

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Play your part to thrive

Council Plan 2020-2024

“By 2024 we will all play our part in building greener, fairer and stronger communities... The changes that we need to make the borough thrive will only happen when we recognise that there is more that unites than divides us. We will continue to build relationships with every community, family and resident so more of us can play our part.”

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Cheshire West
and Chester

Contents

Foreword	3
Vision	4
Our six priorities	6
What difference will this make?	8
Context	
Values and behaviours	10
How the plan fits with other plans	11
How the plan was developed	13
Financial context	15
Our priorities	
We will all play our part to:	
1. Tackle the climate emergency	17
2. Grow our local economy and deliver good jobs with fair wages for our residents	21
3. Support children and young people to get the best start in life and achieve their full potential	26
4. To enable more adults to live longer, healthier and happier lives	31
5. Make our neighbourhoods even better places to call home	36
6. Be an efficient and empowering council	39
Appendices	
1 Plan on a page	42
2 Budget framework	43
3 Performance Management Framework	44
4 Glossary	45

Foreword

While we call this a ‘Council Plan,’ I see it as belonging to the residents of west Cheshire. This is your plan shaped by your views, hopes, concerns and aspirations. I’d like to thank you for your input and can assure you that it has made a difference.

This document will guide our decisions, resources and actions for the next four years. The challenges our borough faces are vast ranging from climate change, inequality, an ageing population and growing a dynamic economy. We also have a £91 million funding gap for the next four years as demand on our services, particularly to support the most vulnerable, continues to rise.

Big challenges need big responses but the days of the Council knowing best are over.

Our plan paints a picture of an exciting future where we all work together to tackle shared challenges. That means collaboration with public sector partners, charities, businesses but most of all building deeper, stronger and broader relationships with communities.

“ Our plan paints a picture of an exciting future where we all work together to tackle shared challenges. ”

Our communities are a huge resource of great ideas, innovation and insight. We need to harness this energy for the common good.

I came into politics as I firmly believe we all have a role to play to make our communities even better places to live, work and play. Through our common endeavour we can achieve so much more and truly make the borough thrive.



Councillor Louise Gittins
Leader of Cheshire West and Chester Council

Purpose

The following document outlines our vision and priorities for 2020-24. It also:

- describes the difference we are seeking to make
- outlines the changes the council will make and how residents can play their part
- provides a focus for all services and decisions
- informs the allocation of resources
- fully aligns with the priorities shared with other partner organisations
- helps us to monitor our progress and take stock of our achievements

It is divided into two sections.

1. **Context:** Details about the purpose of the Council Plan, how it fits into other key plans, the overall vision, and how it was developed.
2. **Priorities:** An outline of what we need to focus on over the next four years, what success looks like, and what the Council and its communities need to change to make a difference.

Notes

This version of the Council Plan is mainly intended for use by our services, partners and elected Councillors. A shorter summary version is also available by visiting: cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk and searching for Policies, plans and strategies. The plan and its various component parts are illustrated on one page in Appendix 1.

Whilst this is a four year plan which covers the period from 2020 to 2024, the context within which the Council works is continuing to change rapidly. Whilst we will formally report on our performance against the plan on a quarterly basis, we will also review the plan at the end of its second year to ensure that it remains ambitious, appropriate and relevant.

Vision

By 2024 we will all play our part in building greener, fairer and stronger communities.

Working with common purpose alongside our residents, public services, and businesses, we will harness the strengths, hopes and dreams of our communities so that fewer people will be held back or left behind.

We will also have a relentless focus on value for money, stretching our collective resources and innovating to make a positive difference.

We believe that lasting change is needed to: tackle the climate emergency; to see more children and young people have a better start in life; to create more good jobs; to have healthier communities, living longer more independent lives; to see more neighbourhoods that are great places to call home; and ensure an efficient and empowering council.

The changes we need to make the borough thrive will only happen when we recognise that there is more that unites than divides us. We will continue to build relationships with every community, family and resident so more of us can play our part.

As well as delivering great services, we want to reignite the traditions of local democracy, community engagement, neighbourliness, and voluntary action. We will be an even more open, collaborative, and ambitious council which recognises that the answer to many of our challenges starts and ends with the relationships within our communities.

By working together we can all
play our part to thrive.

Our six priorities

Our focus for the next four years will be to ensure we all play to our part to:



Tackle the climate emergency: As well as making the Council a greener organisation, we will work with businesses and communities to ensure that our borough reduces its carbon footprint and that future generations are protected from climate change. We have a shared responsibility to act and there will be a real urgency to our response. While this is a real challenge it presents great opportunities to build a green economy, more active residents, less congestion, warmer homes, and a more efficient use of our resources.



Grow our local economy and deliver good jobs with fair wages for our residents:

Our economy is doing relatively well compared to other areas, with lower levels of unemployment and higher levels of productivity. We have ambitious plans to build on this success with higher levels of growth, well supported businesses, dynamic town centres and excellent local skills. Our challenge is to make sure that more local people can access these local opportunities and secure good jobs.



Support children and young people to make the best start in life and achieve their full potential:

Our borough is a great place to grow up for many but not for all. Our vision is for more children and young people to feel included, listened to and to live in safe communities. We will also do everything we can to support children, young people and families to go on to lead fulfilling lives whatever their circumstances.



Enable more adults to live longer, healthier and happier lives: The majority of our residents benefit from good health and wellbeing throughout their lives. However individuals from more deprived areas are more likely to be in poorer health and we need to think differently about how we meet the challenges of people living longer and maintaining good mental health. Joining up with our local NHS and care providers, we want to work closely with communities and build on people's strengths and capabilities to make this happen.



Make our neighbourhoods even better places to call home: Our local neighbourhoods are central to our quality of life and are places where people come together and contribute as a community. We will work with communities to ensure our neighbourhoods are safe, well maintained and we have good range of homes that meet a diversity of needs.



An efficient and empowering Council: We will continue to deliver the best possible value for money by engaging with local people and stakeholders, prioritising our resources and through more innovative ways of working. We will continue to make savings through better contracts, reducing our building costs, and streamlining our processes. We will also look to digitise more services to make them more accessible and cost effective. We believe that better data and intelligence will help our services to be more focused and for us to better understand what communities and individuals want and need, as well as the difference we are making. We will also review our approach to engaging with communities to ensure they are listened to and empowered to play their part.





Children, young people and families:

The Council works with you to help you realise your potential. You will feel listened to, valued and supported to learn and develop from an early age. If you experience difficulties the Council will work with you and join up a range of services to help you get back on track.



Rural communities:

You will feel that the Council values your community and works with you closely to keep your local area vibrant and attractive. You have better access to the internet, more affordable housing and better transport.



Public sector partners:

You will have strong relationships with the Council who will feel like an open and collaborative organisation.



Businesses:

Your borough will be a great place to set up or grow your business with skilled people, good infrastructure, an attractive environment and a responsive council that values your contribution to local communities. You will feel well advised to playing your part and making a contribution to tackling climate change.



Residents:

Your Council will listen alongside you to get things done. You will be assured that money is spent wisely and that the best service is provided.

What will the Council do for you?





Residents:
Listen to you and work on any issues sorted. Your Council Tax is what they are delivering the best they can.



Older residents:

You will feel supported, listened to and valued. We will build on your strengths and aspirations rather than your needs. You will tell your story once to local services and be supported to live at home for as long as possible. Your local community will be there for you when you need them and you will feel supported to make a contribution.

**How can we make a difference in your town centres?
What can we do to make a difference here?**



Our town centres:

All our town centres will go from strength to strength with a vibrant retail sector – fit for the 21st century – a strong cultural offer, and great places to live.



Local neighbourhoods:

Your local area will feel safer, cleaner and greener with good quality and affordable homes meeting a variety of needs. There will be lots of opportunities to make a difference in your local community and you will feel well supported and respected by your Council and local councillors.



