and partners are clear how they can all contribute to the detail of its content and to putting it in place when it has been agreed.

#### **4.0 Wards Affected**

- 4.1 All wards.

#### **5.0 Local Ward Members**

- 5.1 All ward Members.

#### **6.0 Policy Implications including - Carbon reduction and Health**

- 6.1 The Council's purpose and outcomes set out in this report have strong links with the Council's objectives around carbon reduction and health improvement.



The development of the 3 Year Council Plan will ensure that these issues remain priorities and that there are clear plans in place to address them.

## **7.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Director of Finance and Business Services)**

- 7.1 The purpose of developing a new 3 Year Plan for the Council is to guide all the activities of the Council, with residents and partners, to ensure that our shared priorities continue to be met, despite the financial challenges we collectively face. There is no doubt that funding for local government will reduce significantly over the next 5 years, and is likely to continue to reduce beyond this timeframe to 2020. Developing a clear, resourced, longer-term plan, where we agree our purpose, the sort of Council we want to be, the outcomes we want to achieve for local people in Cheshire East, and our priorities for action and investment, will maximise our ability to remain financially resilient and effective, despite undergoing significant change.

## **8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)**

- 8.1 The development of the 3 Year Council Plan will require Constitutional changes which are currently being discussed by the Council; in particular, development of Policy Development Groups, the establishment of an Executive Monitoring Board, and the development of the Health and Wellbeing Board. Other Constitutional changes may emerge over the coming months.
- 8.2 Other legal issues, such as (but not limited to) major staffing changes, or compliance with statutory duties, may emerge, but at this time it is not possible to identify with any certainty what these might be.

## **9.0 Risk Management**

- 9.1 Developing a 3 Year Plan which clearly states the Council's priorities and major change projects, and developing our financial strategy to support these agreed priorities, will enable the Council to mitigate its corporate risks related to financial management and service non-delivery. The stronger our plan, the better able we are to manage risk and uncertainties, as well as to seize new opportunities to do things better. This is critical to building a strong reputation for effective community leadership in a turbulent period of major change.
- 9.2 In addition, developing a clear set of outcomes enables the Council to clearly identify, assess and manage risks at both the corporate and service level. This approach provides a strong framework for the next 3 years which will be reflected in business plans for individual Council service areas.
- 9.3 It is important to note that, as the Council faces significant challenges in achieving the desired outcomes with much reduced funding, it will need to identify its risk appetite for different courses of action, particularly in relation to introducing new, innovative models of service delivery, and a different range of service providers. A revised approach to risk appetite and management will be

further considered by Cabinet and Council as the 3 Year Plan and budget are developed over the next 4 months.

## 10.0 Background and Options

### Our purpose, outcomes and priorities

- 10.1 Cabinet and the Corporate Management Team have spent some time considering what the core purpose of the Council should be, in light of funding reductions and policy changes at the national and local level. They have also considered what key outcomes we are trying to achieve to improve the quality of life of local people and, therefore, what our priorities for action and investment over the next 3 years should be.
- 10.2 A summary of these is attached at **Appendix 1**. This framework will enable us to set clear objectives and targets for action over the next 3 years, and to identify how we will measure our performance and manage risks to achieving our targets.
- 10.3 It is vital that we identify clear priorities for action – those areas where the Council needs to invest and make the most change quickly if we are to deliver our outcomes with reduced resources. These priorities, and the specific projects and activities which will flow from them, will be an important part of our dialogue. They are the major change proposals for the Council which will enable us to be the smaller, affordable and more effective organisation we need to be.
- 10.4 The priority areas for review are presented in **Appendix 1** and are, in summary:
- 1. Local economic development** – we will enhance our existing economic development strategy work, focusing on business growth, regeneration of Macclesfield and Crewe, and the Sustainable Towns programme. We will seek to invest significantly in our road infrastructure to address some of the backlog of work which has built up over many years, and will continue to invest in the roll-out of super-fast broadband across the whole of Cheshire East.
- 2. Developing affordable, and sustainable local models of care for vulnerable children and adults** – in order to ensure care provision is affordable and targeted, we will develop and shape the local market for care provision, including fostering and adoption. We will also implement the next phase of the Care4CE service, and will review and re-shape the provision of services for learning disabilities. Finally, we will maximise efficiencies and ensure better targeted provision through the greater integration of local health and care services, and the planned incorporation of public health responsibilities, resources and activities into the Council.
- 3. Focusing services on early intervention and prevention** – we will do this by reducing unnecessary demand in adult and children's services through promoting self-sufficiency. We will create service delivery models which focus on early intervention to prevent recourse to acute and costly services later. We

will also develop improved information and signposting to wider support and services. Finally, we will maximise the opportunities arising from the work of our new Health and Wellbeing Board.

