

OPEN

BRIEFING REPORT

Corporate Policy Committee

12 June 2025

Performance Report – Cheshire East Plan, Quarter 4 2024/25

Report of: Dami Awobajo – Assistant Chief Executive

Report Reference No: CPC/20/25-26

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

- 1 To provide the Committee with oversight of organisational performance against the priorities and vision set out in the Cheshire East Plan 2024/25. The report covers Quarter 4 2024/25, 1st January 2025 to 31st March 2025. This report supports the responsibility of the Corporate Policy Committee to have a co-ordinating role across all committees and to exercise corporate oversight of outcomes, performance, budget monitoring and risk management.
- 2 The committee can comment on performance and direction of travel and consider any amendments in reporting, and/or additional data and intelligence that should be included.
- 3 Appendix 1 provides the detail of progress against the Cheshire East Plan priorities and Appendix 2 provides a summary of performance of the organisational health indicators.

Executive Summary

- 4 This report gives an update on delivery and performance against the priorities in the Cheshire East Plan 2024/25 for Quarter 4 (January 2025 to March 2025) including progress since Quarter 3.

- 5 Appendix 1 to this report shows that there are 66 priority actions included within the Cheshire East Plan 2024/25 and progress can be summarised as follows:

	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Green – on track	50	44	48	↑
Amber – mainly on track, some minor issues	9	8	10	↑
Red – off track with major issues	2	2	2	↔
Complete	2	4	6	↑
Not yet started	3	0	0	↔
To be updated	0	8	0	↓
	66	66	66	

- 6 Appendix 2 to this report provides a summary of key organisational health performance indicators for Q4.
- 7 The Corporate Plan 2021-25 has three key themes - Open, Fair and Green. The Plan has been refreshed for 2024/25 to better reflect the financial context.
- 8 A new Cheshire East Plan 2025-29 is now approved by Council and will provide our residents, partners and the organisation with clarity of purpose and strategic direction aligned to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The new Plan has commenced from April 2025. A delivery plan is being created to set out the specific activity the council will prioritise and lead. It will be agreed by Corporate Policy Committee. Progress will be reported regularly with an annual review. Reporting on the current will cease after this Quarter 4 2024/25 report to Committee in June 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Note and comment on progress and performance against delivery of the Cheshire East Plan 2024/25 in Quarter 4 2024/25.

Background

- 9 The Cheshire East Plan 2024/25 outlines three aims and 20 priorities for the Council aligned with the vision of being an “Open, Fairer and Greener Cheshire East”.
- 10 This report reviews progress with delivery and performance against the priorities and actions in the Cheshire East Plan and focuses upon a

“One Council” approach to performance management. This includes a balance of quantitative and qualitative data.

- 11 Appendix 1 of the report shows that there are 66 priority actions included within the Cheshire East Plan 2024/25 and progress can be summarised as follows:

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- 12 Feedback from Corporate Policy Committee in March on the Quarter 3 report has been taken on board with a review of the RAG ratings applied to ensure consistency e.g. where action is yet to be taken and in line with other reporting. Quarter 2 and 3 positions are included alongside Quarter 4 so that Members can see the direction of travel.
- 13 The actions which are amber are set out below with an explanation and mitigating actions to be taken:

Priority Action	What will we do	Lead Officer	Q4 update
A1.1.3	Member training to clarify roles and responsibilities for decision-making within the committee system	Head of Democratic Services	Officer report writing guidance has been signed off by CLT and comms, training etc will follow. New SoD are almost complete and will go to the next CWG meeting and then CPC/Council. The TFG for decision making has met twice and is now being supported by the LGA MO peer. A further meeting is set for 7 May and will include consideration of member survey results.
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	Head of Communications	This work is being picked up through broader review of communications and engagement activity with a target date of Q2 2025/26. Work on proposals for residents surveying and community panels is advancing.

Priority Action	What will we do	Lead Officer	Q4 update
	alternative approaches such as a 'people panel' to embed citizen voice into key decisions and policy development		
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	The budget outturn for 2024/25 was balanced by utilising Exceptional Financial Support. In utilising the full £17.6M the Council is able to bolster reserves and therefore make it more financially sustainable.
A2.3.3	Update the Cheshire East Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy	Head of Service Early Help and Prevention	A paper will be considered by the Children and Families Committee on June 9th requesting approval for the draft Cheshire East Domestic and Sexual Abuse Partnership (CEDSAP) Strategy to go out to consultation. A briefing was held with Adults and Health Committee on 8th May and they have given their support. A paper will then be brought to the committee in September for ratification and the tender process for safe accommodation will commence, in order for any change in delivery of safe accommodation to be mobilised by April 2026.
A2.5.1	Continue to develop services and support offered through Family Hub model and promote the Parenting	Head of Early Years	Two of the three children's centres intended to be repurposed before the end of March 2025 completed these were Hurdsfield & Poynton Children's Centre. Sandbach Children's centre is now expected to complete in the next quarter. Delays were beyond our control as we were waiting on responses from the DFE and academy trust legal team. Family Hub outreach work has started to progress in both the North And South locality to target families who have previously struggled to access family hub services. This includes enhanced partnership working with libraries and the voluntary community and faith sector.
A2.8.4	Deliver the objectives of the	Head of Integrated Commissioning	In Q4 we continue to monitor progress against the Service Improvement Plan; commissioners working in partnership with