The voluntary and community sector:

You will be central to supporting local communities to thrive and work seamlessly with the council and other public services to make a difference.

Context

Our Values and behaviours

In 2016 we introduced a core set of values and behaviours which have since guided the way that the council operates. They were shaped through extensive dialogue with our workforce and are now well embedded. We believe they remain relevant. They will continue to guide all elements of our approach to supporting the workforce including recruitment, training and performance management.

Value	What this means	Key behaviours
T eamwork	We always achieve more by working as a team rather than as separate services. The council will not allow its services to work in silos and will always look for opportunities to work closely with other organisations that have shared objectives. Teamwork is also about having good relationships with our communities and service users, where we all achieve more by working together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work alongside others both inside and outside the council • Recognise each others strengths and expertise • Hold each other to account • Think about the needs of customers not just your individual service • Think about the big picture
H onesty	This involves acting with integrity and being honest about what works well, what is possible, and what needs to change. It is important internally but absolutely essential in regard to our relationships with residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the right thing not just the easiest thing • Explain the reasons for our decisions and actions • Be receptive to challenge • Speak up about concerns and areas for improvement • Be realistic about what is achievable
R espect	Respect is a value that is vital in public services. The council will always act to respect residents, partners and staff. It will respect the views and opinions of all, even where there are differences of opinion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value the perspectives and capabilities of individuals • Respect difference • Be polite and courteous • Respond in a timely manner • Challenge unacceptable behaviour
I nnovation	This requires the organisation to think creatively about delivering better results for residents with scarce resources. Often this is about tackling the root causes of problems rather than treating the symptoms, embracing digital technology, working in partnership, and designing services around needs of our residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be enthusiastic and positive • Challenge when things aren't working • Seek out best practice • Be open to new ideas • Embrace technology • Reflect and learn from our actions and experiences
V alue for money	This is more than just about saving money. It is about focusing on the priorities of our communities and making a difference for every pound the Council spends or influences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how much things cost and what difference you are making • Put yourself in the shoes of your customer • Compare what you do to other organisations and learn from the best • Think about resources beyond the Council, within communities, businesses and partners. • Call out waste and suggest ideas to be more efficient
E mpowerment	Internally we want to empower our staff to find new solutions to our challenges. Looking outwards, empowerment is about working differently so that citizens and communities can play their part in tackling local challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise people's capabilities and strengths rather than their challenges • Trust your team, partners and communities to do the right thing • Make it easier for people to share their ideas • Seek out opportunities for growth and personal development

How the plan fits in with other plans

To ensure this plan drives action, it has a clear relationship with other strategic and operational plans across the borough as illustrated by the following diagram



The key relationships are as follows

- The **Place Plan** has been developed by the Council and local NHS and sets out a vision for resident's health and wellbeing over the next five years. It outlines a number of priorities shared between the Council and other key partners to highlight how people can maximise their own health and wellbeing as well as how services can be improved .
- Increasingly we coordinate our activities with the neighbouring councils of Cheshire East and Warrington. This Cheshire and Warrington sub-region is particularly relevant for economic development, on which we work together through our Local Enterprise Partnership, and the reform of our services. We work closely with partners in North Wales and the Liverpool City Region through partnerships such as the Mersey Dee Alliance.
- Another key link is with the Council's **Medium Term Financial Plan** to ensure our resources match our priorities.
- The Council Plan also links with the **Local Plan** which guides development and planning across the borough. A new Local Plan has been adopted in stages, in January 2015 and October 2018.
- All services across the organisation will produce **plans** to set out how they will contribute to the priorities in the Council Plan.
- Finally, **individual objectives** agreed with staff all link back to the **vision, values and priorities** in this document.

How the plan was developed

The Plan was developed by fully considering the views of local people



An extensive public engagement exercise took place between October and early December 2019. Following the announcement of the 2019 General Election, this engagement continued but had to be scaled back to adhere to pre-election rules. Nevertheless, we provided a variety of ways for people to take part from an interactive website, surveys, toolkits that people could use to run their own sessions, focus groups, and a range of events. 3,200 people took part in the residents' survey. The Council's new engagement website received over 3,100 visits with people making more than 600 contributions with their views, or the views of the organisations and groups that they represent, on the Council's proposed plans. In addition, we have engaged with over 175 representatives of community and interest groups, representing people from all ages and from across the borough, including local community action groups, business groups, voluntary groups, schools, carers, trade unions, equality groups and so on.

We have also built on the feedback that local people have already provided through ongoing customer feedback, the recent Place strategy consultation, the Adult Social Care survey and consultations on specific topics such as homelessness and supporting carers. We will continue to engage with people and shape our plans. This will be a continuous process of dialogue with our residents to ensure we are meeting their needs and aspirations.

In addition to this feedback we also considered the following:

- The needs of our communities:** We have analysed data such as our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to identify the specific needs of our communities. This is vitally important as the needs of our communities vary across the borough and we need to focus on issues in a locally sensitive way.
- Political priorities:** Elected Councillors as the representatives of their communities have influenced this document and voted on it at our Full Council meeting on 20 February 2020. They will continue to play a key role in developing action plans and policies that support this plan. They will also play a key role to hold the organisation to account against its key commitments.
- Areas for improvement:** We monitor our performance very closely to ensure we are on track and making improvements. If we are not performing at a high enough level we take action to achieve our objectives. Our priorities and associated actions therefore reflect a number of areas where we think there is room for improvement.
- The views of our partners:** Almost no Council services could be effectively delivered without the input and involvement of our local partners. These include key organisations in the public sector such as the NHS, Police, Fire and Rescue Service, Housing Associations, Jobcentre Plus etc. It also includes voluntary sector organisations that play a vital role in



delivering services and supporting local communities. Businesses are also a key partner that deliver local employment and underpin successful communities. Our shared priorities are reflected in this document.

- **The resources we have available:** This Plan was developed alongside the budget plan. Given the success of the previous four year plan covering the period 2016-2020, and the increased certainty it gave to Council services and residents, the Council's intention was to set a four year Budget linked to the Council Plan. Considerable progress has been made but it has been constrained by the one year funding announcement and lack of clarity over the financial position in future years. Overall the funding gap for this period is estimated to be around £91 million, however after savings proposals and locally generated income we forecast a remaining gap of between £22 million and £31 million for the final three years of this Council Plan, depending on national funding. The budget for 2020-21 and indicative budget plans for 2021-24 have carefully considered the impact of any decisions on the six priorities to avoid any detrimental impact and ensure resources are in place to deliver. All the Council's budgets have now been mapped against the priorities to provide a transparent view of the budgets available (see Appendix 2). The budget report, which can be found on the council's website, includes further details along with specific savings and investment proposals.

- **The priorities of neighbouring councils:** The plan recognises that a number of issues we want to address extend across local authority boundaries. For example, for many years our strategy for economic growth has been coordinated across Cheshire and Warrington alongside our Local Enterprise Partnership. The Mersey Dee Alliance extends that co-ordination into North Wales and the Liverpool City Region. We have also begun to coordinate our approach to health and social care, families and individuals with multiple needs, and community safety across Cheshire and Warrington. The Council and its partners are looking to take on more responsibilities from central Government at this level both to drive further economic growth and to support effective public services.
- **National objectives:** We have considered the priorities and resources of national Government and our legal responsibilities, and will maintain a close eye on any emerging priorities and future responsibilities devolved from central Government.
- **Good practice:** Finally, we have considered good practice from other councils as well as from across the public and private sector.



