

*Cheshire East Council*

# Cheshire East plan 2024-25



**Open**

**Fair**

**Green**

## Vision

**An open, fairer, greener Cheshire East**

## Aims

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

### **Aim 2 - A council which empowers and cares about people**

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

We will provide strong community leadership and work transparently with our residents, businesses and partners to deliver our ambition in Cheshire East.

We aim to reduce inequalities, promote fairness and opportunity for all and support our most vulnerable residents.

We will lead our communities to protect and enhance our environment, tackle the climate emergency and drive sustainable development.

## Priorities

P1.1) Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making  
 P1.2) Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation  
 P1.3) Support a sustainable financial future for the council, through service development, improvement and transformation  
 P1.4) Look at opportunities to bring more income into the borough  
 P1.5) Support and develop our workforce to be confident, motivated, innovative, resilient and empowered  
 P1.6) Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents

P2.1) Work together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient  
 P2.2) Reduce health inequalities across the borough  
 P2.3) Protect and support our communities and safeguard children, adults at risk and families from abuse, neglect and exploitation  
 P2.4) Be the best Corporate Parents to our children in care  
 P2.5) Support all children to have the best start in life  
 P2.6) Increase opportunities for all children and young adults with additional needs  
 P2.7) Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential  
 P2.8) Reduce the reliance on long term care by improving services closer to home and providing more extra care facilities, including dementia services

P3.1) A great place for people to live, work and visit  
 P3.2) Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods  
 P3.3) Reduce impact on the environment  
 P3.4) A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel  
 P3.5) Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all  
 P3.6) Be a carbon neutral council by 2027

What we will do - Priority actions for 2024/25			Lead Officer	Committee	Q1 progress	Update
P1.1	A1.1.1	Introduce a new decision-making framework to streamline the current arrangements and improve quality and clarity of reports.	Head of Democratic Services	CPC	Green	Linked to Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) Action Plan - Consider options to streamline committees, train report authors, emphasise Modern.gov software use – on track for October/ November deadlines
	A1.1.2	Improve understanding of effective scrutiny in a committee system of decision-making	Head of Democratic Services	CPC	Green	Scrutiny training for committee members by December 2024
	A1.1.3	Member training to clarify roles and responsibilities for decision-making within the committee system	Head of Democratic Services	CPC	Green	Training programme for committee members by December 2024
	A1.1.4	A clear and transparent budget setting process, where opportunities to inform and influence decision-making are clearly understood by stakeholders	Head of Finance	CPC	Red	Strategic Finance Management Board drives MTFs review, budget proposals delayed – see covering report
P1.2	A1.2.1	Review and embed consultation and engagement approach across the organisation to put resident and customer voice at the heart of evidence base for decisions, including assessing alternative approaches such as a 'people panel' to embed citizen voice into key decisions and policy development	Head of Communications	CPC	Green	Review approach to communications and engagement including for development of new Cheshire East Plan, starting Q2 – in CPC Action Plan
	A1.2.2	Review equality, diversity and inclusion strategy and EIAs to embed the voices of seldom-heard audiences and those with protected characteristics at the heart of decision-making and service redesign across the organisation.	Head of Business Change	CPC	Green	Update Equality, Diversity, Inclusion strategy with Cheshire East Plan; new EIA template.
	A1.2.3	Review and refresh the aims and priorities in the Customer Experience Strategy as part of a wider review of customer experience and resident engagement.	Head of Customer Services	CPC	Measure not due	Refocus CES review with Transformation programme; develop digital models in Q2 & 3
	A1.2.4	Achieve the Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award	Head of Communities and Integration	E+C	Green	Cheshire East Council gains Gold award. Armed Forces Officer supports veterans

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						with clubs, events, and crisis aid.
P1.3	A1.3.1	Embark on a whole organisation transformation and improvement programme – The primary aim in the short term must be to ensure that the Council is financially stable and delivering support to those who need it most.	Director of Transformation	CPC	Green	Approved transformation plan, children’s services improvement plan and peer challenge action plan mark significant progress
	A1.3.2	Review commissioning approach across all directorates	Head of Integrated Commissioning	A+H/C+F	Green	Commissioning approach is being reviewed and progress is being made
	A1.3.3	Deliver the savings set out in MTFS 2024-28 proposals within the agreed timescales to contribute to a balanced the budget and build sustainable reserves	Head of Finance	CPC	Amber	MTFS 2024-28 approved; financial challenges, low reserves, rising costs, overspend forecast.
	A1.3.4	We will refresh the council’s Digital Strategy and delivery programme. The Digital Strategy identifies forty-seven digital projects and emphasises a digital-by-design approach to offering services to customers.	Head of ICT	CPC	Green	Update CPC on Digital Strategy progress; collaborate on future digital initiatives.
P1.4	A1.4.1	Comprehensive review of each existing alternative service delivery vehicle (ASDV) including review of governance, management, business planning and performance management arrangements.	Director of Environment	FSC	Green	Review complete
P1.5	A1.5.1	Review Workforce Strategy and update for 2025 onwards.	Head of HR	CPC	Green	Workforce Strategy 2025-2028 approach approved; development ongoing, approval expected January 2025.
	A1.5.2	Complete the office moves related WorkplaCE programme, making more efficient use of the council’s office estate and technology to support modern ways of working	Executive Director – Place	CPC, E+G	Green	Office moves are progressing as planned and on schedule.
	A1.5.3	Review and update the Brighter Future culture programme	Head of HR	CPC	Green	Council behaviours refresh approved; ongoing staff engagement for updated culture programme
	A1.5.4	Complete the DMA review of senior capacity and extend DMA across the organisation as part of service re-design	Head of HR	CPC	Green	Senior management restructure (Tier 4+) approved; phase one