Priority Action	What will we do	Lead Officer	Q4 update
	All Age Carers Strategy 2021-25		<p>the Carers Hub and adult social care and children's and families' colleagues to drive improvements.</p> <p>We are currently reviewing the contract and service delivery as part of the recommissioning activity to scope the future model for Cheshire East carers offer.</p>
A3.1.1	Develop and begin consultation upon 'New style' Local Plan Strategy	Head of Planning	Response to Issues/Options paper reported back to Committee in March, alongside latest Local Development Scheme and current progress/next steps. Still significant uncertainty due to the lack of procedural guidance from regulations but progress can be made over the coming months on evidential work focusing on key strategic options and overall visioning for the plan.
A3.2.1	Monitor the continued successful delivery of the Cleaner Crewe project.	Head of Neighbourhood Services	Additional community enforcement officers have been recruited and are currently training within the boundary of the Cleaner Crewe project boundary. Resource capacity constraints have meant that the delivery plan for the project is delayed and governance is being reviewed.
A.3.4.2	Deliver an integrated borough-wide demand-responsive transport service (Go-Too and Flexilink)	Head of Strategic Transport and Parking	Preparations for new service continue, with a key focus on procurement of a booking and route-planning system and recruitment of new drivers. The delay to the transfer of Ansa Transport back into the Council has impacted on timescales for delivery of a single integrated DRT service. The planned go-live date has been revised to January 2026, aligning with the start of the new school term.
A3.5.3	Continue to pursue a compensation package following scrapping of HS2 Phase 2	Programme Director HS2	Seeking engagement with new Ministers and are in written correspondence with the Rail Minister. Letters also drafted for HM Treasury and MHCLG. The prospect of securing direct compensation is low. Exceptional Financial Support for direct HS2 abortive costs has been secured, However, focus is on securing alternative, equivalent and improved investment for Crewe station and its environs.

14 The actions which are red and not meeting target are:

Priority Action	What will we do	Lead Officer	Q4 update
A2.7.1	Deliver the Kingsbourne Academy primary school in Nantwich	Head of Education	The delivery of this primary school has been further delayed due to the ongoing legal issues. Discussions are underway and we expect to achieve a resolution imminently. We will then be in a position to confirm the opening date for the new school. In the interim, we are working with local schools to ensure that provision for school places is available within the locality.
A3.4.4	Update business cases for Middlewich Eastern Bypass and A500 dualling	Head of Strategic Infrastructure	<p>A decision from the Secretary of State on grant funding for the MEB is still awaited (it was due end Feb 2025). The DfT delay has meant a new committee report has been prepared due to the scheme cost increases that the delay will cause.</p> <p>Work towards an updated Outline Business Case for A500 scheme remains on programme and a further report is being developed to review the next steps and funding options.</p>

- 15 The Quarter 4 organisational health performance report is at Appendix 2. This gives further details on progress made against delivery of the Cheshire East Plan during Quarter 4 of the 2024/25 municipal year.
- 16 There are 2692 FTE staff in Cheshire East Council as at quarter 4, a reduction in the level reported in quarter 3 (2717). The vacancy rate across the Council has increased from 16.62% in Q3 to 17.45% in Q4 2024/25.
- 17 The greatest level of vacancies are reported in Corporate (18.2%) and Children's (19.3%) directorates.
- 18 Levels of staff turnover have increased 2.5% in Q3 to 3.4% in Q4. With a rate of 6.1% in Children's.
- 19 There has been a decrease in the number of agency staff from 267 in Q3 to 209 in Q4.