Financial context

The story so far

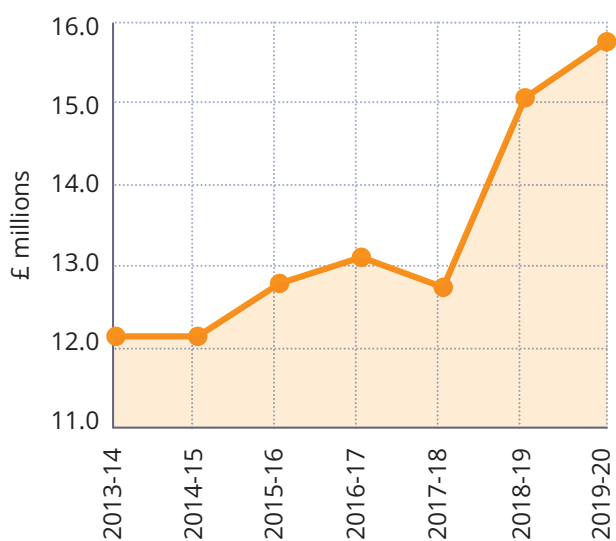
At a national level, the Local Government Association has calculated that since central Government's austerity measures began in 2010 councils have lost 60p out of every £1 the Government had previously provided to spend on local services. Since 2010 we have received less funding every year and in cash terms have seen reductions of more than £330million. This has meant that we have had to make significant changes to the way we deliver services. We start from a challenging position and continue to face a significant financial challenge over the next four years.

With a limited budget it is essential that we are financially prudent and that all of our ideas are costed and affordable so that we can continue to provide a wide range of services to people across the borough. The Council works within strict rules that require us to set a balanced budget every year. We monitor our expenditure constantly to ensure that it is focused on what we are trying to achieve. Resources for each of the six challenges are set out in the document.

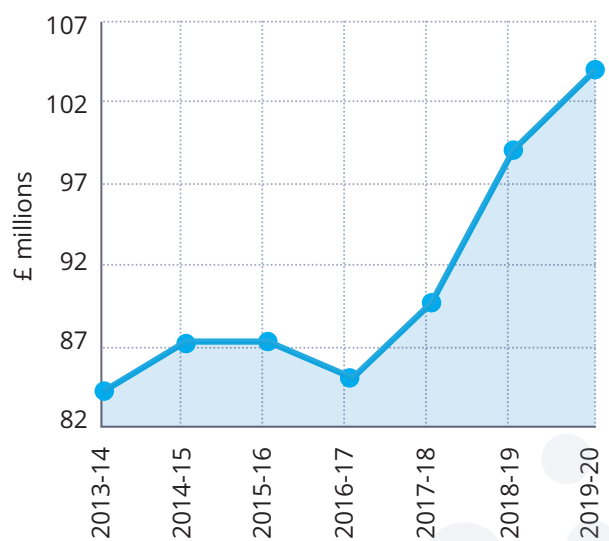
Locally raised funding from Council Tax and Business Rates is not enough to meet all the Council's current responsibilities. Our services therefore depend critically on announcements made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Spending Reviews. We had hoped that the government would announce a long term financial settlement, allowing us to plan services over several years with more certainty. Unfortunately the Chancellor has only announced funding for one financial year (2020-21) at the time this document was published.

Schools aside, the Council's biggest area of expenditure is the £168 million that we spend on supporting vulnerable adults who need social care, and a further £69 million that goes towards supporting children and young people. The average cost of the services that this expenditure funds is increasing significantly. Since 2013-14 the annual cost of a child being in care has increased from £26,000 to £40,000 a year; the average weekly cost of an adult care at home package has increased from £110 to £202.

Total cost of looked after children (£ million)



Total cost of Adult Social Care packages (£ million)



Financial context

Our financial challenge

The financial gap that we need to deal with, driven by demand pressure and national funding assumptions over the next four years is approximately £91 million. This is made up of anticipated reductions in funding from central government and investment required to meet cost pressures across the Council. With council tax increases of 2% assumed each year over the next four years in line with national forecasts, a 2% charge for Adult Social Care in 2020-21, business rates income and savings proposals, this gap will reduce to £31 million. This position may improve further if temporary government funding is made permanent, but this would still leave a gap of £22 million. We have developed proposals within our budget plan to address this challenge in part but will develop our plans further as more information is made available by central government.

Capital expenditure

Despite the pressures on our day-to-day spending, we have the opportunity to invest in assets that deliver an economic or social return into the future – capital expenditure. We can fund one-off projects to build and develop assets like leisure centres and roads, for regeneration programmes or technology and equipment. Capital investment is raised:

- through selling assets such as buildings or land we no longer require
- from dedicated Government grants
- from private sector investment
- from other borrowing which is repaid over a period of years
- from the Housing Revenue Account which is financed by, and allocated towards, council housing
- through setting aside some of our revenue budget to fund future finance costs.

Our programme of capital investment is likely to cost over £400 million between 2020 and 2024 requiring approximately £90 million of Council borrowing, with the remainder financed through other sources. Whilst capital funding sums may appear significant, spending has to be affordable and has to be done within the prudential code which all councils need to abide by.

In such a tight financial environment we need to make difficult choices about which projects we fund in line with our priorities. As well as helping secure improvements to our communities and services capital investment can help the Council improve its sustainability, both financially and environmentally; for example by generating savings through more efficient buildings and reductions in high costs of maintenance. It can also increase income to the Council through commercial opportunities such as further investment in property. The Council will invest in projects with a direct benefit to our residents rather than purely commercial projects outside our borough.

“ In such a tight financial environment we need to make difficult choices about which projects we fund in line with our priorities. ”

Priorities



1. We will all play our part to tackle the climate emergency

“ We need to make low carbon journeys, save water, pass on plastics, fight against food waste, shop local, and save energy. ”

Youth Senate response to the Play Your Part engagement

Our shared challenge

The science and evidence is clear – climate change poses a massive threat to our way of life and the time for action is now. We use the phrase ‘climate emergency’ to reinforce the urgency required. If we don’t face up to our responsibility we will see more flooding, pollution, threats to wildlife and an uncertain future for the next and future generations. While Government and international bodies should take the lead, we can make a big difference locally. Our ambition is to become a carbon neutral borough, reducing our emissions of greenhouse gases to net zero by 2045 or earlier. Council emissions only make up 0.7% of the borough’s greenhouse gas emissions. As a council we will play our part and we will be carbon neutral by 2030, but we need to encourage and support others to reduce their emissions. The UK is not currently going to meet its target of being carbon neutral by 2050, so there is a need to rapidly increase the rate of greenhouse gas reduction to ensure that west Cheshire makes its contribution to this national and international challenge.

This will require concerted action across industry in particular, given the high level of manufacturing in the borough. We will also need to see more sustainable energy, waste, transport and land use. Every citizen has a role to play, and often small things will add up to a big difference. If we get this right we will not only secure a better future for those that follow us, we will also support economic growth in new green industries, support healthier lifestyles and help tackle fuel poverty.

What our residents think

83% of respondents to the resident’s survey said that they were concerned about climate change, with 44% of respondents being very concerned. 21% agree that 2050 is the right deadline by which to bring UK emissions to net zero, but 55% think that it should be done more quickly.

Over three-quarters of participants agreed with all the Council’s proposals for tackling the climate emergency, with particularly strong support around tree planting, energy efficient homes and supporting industry to reduce their carbon footprint. There were also calls for the Council to lead by example, to invest in awareness and educational behaviour change campaigns and to improve the public transport and cycling infrastructure to make sustainable transport a more viable option. Over two-thirds of residents agreed with ideas of how residents could play their part, particularly around reducing and recycling waste, buying local and green and switching to greener energy.

What our partners think

Our partners share our ambition to become carbon neutral and are already working to reduce their own carbon footprints, contribute to the national clean air strategy and work with local communities to inform people about how they can reduce their own carbon footprints. Cheshire and Vale Royal CCG commented that getting this right will not only secure a better future for those that follow us, we will also support economic growth, support healthier lifestyles,

help tackle fuel poverty and ensure the responsible use of NHS resources that will help to minimise costs and maximise the funds available for patient care.