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						consultation ends 20th September, final structure to be agreed in October. Phase two will follow.
P1.6	A1.6.1	Review and refresh communications and engagement strategy and resourcing as part of a wider review of customer experience and resident engagement.	Head of Communications	CPC	Green	Develop communications and engagement strategy in line with Cheshire East Plan and customer experience strategy, starting Q2
	A1.6.2	Establish a range of subscriber e-newsletters and digital content to share key updates and council services, support and decisions with a range of stakeholders – to extend reach of messages	Head of Communications	CPC	Green	Develop communications and engagement strategy in line with Cheshire East Plan and customer experience strategy, starting Q2.
	A1.6.3	Review and update the approach, across the organisation, to employee communications and workforce engagement	Head of Communications	CPC	Green	Refresh the internal communications and engagement strategy – all staff sessions held September 2024

Priority	What we will do - Priority actions for 2024/25		Lead Officer	Committee	Q1 progress	Update
P2.1	A2.1.1	Support VCFSE to build upon the People Helping People initiative and work collaboratively through 'Growing our communities'.	Head of Communities and Integration	A+H	Green	<p>Volunteer approach: onboarded Community Connectors, developed IT systems, training, branding, partnerships, and home needs systems.</p> <p>Community growth: commissioned CVSCE, Cheshire Community Action, and Cheshire Association of Local Councils.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Market growth: better funding use, impact reporting, long-term provision, stronger relationships.</li> <li>2. Communication channels: joined-up working, better connections, integrated infrastructure, health challenge awareness, collaborative practices.</li> <li>3. Public sector influence: informed JSNAs, visibility, decision-making influence.</li> </ol> <p>Community grants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy-saving projects: £147,111 awarded.</li> <li>• Cost of Living Fund: 19,455 users, 599 volunteers, support for older people,</li> </ul>

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					community meals, and supermarket
A2.1.2	Complete construction of the Traveller transit site	Head of Housing	E+G	Green	The site is on track for completion by the end of September 2024, pending utility connections.
A2.1.3	Support and contribute to the achievements of the borough's eight care communities and neighbourhood partnerships	Head of Communities and Integration	A+H	Green	<p>Place-based communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and Wellbeing events.</li> <li>• IT project with Sandbach library.</li> <li>• NHS Talking therapies in rural areas.</li> <li>• Holmes Chapel Family Hub Stay and Play group.</li> <li>• Knutsford Parkletics programme.</li> <li>• Priority working groups in Sandbach, Middlewich, Alsager, Shavington, Haslington.</li> </ul> <p>Minority groups and communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Afghanistan Scheme: 16 families, 70 individuals.</li> <li>• UK Sponsors: 136 families, 264 individuals.</li> </ul>

Priority	What we will do - Priority actions for 2024/25	Lead Officer	Committee	Q1 progress	Update	
P2.2	A2.2.1	Focus delivery of targeted activity to reduce alcohol and substance misuse, smoking, domestic abuse and violence and increase healthy eating and physical exercise in areas that experience worse health outcomes.	Director of Public Health	A+H	Green	<p><b>Lifestyle Survey:</b> Insights into lifestyle variations by geography and demographics.</p> <p><b>Substance Misuse:</b> Developing a 5-year strategy to reduce drug and alcohol harm, with extensive partner engagement.</p> <p><b>Smoking Cessation:</b> Pilot financial incentives for pregnant women to quit smoking; Smokefree 2030 ambition.</p> <p><b>Smokefree Programme:</b> Sub-regional system mapping for stop smoking support; local group established for All Together Smokefree.</p> <p><b>Physical Activity/Healthy Eating:</b> Eat Well Move More Partnership's inaugural meeting and ongoing action plan development.</p>
	A2.2.2	Continue to deliver activity to deliver the <a href="#">Cheshire East Harm and Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2023-2025</a>	Director of Public Health	A+H	Green	<p>Suicide Needs Assessment: Nearing completion, analysing trends and risk factors in Cheshire East.</p> <p>Keep Safe and Cope Well Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed for children and families to build resilience.</li> <li>Pilot course delivered to over 60 professionals.</li> </ul>