**4. Responding to the changing education and learning environment** – we will work with schools to ensure they are self-sustaining, and also review special school provision. We will also seek to improve adult skills for work, and will pursue the development of a University Technical College.

**5. Securing housing that is locally-led, community-based and that meets local needs** – we will develop a new model for delivering housing services which ensure that housing is fully integrated with all services across the Council, and supports independent living and health improvement. This will enable a reduction in dependency on caring services and other public interventions.

**6. Redefining the Council's role in place-based services** – we will develop new delivery models which are efficient and affordable in areas such as leisure and streetscape. We will continue our Total Transport programme, and also identify the best model for delivery of library services and community facilities, in partnership with other service providers and community groups.

**7. Service efficiency and redefining the corporate core** – as we move to become a more productive, leaner organisation we must continue to secure efficiencies from all services, to reduce spending. We must also redefine the corporate core of the council, making sure it provides the subject expertise needed to enable effective commissioning and delivery of services across the public service network. We must implement more efficient business processes and architecture, and ensure our ICT systems support innovative frontline delivery. We will also maximise the benefits from the Corporate Landlord model, to best utilise our extensive asset base to support the wider objectives of the Council.

**8. Workforce planning** – we will further develop employment and working practices to enable flexible and agile working and to reduce our costs. We will identify our changing skills requirements over the medium term and equip the organisation with these skills. We will manage workforce turnover so that vacant posts are used to provide efficiency savings, whilst retaining those staff with essential skills for the future.

- 10.5 Detailed proposals for each of these 8 areas, including specific savings and cost reduction proposals, will be developed over the next 2-3 months, as part of the budget setting process.

#### Principles for budget decisions

- 10.6 In order to manage the difficult budget setting decisions necessary over the next 4 months, a set of principles have been developed which will be applied consistently to guide these decisions during the budget process. These principles are:

**Our principles to underpin budget decisions:**

1. We will be policy-led and stick to our decisions
2. We will make decisions based on evidence of need and of what works
3. We are planning for at least 3 years
4. We must be a more productive and affordable organisation
5. We will stop doing some things to focus on those that matter most to local people
6. We will invest in innovative new ways of providing services
7. We will ensure that those who provide services, whether in-house or externally, give real value-for-money
8. We will promote self-reliance and capacity in local communities to reduce demand on public services
9. We will focus our limited resources on prevention and early intervention
10. We will invest in infrastructure to promote local economic growth and access to job opportunities

Developing the 3 Year Council Plan and Financial Strategy

10.7 Over the next few months, the Council will have an open and honest dialogue with residents, local businesses, town and parish councils, and partner organisations, in order to fully develop its 3 Year Council Plan. This will be done hand-in-hand with developing our Medium Term Financial Strategy. As our Purpose states, we want to be “a Council that works in partnership with others to ensure the best outcomes for local people”. We can only achieve positive outcomes in Cheshire East if we do it in partnership with local communities, voluntary and faith organisations, businesses, and the wider public service network locally.

10.8 The key stages in developing the 3 Year Council Plan and Financial Strategy are as follows:

**October – December:**

Open dialogue with residents, businesses, town and parish councils, and partners through special events, the Council’s website, and other communication channels – to gain support for our proposed approach and to get views on the future role of the Council, its priorities, and how it can change its ways of delivering local services to provide better value-for-money for local people.

**December - February**

Further dialogue on detailed budget proposals and action plans for major service changes which respond to significantly reduced funding, whilst delivering on key priorities. Final 3 Year Plan and Financial Strategy considered by Council on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2013.

**February – March**

Communication with residents, businesses and partners about the final 3 Year Plans and how these will be delivered.

- 10.9 This public-facing dialogue will be accompanied by extensive communication and engagement with all elected Members and staff over the same period.