What success will look like

- the Council producing less greenhouse gas
- residents and businesses producing less greenhouse gas
- improved access to alternative modes of transport such as buses, electric vehicles, cycling and walking
- more energy efficient homes and buildings
- less waste and higher rates of recycling.

How the Council will play its part

Throughout 2020 we will be working up our plans with councillors, experts and residents. Our initial proposals are as follows.

Do all we can to be a low carbon organisation: The Council, as an organisation, emits around 28,332 tonnes of CO₂ emissions each year. While this is just 0.7% of total carbon emissions for the borough, we will set an example as a low carbon organisation. This will involve reducing the number of buildings we have and making the rest more energy efficient; purchasing our energy from renewable sources; reducing staff travel emissions through flexible working and alternative modes of transport; ensuring all our decisions consider the impact on climate change; purchasing goods and services from local organisations that demonstrate strong environmental credentials; using more energy efficient street lights; moving to a low emissions fleet of vehicles; offsetting the remainder of the Council's emissions, and working with our staff to embed a more environmentally aware culture. We will also invest in capacity to co-ordinate our response to the climate emergency.

Work with local industry to reduce their carbon footprint: Industrial emissions account for 64% of the total carbon footprint of west Cheshire. This is hardly surprising given large local organisations involved in heavy industry. At peak periods, Ellesmere Port alone consumes as much as 5% of the UK's energy. This is both a challenge and an opportunity. Through our Local Industrial Strategy we will work with these sectors to help them move to lower carbon forms of

production. The Cheshire Energy Hub is a cluster of energy intensive industries in the area supported by the Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership. They are currently developing ground breaking plans for low carbon energy for industry through efficiency measures, innovative technologies, developing local skills, new storage facilities and transportation systems, local energy generation projects and the use of zero carbon fuels such as hydrogen. An Energy Innovation District for Ellesmere Port, where much of the heavy industry is located, is being formed to develop these plans further and provide the opportunity to offer a blueprint for how moving away from carbon can be linked to regional economic prosperity. We will also work with industry and Government to explore the use of carbon capture technologies that reduce emissions. We also want to explore how we attract new industries that specialise in green technologies and what green technologies we can adopt as a Council. Climate change is a global issue that requires a local response; we will work closely with our neighbouring authorities, the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership and partners across the sub-region to co-ordinate our response.

Promoting renewable energy: We will bring forward plans for the acceleration of renewable energy. We want to explore the opportunity for investment in a solar and or wind farm to generate renewable energy for the local area. We also want to promote renewable energy sources through our local planning processes. Often residents and businesses are seeking guidance on what they can do in relation to energy so we will develop a plan to pull together appropriate advice and support.

Moving to a lower carbon transport system: We will support greater use of public transport and alternative forms of transport such as cycling and walking. We have an active travel forum which brings together key stakeholders interested in this agenda. Digital infrastructure also has a role to play, with improved mobile connectivity and full fibre broadband reducing the need for physical transport. This will require significant new investment both from the public and private sector. We will support a robust local network of charging points to encourage people to make the switch to electric vehicles, and explore how this will align to our parking strategy. In addition to reducing greenhouse gases, these actions will also have a positive impact on local air quality and health.

Making local homes more energy efficient: We want to explore what more the Council and other local organisations could do to support homes to be more energy efficient. As well as promoting more energy efficient new build homes, this could involve actions to increase insulation, energy storage and promoting the retrofitting of renewable energy technology in existing homes. It may be possible to fund these schemes through the subsequent energy savings to the property.

Reducing, reusing and recycling more waste: Household waste collection and the disposal of non-recyclable household waste contribute 39.5% of the Council's carbon emissions. We already have high levels of recycling, and our household waste collection service has been recognised as the most carbon efficient in England for four out of the last five years, but we recognise that we cannot be complacent. The Council is currently undertaking a strategic review of its waste strategy to provide a 10 year plan for the management of household waste and recycling. The outcomes of the Council's waste strategy review will inform the future shape of our waste collection and recycling services, and will be available in spring 2021. The strategy will also align with the Government's National Waste Strategy, which sets out how they will preserve material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy in England. This, combined with bringing the waste collection service back into local authority control from April 2020 rather than being run through a private company, will create exciting opportunities for change. We intend our new waste service to be run on cooperative principles where residents, businesses and staff have a greater say in the operation of the service, helping to reduce, reuse and recycle waste.

Working with agriculture to support a sustainable future: As a borough with many rural communities, it is essential that we support the agricultural sector to play its part. The Council owns a significant farm estate and we will consider how this could provide opportunities to promote lower carbon methods of farming. Cheshire is home to experts in world class agricultural practices such as Reaseheath College which helps promote leading practices. We may also review the grants and support we provide to rural communities to promote more sustainable futures.

Using our planning powers to address climate change: Building on current good practice, the Council has the opportunity in its Local Plan to promote more sustainable

development. This could involve decisions around land use, urban design, transport, promoting physical activity and active transport and the energy efficiency of development. It could also involve identifying measures to adapt to the effects of climate change such as flooding.

Supporting the planting of trees: Trees provide a natural and cost effective solution to capture and absorb carbon dioxide emissions. Through organisations such as the Mersey Forest and other community groups we will support schemes that accelerate the pace of tree planting across the borough, at the same time making it more attractive, encouraging people to engage with the great outdoors and helping flora and fauna to thrive.

Lobby for national change: While we are heartened to see the Government sign up to become a net zero carbon country by 2050, we want to work with the Government to see funding and powers devolved to the local area to make this happen.

How residents can play their part

We need to be realistic. The Council will never be able to tackle all the challenges facing the borough on its own. Working together to build stronger communities has to be at the heart of our approach. Local communities are a huge resource of great ideas, innovation and action. We need everyone to play their part.

- **Share your ideas:** As we develop our plans we want residents to share their ideas on how we can tackle this challenge. More information on how to get involved can be found at <https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your-council/councillors-and-committees/the-climate-emergency/the-climate-emergency.aspx>. We are keen for everyone to get involved as this involves all generations.
- **Buy local and green:** Buying more products from local suppliers and businesses committed to a sustainable future helps us all play our part. A good example is the rapid move away from single-use plastics due to consumer pressure. Also, consider energy ratings when replacing white goods and other devices - efficient devices cost less to run as well as reducing your emissions. You can calculate your carbon footprint at <https://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx>

- **Travel more sustainably:** Consider car sharing, use public transport or other forms of transport such as walking and cycling where possible. If you are buying a vehicle, consider electric and low emission versions. You may also want to consider offsetting your travel emissions by contributing to things like tree planting schemes.
- **Switch to greener energy:** There are now more options from new and traditional energy providers which focus on renewable and lower carbon energy.
- **Reduce, reuse and recycle:** By reducing the amount of waste sent for disposal you can make a massive difference. By actively reducing the amount you waste, reducing single-use plastics, buying products that use less packaging, reducing food waste and recycling more you can play your part.
- **Eat a greener diet:** Consider moving to a greener diet in line with United Nations recommendations.

The Mersey Forest

The Mersey Forest Plan is a commitment to increase woodland cover and to help to offset our carbon emissions which receives significant funding from Cheshire West and Chester Council. The forest isn't just about carbon capture though. The Natural Health Service uses the forest for evidence-based interventions to tackle poor health. Targeted at the areas with greatest health inequalities in west Cheshire, they make use of green spaces, our woodlands and parks, to help improve people's mental health and increase their physical activity.