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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>45+ schools interested; 7 primary schools piloting in 2024-2025.</li> </ul> <p>Domestic Abuse and Suicidality Toolkit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed collaboratively by Public Health, Children and Families, and Adults Social Care.</li> <li>Launched in May 2024 with over 120 attendees.</li> </ul>
A2.2.3	Continue to deliver activity to deliver the <a href="#">Living Well in Crewe plan</a>	Director of Public Health	A+H	Green	<p>Living Well in Crewe Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Old library site cleared for new History Centre.</li> <li>Progress on Towns Fund projects: Youth Zone, Pocket Parks, Valley Brook green corridor.</li> <li>New bus station and car park completed.</li> </ul> <p>Green Spaces for Wellbeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiative in Queens Park by ANSA.</li> <li>Outdoor activities and exercise to improve</li> </ul>

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						mental and physical wellbeing.
	A2.2.4	Continue to deliver activity to deliver the <a href="#">Cheshire East Place Mental Health Plan 2024-2029</a>	Director of Public Health	A+H	Green	Ongoing and in line with delivery plan
P2.3	A2.3.1	Continue to embed our Signs of Safety practice model	Principal Social Worker (Children)	C+F	Green	Restorative Practice training provided to all staff; Stockport SLIP to offer additional training for new leaders in Children's Social Care.
	A2.3.2	Update the <a href="#">Cheshire East Safeguarding Adults Board Strategic Plan</a>	Head of Adult Safeguarding	A+H	Green	The Safeguarding Board Strategy has already been updated and is on the SAB website
	A2.3.3	Update the <a href="#">Cheshire East Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy</a>	Head of Service Early Help and Prevention	C+F	Amber	The workshop has set the groundwork, but progress is on hold until the new Service Manager starts on 14th October 2024. The new interim DCS, starting on 23rd September, will act as the Strategic Lead for the DA and SV board
P2.4	A2.4.1	Attract more foster carers to support Cheshire East children through the Foster4 collaboration	Head of Provider Services	C+F	Amber	Cheshire East are active members of the Foster4 Board and have started to attend meetings. Further update in Q2
	A2.4.2	Prioritise care experienced adults as part of our recovery work to improve employment and training opportunities.	Head of Service: Cared for Children and Care Leavers	C+F	Green	Care Leavers are receiving dedicated support for employment, education, and training, leading to improved KPIs and better overall support.
	A2.4.3	Deliver the priorities of the <a href="#">Cared for children and care leavers strategy 2022-26</a>	Head of Cared for Children and Care Leavers	C+F	Green	The Cared for and Care Leavers Strategy update is on track for November 2024, as part of the Children's Service Improvement Plan.

Priority	What we will do - Priority actions for 2024/25		Lead Officer	Committee	Q1 progress	Update
P2.5	A2.5.1	Continue to develop services and support offered through Family Hub model and promote the <a href="#">Parenting Journey</a>	Head of Early Years	C+F	Amber	Family hub program paused; new dates set, transformation on track.
	A2.5.2	Continue work to build Crewe Youth Zone	Director Education, Strong Start and Integration	C+F	Green	Crewe's new Youth Zone named 'The Dome', funded by contributions.
	A2.5.3	Continue to deliver the <a href="#">Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People programme</a>	Director Education, Strong Start and Integration	C+F	Green	Prioritizing children's mental health through networks, alliances, and training initiatives.
P2.6	A2.6.1	Establish and deliver against the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) management plan	Strategic lead for SEND and inclusion	C+F	Amber	Deficit reduced by £10.1M, further £8.4M reduction forecasted quarterly.
	A2.6.2	Capital programme to increase in-borough provision	Head of Education	C+F	Green	Several school expansions completed; more schemes progressing on site.
	A2.6.3	Grow organisational capacity to support transformation of SEND support (MTFS 24)	Strategic lead for SEND and inclusion	C+F	Green	Appointed strategic lead and team to transform SEND support quickly
P2.7	A2.7.1	Deliver the Kingsbourne Academy primary school in Nantwich	Head of Education	C+F	Red	This scheme has been further delayed due to ongoing issues.
	A2.7.2	Process primary and secondary applications efficiently, offering parental choice places where possible.	Head of Education	C+F	Green	High success in school offers: 93% primary, 94% secondary.
P2.8	A2.8.1	Investment in Adult Social Care (MTFS 8)	Director of Adult Social Care	A+H	Green	Growth included in budget for 2024/25 and under review for future years in line with MTFS development and transformation plan
	A2.8.2	Continue to develop and promote the Shared Lives service	Head of Care4CE	A+H	Green	Project work completed, project to evaluate impact to commence
	A2.8.3	Use technology to digitally enable people to support themselves ( <a href="#">Digital Inclusion Plan 2023 – 2026</a> )	Corporate Manager, Health Improvement	A+H	Green	Digital enablement improves health, connectivity, education, access, and savings

Priority	What we will do - Priority actions for 2024/25		Lead Officer	Committee	Q1 progress	Update
	A2.8.4	Deliver the objectives of the <a href="#">All Age Carers Strategy 2021-25</a>	Head of Integrated Commissioning	A+H	Green	Wellbeing of diverse Cheshire East carers needs whole system approach.