**11.0 Access to Information**

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

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## CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

### REPORT TO: Cabinet

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	15 October 2012
<b>Report of:</b>	Strategic Director – Places and Organisational Capacity
<b>Subject/Title:</b>	Culture Policy –Notice of Motion
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor R Bailey

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#### 1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report considers the Notice of Motion on Cultural Policy (proposed by Councillors K Edwards and D Flude) sent to Cabinet for determination.

- 1.2 The Motion is : -

“As Unitary Councils can and should be a powerful support to the sense of community in the area for which they have responsibility, Cheshire East Council will develop a cultural policy, that will support the rich ancient and industrial heritage of the borough, encourage the enjoyment of and the participation in the creative and performing arts and ensure a full range of facilities to enable residents to experience and enjoy a rich cultural life”.

#### 2.0 Decision Requested

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the proposals for the production of a Cultural Policy to guide Council support to this area of work in the future.
- 2.2 That Cabinet note the work currently being undertaken to support the delivery of a strong cultural sector within Cheshire East .
- 2.3 That Cabinet note the response to the Notice of Motion.

#### 3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Through the work of the Council's Arts Heritage and Cultural Services team either in direct service provision or through partnership working with local cultural groups and organisations arts and culture continue to play a

key role in supporting a range of policies to improve the health and wellbeing of the local communities of Cheshire East. The production of a cultural policy will ensure that this support remains focussed.

**4.0 Wards Affected**

4.1 N/A

**5.0 Local Ward Members**

5.1 N/A

**6.0 Policy Implications**

6.1 The production of a Cultural Policy Statement and Action Plan will lead to an efficient use of resources and give a clear direction for service delivery.

**7.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Director of Finance and Business Services)**

7.1 The recommendation does not have a financial implication.

**8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)**

8.1 This is a discretionary area of work for the Council. Legal implications may arise from the activities proposed as part of the development of a policy. These will need to be considered as part of the policy development process.

**9.0 Risk Management**

9.1 There are no associated risks with the recommendation.

**10.0 Background and Options**

10.1 It is widely acknowledged that Cultural activity brings communities together whether this is in theatres, our community halls, on the streets or in our rural villages. Furthermore culture in its widest definition offers local people and visitors the chance to explore and express the distinctiveness and diversity of the Borough. Within Cheshire East there is already a year round wide programme of events and festivals, most of them being community led that supports this. Most recently this was seen in the successful contribution of the arts to the Olympic Torch Relay as it passed through Cheshire East.

10.2 In order to maximise the contribution that the arts and culture can bring to both sustaining and improving the quality of life in Cheshire East the Portfolio Holder has initiated the development of a Cultural Policy Statement and Action Plan to take into review a range of service areas and key outcomes within the Council to ensure that there is a focus on their contribution. The key outcomes will include : -



**Participation** – more opportunities to take an active part in arts and cultural activities both in local communities and as a mechanism to support other Council priorities including working with older people and improving health and wellbeing.

**Conservation** of the natural and built heritage of Cheshire East and its use for cultural activities.

**Sustainable infrastructure**, including strong partnerships that can help develop our cultural offer.

**Promotion** of the Borough as a place where arts and culture are valued and can be enjoyed.

**Employment** opportunities through inward investment and in the culture sector.

It is intended that this piece of work will be brought back to Cabinet for approval in due course with an implementation date of April 2013.

- 10.3 One of the key outcomes of the policy will be to ensure the future sustainability of facilities used for the production and enjoyment of arts and cultural activity that are currently owned and managed by the Council. This currently includes Knutsford Civic Centre including the Studio Cinema, and Crewe Lyceum Theatre. Following previous Council decisions, the aim for both buildings has been in recent months to seek suitable commercial partners to undertake their management on a long term lease arrangement. Cabinet will be aware that the Knutsford Civic Centre and Studio Cinema has recently transferred to Curzon Cinemas who will be looking to invest in updating the projection facility at the Centre which will hopefully protect its future for cinema exhibition. Cabinet approval is also being sought to confirm a preferred bidder for the management of the Crewe Lyceum Theatre on a 15 year lease. It is considered that both arrangements will ensure the future of the facilities and the contributions that they make both to their local communities and more widely to Cheshire East residents.

## **11.0 Access to Information**

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

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