Just one of the projects taking place in the forest will engage more than 3,000 people in 8-12 weeks of evidence based activities that increase physical activity by 40% and wellbeing by around 20%. These programmes will offset our carbon emissions whilst at the same time supporting people to live better, healthier lives and reduce demand on the health and social care system. In November 2019 Cheshire's Natural Health Service was awarded Best Nature Based project in the Year of Green Action at the Innovation in Public Health Awards.



Investing in our priorities

All available council resources will be marshalled to tackle the climate emergency and new investment from Government and the private sector will also be identified to help. In addition we will invest £16.2 million of capital funding in projects that reduce the borough's carbon footprint

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?

Every service within the Council will contribute to this priority

Supporting plans and strategies

- Carbon Management Plan
- Energy and Carbon Reduction Strategy
- Local Industrial Strategy
- Local Plan
- Local Transport Plan
- Low Emissions Strategy

Links to other priorities: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6



2. We will all play our part to grow our local economy and deliver good jobs with fair wages for our residents

“ Have a small business development strategy... give more contracts and work to businesses local to Cheshire. ”

Play your Part respondent

Our shared challenge

Our local economy is doing well, with a number of strong businesses, low levels of unemployment and high levels of productivity. Economic output is increasing faster within the borough than it is across either England or the North West and employment levels are currently at a historic high. There are improving transport connections to Manchester, Liverpool, North Wales, the Midlands and London. Local residents also have good skill levels, particularly at graduate level. However, within this positive picture there are individuals and communities who are currently unable to enjoy the same opportunities.

The challenge is to make sure that local people can contribute to and benefit from growth. The median gross weekly wage for west Cheshire residents who work full-time is slightly higher than the national average, but averages hide the fact that two neighbourhoods in west Cheshire are ranked in the 2% most deprived in England.

Transport connections within in the borough have room for improvement, particularly in relation to affordable public transport. Road congestion is significant in some areas, and many rural communities suffer from poor transport connectivity. Improving these and investing in digital infrastructure will allow the economy to benefit from the talents of the whole borough. We also have a duty to support thriving local high streets across all our communities in the face of major changes to the retail sector.

Economic resilience is also an issue for us. Some of our most productive businesses are in sectors such as automotives and chemicals that may be vulnerable to economic shocks, changing consumer preferences, automation and international trade changes. In the short term we are particularly focused on managing the potential impact of Brexit.

What our residents think

Local peoples' perception of the local economy vary, with 31% of survey respondents feeling that the local economy has got worse over the past few years whilst 11% feel it has improved. 39% feel that they are benefitting from regeneration in their local area and 46% think they are benefitting from regeneration across the borough.

Almost three quarters of participants agree with the Council's proposals for this priority, in particular around the Council using its powers to support local business and employment, taking a new approach to skills and employment and revitalising our town centres. Discussions focused on making west Cheshire a more attractive place for business and study, supporting small businesses, improving the cost, frequency and reliability of public transport and supporting young people into employment.

Over two-thirds of participants agreed with suggestions of how local people could play their part, particularly in sharing ideas to contribute to planned regeneration and supporting local businesses. Nine out of ten participants agreed with all the ideas for how businesses could contribute.

What our partners think

Our partners supported the focus on a local economy that works for everyone. A wide range of local businesses participated in an economic summit where attendees were supportive of overall proposals and put forward a strong demand for continued dialogue and further opportunities to influence plans. Community and voluntary sector representatives were keen to establish a voluntary sector presence in each of the Borough's main towns to promote and facilitate opportunities to volunteer and support

organisations and groups to match social responsibilities to benefits for local businesses and communities. The importance of the Northgate Development being undertaken in a way which was sympathetic to the historic environment was highlighted, along with the opportunity that the promotion of walking and public transport could have in reducing city centre private car usage and strengthening the city's historic character.

What success will look like

- more people benefitting from improved skills and higher earnings
- West Cheshire being the best place in the UK for rural businesses
- Improved social mobility
- better digital connections and download speeds
- local business growth and investment
- increased productivity.

How the Council will play its part

A new approach to skills and employment: We need to review all of our local skills, reskilling and employment services to ensure they are focused on tackling the challenges outlined above. The Employers Pledge is key to raising expectations of young people and helping them achieve the skills needed by local employers. The Employers Pledge partnership already supports hundreds of employers to work more closely with schools, colleges and up to 12,000 learners, building aspirations and providing young people with pathways into their chosen careers. This will be supported by the new Accelerate Programme which, working with the Local Enterprise Partnership and the University of Chester, will support employers to identify whole workforce training needs. It will have a particular focus on digital skills through the Digital Skills Partnership who work with business and training providers to enable the current and future workforce to develop the skills they will need to take full advantage of new digital technologies. New approaches will mean working closely with colleges, schools and businesses to identify the skill needs of the future. An example of this could be working with NHS organisations to develop a careers

academy concept to explore approaches for careers in care. We want to help businesses realise the potential of apprenticeship funding, including the apprenticeship levy that all large businesses need to pay and will provide advice to businesses on how to deploy the levy, including how to use their unspent levy within their supply chain. We also want to introduce schemes that address any barriers to local people increasing their skills, working hours and earnings.

Improving our support to businesses: We will review how we support local businesses to encourage inclusive growth and new and expanding businesses. A digital business portal will be implemented to make it easier for businesses to interact with us. We will also explore how we can support the development of premises to support new businesses. We are interested in developing an investment fund to support progressive local businesses, including co-operatives, which contribute to the borough. We want to introduce a 'business angels' programme which links investors to talented start-ups.

Using our purchasing powers to support local business and employment: We want to review our approach to purchasing goods and services to enable smaller, local businesses to be in a better position to bid for work, as well as developing specific events and support for local businesses to make the most of procurement opportunities. Our payment terms for local businesses will be halved from 30 days to 15 to help them with their cash flow. We will continue to work with Council-owned companies and other public sector organisations to promote 'community wealth', considering the social value of procurement and retaining more of the money that we spend in the local area and consider career progression for staff. All Council staff and those working in Council-owned companies are paid the Local Living Wage as a minimum and we will encourage others to do the same.

Using our planning powers to support local businesses and employment: Where appropriate, we will explore ways in which planning agreements can support and encourage developers to hire and buy locally.

Providing tailored support to key sectors: High value sectors such as advanced manufacturing, energy, logistics and digital will receive a tailored package of support. A Local Industrial Strategy for Cheshire and

Warrington is being developed with business and government. The aim is to provide vital support on training, funding, tax incentives, research and development, and infrastructure to support key sectors, particularly those operating in an uncertain environment. This is especially important in the context of Brexit which has created challenges for many of these sectors. We will also ensure that key areas which are traditionally lower paid, such as health and care, are supported to develop and grow, creating career pathways.

Improving major infrastructure: We will continue to make the case for investment in integrated transport infrastructure, as well as specific rail projects such as Northern Powerhouse Rail, and HS2 to connect economic opportunity across the North and the wider country. We also want to see the delivery of major rail and road improvements into North Wales as part of the Growth Track 360 programme. Another major focus will be on working with Government, businesses and communities to enhance digital infrastructure such as full fibre broadband to premises. This will also form an important part of our sustainability and low emissions agenda.

Enhancing local transport: We need to enhance public and community transport to support growth that benefits more local people, as well as tackling climate change. We will explore how we can improve the connectivity of our towns and villages through local bus services and will review the future model for the Park and Ride service. This may involve new services or targeted financial support to make public transport more affordable for certain groups. We will work with schools to promote bus use by pupils and discourage drop-offs and pick-ups by private vehicle. Local rail services will also be an area of focus and the case for investment will be made in services such as the mid-Cheshire line, the Wrexham-Bidston line, Winsford to Crewe, Winsford to Warrington, and Hooton to Liverpool. We will also seek investment for local road schemes that improve connectivity including the Winsford Southern Bypass, the Western Relief Road, and the A51.