Priority	What we will do - Priority actions for 2024/25		Lead Officer	Committee	Q1 progress	Peer review action plan
P3.1	A3.1.1	Develop and begin consultation upon 'New style' Local Plan Strategy	Head of Planning	E+C	Amber	Plan completed, but timeframe uncertain due to legislative and governmental changes.
	A3.1.2	Deliver the Planning Service Improvement Plan	Head of Planning	E+C	Amber	SIP progress good; restructure done, IT delayed, overall rating affected.
	A3.1.3	Deliver cultural development activities, including continued activity towards the Cheshire Archives – a Story Shared project (MTFS 56)	Head of Rural and Cultural Economy	E+G	Green	New centres in 2026; online and library services continue.
	A3.1.4	Update the Statement of Licensing Policy	Head of Regulatory Services	Council	Green	SOLP reviewed; approval scheduled for July, final decision in December.
P3.2	A3.2.1	Monitor the continued successful delivery of the Cleaner Crewe project.	Head of Neighbourhood Services	E+C	Green	Progress measures for cleaner Crewe project remain in place.
	A3.2.2	Update and deliver the Air Quality Strategy, following consultation.	Head of Regulatory Services	E+C	Green	Air Quality Strategy updated; scheduled for July, ongoing implementation reported.
	A3.2.3	Update the <a href="#">Safer Cheshire East Partnership Plan</a>	Locality Manager, Community Safety	E+C	Amber	2024-25 Partnership Plan and 2023-24 Annual Report outline community safety activities, funding, and priorities, reviewed annually for emerging risks
P3.3	A3.3.1	Continue implementation and monitoring of the Green Spaces Maintenance Policy	Head of Environmental Services	E+C	Green	New policy adopted; maintenance changes successful, further improvements underway.

Priority	What we will do - Priority actions for 2024/25		Lead Officer	Committee	Q1 progress	Peer review action plan
	A3.3.2	Update the Cheshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy	Head of Planning	E+C	Measure not due	
	A3.3.3	Finalise and implement the <a href="#">Biodiversity Net Gain</a> Supplementary Planning Document	Head of Planning	E+C	Green	BNG SPD updated; adoption scheduled for July after legislative changes
<b>P3.4</b>	A3.4.1	Complete Bus Service Review and refresh Bus Service Improvement Plan	Head of Strategic Transport and Parking	H+T	Green	Consultation done; papers drafted for ongoing committee discussions
	A3.4.2	Deliver an integrated borough-wide demand-responsive transport service (Go-Too and Flexilink)	Head of Strategic Transport and Parking	H+T	Green	Consultation done; papers drafted for ongoing committee discussions
	A3.4.3	Secure further funding for active travel routes	Head of Strategic Transport and Parking	H+T	Green	
	A3.4.4	Update business cases for Middlewich Eastern Bypass and A500 dualling	Head of Strategic Infrastructure	H+T	Green	Middlewich Bypass submission in September; A500 Business Case development funded.
<b>P3.5</b>	A3.5.1	Deliver the <a href="#">Cheshire East Rural Action Plan 2022-26</a>	Head of Rural and Cultural Economy	E+G	To be added	
	A3.5.2	Continue to deliver Connected Cheshire digital infrastructure	Head of Economic Development	E+G	To be added	
	A3.5.3	Continue to pursue a compensation package following scrapping of HS2 Phase 2	Programme Director HS2	E+G	To be added	
	A3.5.4	Develop a clear place marketing approach	Head of Economic Development	E+G	To be added	
	A3.5.5	Enable the delivery of Handforth Garden Village	Head of Economic Development	E+G	To be added	
<b>P3.6</b>	A3.6.1	Deliver actions to achieve the objectives of the Carbon Neutral Action Plan 2027 (updated timescale)	Head of Environmental Services	E+C	Amber	Good Q1 progress; electric vans, decarbonisation, solar farm nearing completion.
	A3.6.2	Update the borough-wide Carbon-Neutrality Action Plan 2045 following public consultation	Head of Environmental Services	E+C	Green	Consultation done; Action Plan adoption pending at future committee.