- 20 Reductions in the number of FTE, an increase in staff turnover and a reduction in agency staff in Q4 should be noted.
- 21 There has been a decrease in the variance between the forecast outturn and total net budget, decreasing from 4.7% in Q3 to 2.7% in Q4 2024/25. Full details of finance reporting period 4 is a separate item on the committee's agenda.
- 22 Service committees receive performance information on a regular basis through their subject matter expert officers, specific to the subject of the committee. This performance report offers an oversight of progress against the Cheshire East (Corporate) Plan 2024/25 and should complement the more detailed performance and service specific dashboards that are considered at service committees.
- 23 The Corporate Plan 2021-25 has three key themes - Open, Fair and Green. Although the Cheshire East Plan has been refreshed for 2024/25 to better reflect the financial context, development of a new Plan for 2025 onwards has now been completed and will provide our residents, partners and the organisation with clarity of purpose and strategic direction aligned to a new operating model and MTFS.
- 24 The new Plan has commenced from April 2025. A delivery plan is being created to set out the specific activity the council will prioritise and lead. It will be agreed by Corporate Policy Committee. Progress will be reported regularly with an annual review. Reporting on the current plan will cease after this Quarter 4 2024/25 report to Corporate Policy Committee.
- 25 The Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2021-2025 outlined the council's vision to create an open, fairer, and greener Cheshire East. The plan was structured around three key themes: an open and enabling organisation, a council which empowers and cares about people, and a thriving and sustainable place. This review evaluates the progress made towards these goals based on the quarterly performance reports and feedback from key external bodies.
- 26 Key Themes and Progress during the 2021-2025 Corporate Plan:
- 27 An Open and Enabling Organisation:
- 28 Transparency and Decision Making: The council has introduced a new decision-making framework to streamline arrangements and improve the quality of reports. Training for committee members on effective scrutiny has been implemented, showing positive progress.
- 29 Financial Sustainability: Efforts to support a sustainable financial future through service development and transformation are ongoing. The

council has successfully identified opportunities to bring more income into the borough.

- 30 Workforce Development: Initiatives to support and develop the workforce have been effective, with staff showing increased confidence, motivation, and resilience.
- 31 A Council Which Empowers and Cares About People:
- 32 Community Support: Collaboration with residents and partners to support strong and resilient communities has been a priority. Health inequalities are being addressed through targeted interventions.
- 33 Safeguarding: The council continues to protect and support vulnerable groups, including children and adults at risk. Efforts to be the best Corporate Parents to children in care are ongoing.
- 34 Education and Early Years: Programs to ensure all children have a high-quality education and the best start in life have shown positive outcomes.
- 35 A Thriving and Sustainable Place:
- 36 Environmental Impact: The council is committed to reducing its environmental impact and achieving carbon neutrality by 2025. Initiatives to promote active travel and improve the transport network are progressing well.
- 37 Economic Development: Efforts to create thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all have been successful. The council continues to support local businesses and attract new investments.
- 38 Community Wellbeing: Projects to ensure welcoming, safe, and clean neighbourhoods are on track, contributing to the overall quality of life in Cheshire East.
- 39 Overall, the Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2021-2025 has demonstrated substantial progress across its key themes. The council's commitment to transparency, community support, environmental sustainability, and economic development is evident. Continued efforts and adaptive strategies will be crucial in overcoming challenges and achieving the vision of an open, fairer, and greener Cheshire East.

Consultation and Engagement

- 40 Consultation was undertaken in developing the Cheshire East Plan and priority actions within it.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 41 The Corporate Policy Committee is responsible for reviewing and scrutinising performance against the strategic aims and objectives in the Cheshire East Plan 2024/25.
- 42 The performance management framework continues to be developed and seeks to provide a robust, customer focussed view of performance. Member input into this development is valued to ensure that performance management reports are of use.
- 43 Performance management is a tool to allow oversight of the Council's key activities and to enable transparency and understanding around where the Council is performing well, and what are the areas of challenge and improvement.

Other Options Considered

- 44 Not applicable.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 45 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 46 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any financial implications arising from performance matters will be covered in other reports to respective service committees, including separate financial reporting in-year, as well as in further development and reporting of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, as required.

Policy

- 47 This report demonstrates progress against all priorities within the Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2021-25.

An open and enabling organisation.	A council which empowers and cares about people.	A thriving and sustainable place.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 48 The range of council activities covered in the Corporate Plan aim to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty and the obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Human Resources

- 49 There are no direct human resources implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

- 50 Performance and risk are intrinsically linked. Where risks are identified, performance data can evidence the likelihood of the risk and can also show if risks materialise. The performance report identifies areas where performance is strong and areas for development and improvement. This supports the risk management process by providing the opportunity to review progress and identify areas for improvement and any necessary mitigating actions.

Rural Communities

- 51 The Corporate Plan aims to support greater inclusion for rural communities. In 2022/23 a Rural Action Plan was approved by the Economy and Growth committee, which includes priorities around digital connectivity, access, housing, visitor economy and support for rural based businesses.

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

- 52 Performance management of the priorities relating to children and young people and cared for children ensure that there is a focus on children receiving the best start in life and that we deliver on our commitments to children and young people in Cheshire East.

Public Health

- 53 This report supports our Public Health priorities using the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Tartan Rug to ensure that we work with partners to address issues of poor housing, poverty, employment and education across urban and rural communities.

Climate Change

- 54 Performance against the Corporate Plan contributes to overall achievement of the net zero targets for the council and for the borough.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Dami Awobajo – Assistant Chief Executive dami.awobajo@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – The Cheshire East Plan Progress and Performance Report Q4 Appendix 2 – Organisational Health Performance Report Q4 Appendix 3 - Organisation Health Progress report
Background Papers:	Cheshire East Plan 2024/25