Revitalising our town centres: Town centres are the heart of our communities. Due to changes in shopping habits, including increased online shopping, we are seeing a national challenge to the high street. The

Council will look to make careful investment in schemes that transform our town centres to support local employment, consider housing opportunities and combine to create places that attract and retain people who want to invest, live, work and play in the borough. We will also monitor our approach on car parking and explore the development of a register of landlords of empty shops. Working with local residents and businesses, we will deliver Northgate Phase One in Chester, providing a new market, cinema and public square. A sustainable plan for the future phases of the development will be developed which meets the needs of the city and borough and responds to the wishes of local people. We will also maximise the use of our heritage and culture assets to support the vibrancy of our borough. We will continue to support the Council's investment in Northwich at Barons Quay and Weaver Square, the implementation of the Ellesmere Port Masterplan and the regeneration of Winsford town centre. We will work with town and parish councils to support vibrant village centres and rural towns.

Making west Cheshire the best place in the UK for rural businesses: Around a third of people in west Cheshire live in rural areas and can face specific difficulties around physical and digital connectivity. We will enhance local transport and continue to push for greater broadband and mobile phone coverage in rural areas, trialling new ways of getting communities online. Alongside supporting rural businesses we will implement planning policies that support the rural economy and we will work to secure the long-term future of Cheshire's Sandstone Ridge.

Supporting appropriate and affordable housing: Our approach to housing will be significant in our response to the climate emergency and to making neighbourhoods even better places to live, but it is also essential to attract and retain our future workforce. Housebuilding stimulates local growth through construction. A good supply of homes and a quality rental sector are vital to ensure lower income groups and others have a choice to live in the borough. We will continue to develop policies that increase the numbers of houses built in appropriate places. We will develop a new offer to attract and retain younger professionals along with more affordable options for lower income groups including quality council housing.

Pressing for devolved powers from Government: We believe that we could move further and faster if Government gave us more powers and funding to support local growth. Working with our neighbouring councils in Cheshire East, Warrington and our Local Enterprise Partnership we will press for a devolution deal similar to the arrangements in Greater Manchester, Liverpool and elsewhere. This will support our regional working across the North West and North Wales and will help us make decisions that benefit local people, particularly in relation to tackling the climate emergency, skills, infrastructure, housing, and business support.

How residents can play their part

- **Support local businesses:** Choosing to spend more of your money with local businesses and in your local town centre helps sustain those businesses that you support, as well as encouraging new businesses.
- **Share your ideas:** A range of regeneration schemes are planned in various areas, in particular Chester, Northwich, Winsford and Ellesmere Port. We want residents to share their ideas and opinions on these schemes to make them as effective as possible. More information on how to get involved can be found at participatenow.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

- **Take advantage of training opportunities:** A wide range of training and support is available to help you to develop new skills and potentially change career.

How businesses can play a part

We want to strike a new deal with businesses. Alongside the support we've outlined above we want to work with companies across west Cheshire so we can achieve inclusive growth.

- Signing up to the local living wage.
- Greater corporate and social responsibility, for example by supporting local good causes, reducing their carbon footprints, promoting volunteering and more.
- A wider range of companies taking action to support the health and wellbeing of their workforce.
- Committing to apprenticeships, local employment, training and career progression.
- Working with us to tackle shared challenges such as climate change.
- Attending, and engaging with, regular business forums



Winsford Whole Place Programme

The Winsford Whole Place Programme is a comprehensive integrated programme which aims to address the social, economic and physical issues in Winsford. It brings a range of related projects together to ensure a co-ordinated impact on the lives of local residents. The programme focuses on physical regeneration of the town centre, improving education and employment opportunities and early intervention and prevention for vulnerable people. It has already seen the creation of the Winsford Integrated Public Services Hub bringing together Jobcentre Plus, the WorkZone, Citizens Advice, ForFutures and Weaver Vale Housing Trust Employment Horizons team in one place for a seamless customer experience. A project to raise young people's aspirations has been expanded to all Winsford schools and is now being adopted in Ellesmere Port whilst work to narrow attainment gaps for disadvantaged pupils has seen significant success.

One project within the programme that has seen significant investment being made is the expansion of Winsford Industrial Estate, the aim of which is to benefit jobseekers, businesses and their customers. The Council and its partner, Public Sector PLC, have received planning permission to deliver 350,000 sq. ft. of new employment floor space, which will create up to 1,500 jobs for people in Winsford and west Cheshire. The roads and facilities at the industrial estate will be greatly enhanced, with plans for a petrol station, pub and a hotel.

The Council has further plans to enhance the offer to small and medium sized businesses by providing best-in-class industrial space which will benefit the local community with sustainable job growth and long-term investment.



Investing in our priorities

By 2020/21 we expect to spend £19.3million in this area, offset by £23.8million of income such as the rent charged on Council-owned business premises. This will give a surplus of £4.5million which will be used across the Council to pay for services that you told us are important.

We are also investing £94.6 million of capital into this challenge area over the next four years, £10 million of which would be funded by the Council.

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?

Key services within the Council that contribute to this priority include:

- Business Growth
- Commercial Property
- Employment, Skills and Learning
- Planning
- Procurement
- Regeneration teams
- Transport

Supporting plans and strategies

- Constellation HS2 Growth Strategy
- Growthtrack 360
- Local Industrial Strategy
- Local Plan
- Local Transport Plan
- Strategic Economic Plan
- Transport for the North

Links to other priorities: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6



3. We will all play our part to support children and young people to get the best start in life and achieve their full potential

“ Work with families to tackle child poverty through the poverty truth commission, the Welcome Network and expanding the holiday hunger programme. ” **Community and Voluntary Sector Response**

Our shared challenge

Overall, west Cheshire is a great place to grow up for many, with good schools and educational settings in safe communities with access to a range of leisure and culture activities. We are investing more money in education to develop skills for life, but will continue to look for efficiencies in the way that specific services are delivered to maximise the impact additional investment can have. Children and families are supported to be safe and healthy and our child protection services are rated good by Ofsted. There are, however, a number of challenges.

- Approximately 13% of under 16s live in low income families. This is lower than the England average, but in some areas of west Cheshire child poverty is at least 35%.
- Whilst education outcomes are good for many children, we believe there is room for improvement at primary school level. There is also a gap in attainment between ‘all pupils’ and those who are disadvantaged. In west Cheshire this gap is greater than the national average and it is not being closed quickly enough.
- There is an increase in children and young people with complex needs, especially where domestic abuse, exploitation and family emotional health and wellbeing are contributory factors.
- Although the development of the Edge of Care team and other initiatives has meant that the number of children entering care has fallen by almost 40% over the last two years, west Cheshire still has more children in care than the national average and the cost of specialist placements is escalating. We are constantly looking at ways to work with families at the earliest opportunity and tackle problems before they become a crisis. This is to ensure that the best decisions are made for children, with resources targeted to support them to remain safely with their families wherever possible or to meet their needs elsewhere if they cannot.
- The emotional health and wellbeing of our young people is an area of focus and we have higher rates of self harm and hospital admissions for mental health conditions than the national average, along with high numbers of unintentional injuries.
- Demand for services that support children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is growing. We have more children in specialist provision and funding is not keeping up with this growth which reflects the national picture.
- We need to improve transitions between educational settings and from childhood to adulthood, making sure our young people have the skills and qualifications they need. The Social Mobility Commission has found that west Cheshire is amongst the worst 10% of all local authority areas for ‘youth social mobility’ as measured by disadvantaged young people achieving good qualifications and progressing to university.

What our residents think

When asked to rate the importance of various things in making somewhere a good place to live, residents gave education a score of 9 out of 10 and activities for children and young people a score of 8.5 out of 10.

Again, almost three quarters of participants supported the Council's proposals for this priority, particularly around supporting young people leaving care, promoting emotional health and wellbeing, raising attainment and reducing the attainment gap, and tackling domestic abuse at an earlier stage. Discussion focused on the need to promote social activities for young people and improving education, including raising aspirations, teaching life skills and post-16 opportunities. A similar proportion of participants agreed with ideas of how local people could play their part, particularly around staying safe, thinking about wellbeing and making the best of educational opportunities.

Four workshops were carried out with Cheshire West and Chester's Youth Senate and Children in Care Councils, with all choosing to focus on the challenge of supporting children and young people to get the best start in life and achieve their full potential. Key messages included: the need to support people, including care leavers, into adulthood; social activities, including opportunities to get involved in the community and in local decision making; mental health issues; celebrating successes; child poverty; accessible and affordable public transport; and climate change.

What our partners think

Health service partners highlighted the importance of the health and wellbeing of children and young people and their commitment to continue to work with the council to better engage children and families in the development of services, as well as specific services around physical activity, services for young people with special educational need and disability and improving the transition from childhood to adulthood.

Community and voluntary sector partners highlighted the positive work of the Poverty Truth Commission and holiday hunger programme, as well as the need to strengthen the offer and support for young people particularly around mental health resilience, excluded young people and young carers.

What success will look like

In tackling these challenges, our vision is to continue to support children and young people to thrive in their lives and break down barriers of inequality so they can fully achieve their ambitions and reach their potential. If we were successful by 2024 we would expect to see:

- more children and families being helped at an earlier stage, reducing the need for more intrusive statutory services
- fewer children affected by complex issues such as domestic abuse, exploitation and family emotional health and wellbeing
- higher levels of educational attainment and progression and a closing educational attainment gap between disadvantaged and more vulnerable children with their peers
- higher levels of positive emotional health and wellbeing
- more inclusive, sustainable and joined up services that meet the needs of children with SEND (special educational needs and disability)
- a reduction in the rate of child poverty

How the Council will play its part

Further joining up of services for children and families: We want to work with all services across the Council and our partner agencies to develop a 'one children's service' approach. This will mean looking at the ways children and families interact with services and making sure there is more joined up support to meet their needs across areas like early help, education, youth services, special educational needs, children's social care and health. We will work with children, young people and families to create this new approach and learn from national and international best practice. The Council will continue to offer a range of parenting programmes and parenting skill courses with a strong evidence base to ensure that parents in need of support are provided with help to improve their skills and confidence. We will also work with other agencies to ensure we have a consistent approach across public services. The principles of early help, prevention and the effective use of data and engagement with families will be a focus across the whole of this programme.



Further strengthening our support for children and young people with SEND: We will continue to work with children and young people, parents and carers, schools settings, post-16 providers and other partners to ensure that SEND services are meeting needs and making people feel more included. We want to support special schools to share their expertise with mainstream schools to help more children with disorders such as autism or with moderate learning difficulties to be able to attend their local secondary school. We also want to improve residential provision and to help children and young people with SEND prepare for adulthood. Our work in this area will include supporting and training those working with SEND children to enable them to better meet their needs.

Targeted action to raise attainment and reduce the attainment gap: We will work with schools, settings and post-16 providers, through the Education Improvement Partnership, to improve the educational outcomes for all children and especially reduce the attainment gap between vulnerable and disadvantaged children compared to their peers. Governors, school and system leaders will be encouraged to support and challenge schools to improve outcomes, deploying pupil premiums in the optimum way whilst remaining inclusive and supporting children to move between key stages of education whilst still making progress.

Best practice will be shared and progress will be continually monitored through the Education Improvement Partnership. We will make the case nationally for the fair funding of our schools and educational settings so they are able to meet local needs and will support schools to best use their pupil premiums. We will also ensure that services such as libraries are welcoming, from the bookstart offer for pre-school children to the removal of fines for late books from children under 12.

Supporting emotional health and wellbeing: We will work with our partners to improve our support for the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people. This will include greater awareness and training for the workforce, including specialist support for children who have had adverse experiences. We will also build the ability of schools and other settings to identify the early signs of mental health difficulties, intervene and explore digital services and support for parents and carers.

Supporting young people leaving our care into independence: We want to do more to support those leaving our care into adulthood. As a corporate parent, we want to take a whole borough approach and improve our accommodation offer, improve local health services, support local apprenticeships and employment, and work with local businesses to support care leavers to get off to the best start in life.

Working with families to tackle child poverty: We have established a second Poverty Truth Commission where those experiencing poverty have been able to share their experiences and help design solutions. We will continue to support the work of the Poverty Truth Commission and encourage other public sector



organisations and local businesses to work differently to address poverty. The current Commission is exploring the issues of health (including mental health), housing and homelessness and food poverty. In the meantime one of our Council companies, Edsential, is offering support through the summer holidays for deprived families suffering from holiday hunger and the Welcome Network is a new project that looks to tackle loneliness and end food poverty. We will do all we can to work with families at the earliest stage to take advantage of their free nursery entitlement and, where possible, secure employment. We will look at how our Starting Well service collaborates with other organisations to enable, support and mentor parents to meet their aspirations. As a Council we will also consider our response to the 'stop the knock' campaign on local government debt collection and the benefit this could bring for both families and individuals who have fallen into debt with the Council.

Transform our youth services: We will work with young people, voluntary organisations and other agencies to ensure that our youth services respond to the changing needs of young adults living in our borough. We want to ensure that the services that they receive are joined up, inclusive and equip them with the life skills and knowledge they need as they move into adulthood.

Take concerted action to tackle childhood obesity: We already have the 'Eat Well, Be Active' framework in place and will look to scale-up programmes such as the Daily Mile, Active Streets and local sport provision to tackle childhood obesity. Through Edsential we support healthy eating and provide good quality school meals that use local suppliers and farm assured meat. Targeted nutrition programmes and key campaigns will also be rolled out to encourage healthy lifestyles for children and families. We have already used our planning powers to reduce access to fast food, particularly close to schools and will review the impact that this has.

Improve the transition from childhood to adulthood: We will work with schools and colleges to ensure they are offering a curriculum that supports and inspires young people into adulthood and employment. We will continue to support and promote high quality careers advice to be provided by schools and colleges. We will especially focus on the preparation for adulthood of vulnerable children and young people, especially those in our care.

Improve the offer to tackle domestic abuse at an earlier stage: Following a review we will be investing in services

that support survivors and children affected by domestic violence and abuse at the earliest stage. We also want to work with partners to support perpetrators of abuse to get the right support earlier to avoid the abuse escalating. We want this service to respond quickly to all those concerned. We believe this will help us to prevent higher risk cases of domestic abuse, which have devastating and long lasting impacts on children and families. We are working with partners to deliver the healthy relationships course targeted at young people as well as developing more dispersed domestic refuges across the Cheshire and Warrington sub-region. We will also continue our work with partners across Cheshire, promoting the Open the Door campaign and raising awareness with local businesses and others about the impact of domestic abuse and the part they can play in awareness raising.

How children and families can play their part

- **Share your ideas:** We want all of our residents to share their ideas on what we do and how we work and we are particularly keen for more children and young people to get involved. To find out what we're talking about or for more information on how to get involved go to participatenow.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
- **Think about what you need to do to stay healthy:** Consider the health and wellbeing advice available from the NHS and partners – eat well and be active and if you are a parent, carefully consider medical advice about vaccinations and breastfeeding.
- **Think about your wellbeing:** As the speed and stress of modern life increases, people are becoming more aware of their mental health and wellbeing. Seek support if feeling anxious, stressed or lacking confidence; look after your mental wellbeing at least as much as your physical wellbeing.
- **Make the best of opportunities at school and college:** Focusing on getting good vocational or academic qualifications will give you a wider choice and more opportunities as you grow older. School and college aren't only about qualifications though – there are huge ranges of sporting, leisure, cultural and social opportunities that are also available.
- **Stay safe:** Avoid risky behaviours, whether that's on the roadside, at a party or online. Encourage your friends and peers to do the same.

Investing in our priorities

We are planning to spend £66.6 million on children and families services in 2020-21. This would be 16% more than the current budget.

We will also invest £29.3 million of capital into this area over the next four years largely through Government grants but including £2 million of the Council's own resources. This will be directed to schools, youth provision, and housing for children in care.

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?

Key services within the Council that contribute to this priority include:

- Childrens Social Care
- Commissioned services
- Domestic Violence Services
- Early Help
- Education
- Housing Solutions
- Public Health
- Starting Well Service
- Youth Services
- Youth Offending Service

Supporting plans and strategies

- Children and Young People Plan
- Domestic Abuse Strategy
- High Needs Review
- Parenting Strategy
- Place Plan

Links to other priorities: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6

Edge of Care

Cheshire West and Chester Council has seen a rise in children entering care in recent years; more acute than for many other local authorities. Within this context, our Edge of Care Team was launched to support families at significant risk of breakdown where other interventions were not making an impact. Three quarters of the children involved in this service avoided becoming Looked After Children and the Edge of Care Team contributed approximately £0.9million in cost avoidance which contributed towards the Council's cost reduction programme





4. We will all play our part so more adults live longer, healthier and happier lives

“ Help people who need support to come together with those who don't and make friends thus reducing the amount of people in the community who are lonely and don't see many people. ” **Play Your Part Respondent**

What this means and why we think it is important

Many residents in west Cheshire live healthy and independent lives. The borough has real strengths, with more residents benefitting from a good quality of life, strong communities and a relatively good life expectancy. We are currently working with the local NHS to deliver a joint five year Place Plan to improve residents' health and wellbeing. Nevertheless there are challenges we need to address.

- We have significant health inequalities and the more deprived areas of the borough experience poorer health than more affluent areas. On average, men live 10.4 years less in our more deprived areas and women 9.1 years less. This challenge cannot be addressed solely by health services but requires a wider approach to tackling issues such as employment, housing, and access to good education.
- It's great news that people are living longer. By 2035 28% of our residents will be over 65. Our challenge is to ensure that older people are supported to be independent for as long as possible and that those extra years are as healthy as possible. This isn't limited to health services but is also about fostering strong communities that can support each other.
- Social isolation and loneliness is also becoming more of a challenge and can affect both physical and mental health. Again, strong and active communities are vital to combatting this challenge.

- One in six adults aged 16 and over in England report experiencing symptoms of a common mental health disorder. This translates as over 46,000 adults in west Cheshire.
- At the time of writing, the Government is not clear how social care will be adequately funded in the future and a proposed White Paper has been delayed for three years. New ways of working will be needed to make sure that we achieve the best for those who need support. It will be particularly important to ensure that resources are prioritised towards prevention and community support in order to reduce the need for long term and crisis care but this will require significant change.

What residents think

Local residents feel that their health and wellbeing have remained stable over the past few years with 72% of respondents continuing to rate their health as good or very good - the same as surveyed in 2017. Over the same period, people's rating of their mental health has also remained the same.

Those in receipt of adult social care are reporting a consistent quality of life score over the past two years which is better than the regional and national averages. They are also more likely than the national average to feel in control of their daily life and to have as much social contact as they want. However, satisfaction with social care services for both service users and carers has declined locally and is below the regional and national average.

Over three-quarters of respondents support the Council's proposals for this priority, particularly on improving the quality of housing, shaping places to support independence and equipping our workforce. Discussion focused on communities supporting one another through community social events and volunteering as well as the themes of appropriate housing options and improved public transport which recurs across all the priorities in this plan. Again, over three-quarters of respondents supported all ideas of what residents could do, particularly giving to others and continuing learning. There was also support for other organisations to offer support through better integration of services, running projects and initiatives within communities and signposting services. Community and Voluntary Sector representatives also championed the need to work together to develop joined-up services and social prescribing.

What our partners think

Our health services partners remain committed to working with us and other partners to enable joined-up care to be provided closer to people's homes by developing new, integrated models of community care. They have also highlighted that one of their main priorities is working with Public Health to support people through behaviour change – especially encouraging healthy lifestyle choices.

Community and voluntary sector partners highlighted the need to develop strong communities to support independence and their role in co-ordinating activity to extend social prescribing, to develop a new approach to mental health and strengthening friendship and relationships support and reduce health inequalities for our learning disability communities.

What success will look like

- more people living a healthier, happier life for longer
- reduced gaps in health and life expectancy between more and less deprived areas
- more resources spent in the community
- More residents having a better experience of health and social care.

How the Council will play its part

Developing stronger communities to support independence:

We have committed to being a World Health Organisation 'Age Friendly' borough and we are having conversations with residents to improve our understanding of what will help them to live healthier, fulfilled and more independent lives. There are some outstanding examples of how communities can support each other with some help from the Council and other bodies, and we want to build on the existing work with ward members, town and parish councils.

The Community Connector project for example provides people in crisis with practical advice and support, joining up all community support around the individual. We feel more could be done to work with the voluntary sector to strengthen communities, particularly to tackle social isolation. We want to extend social prescribing where GPs prescribe attending specific community activities and clubs that provide an opportunity for social interaction and healthy living rather than traditional medical interventions. We will pilot the introduction of safeguarding angels, trained volunteers who champion and uphold the rights of vulnerable adults, and we will bring people together through the spectacular social butterflies arts project. We will also continue our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, supporting our local armed forces and veterans. We're interested in how digital technology can support thriving communities to help each other and are determined to improve resident information, advice and guidance on what is available. We also want to extend inter-generational schemes where different generations come together as a community. Finally we want to strike a new deal for carers where we give more tailored help and support.

Shaping places to support independence:

Through our planning and regulatory powers, we have the opportunity to create a physical environment that supports good health and independence. This is supported through the provision of a dedicated accessibility officer. We particularly want to create age friendly communities where the design of our neighbourhoods support the older generation to live fulfilling lives through appropriate housing, public spaces, transport and community facilities.

Improve the quality of housing: We will develop housing plans that support a range of people to be independent for longer. Using our land, resources and planning powers we will shape a housing offer that enables people to live longer in the community. We will also work to create more affordable and decent housing for lower income groups which will have a long term beneficial impact on health and wellbeing.

Encouraging good jobs: Employment and income are critical to mental and physical health. We will work with businesses to extend good employment practices and encourage good jobs that are fairly paid. We will continue to promote the west Cheshire local living wage.

Tackling lifestyle issues: Issues such as smoking, alcohol consumption, poor diet and sedentary lifestyle have a long term impact on health and wellbeing. A range of initiatives will help to persuade more people to live healthier lifestyles, including the Food Active Partner Pledge which commits a range of local organisations to working together to promote healthy weight across the borough. A wide-ranging review of our leisure services will also take place with health considerations at the centre of any decisions.

A new approach to mental health: We will support residents with mental health challenges through cultural and leisure services such as the Natural Health Service which helps provide outdoor activities to improve wellbeing. We will build on the success of the Cheshire and Wirral Wellbeing Hub and work with health partners to extend this and the Crisis Cafe model. We will also focus on prevention, better advice and guidance and greater integration with NHS mental health services.

Modernised social care: The pathway to independence builds on the foundations already in place by redesigning some of our services, strengthening relationships with the voluntary and community sector and making better use of equipment and technology. It focuses on working with people earlier to keep them healthy, independent and ensures that they get advice, information and support in a much more timely way. Our aim is to focus on what people can do for themselves and find creative and meaningful ways to support them and their families rather than commissioning traditional support. By doing this people can remain in control of their lives and we can avoid unnecessary admissions to hospital and long term care. We continue to improve timely discharges from hospital so people can return home as quickly as it is safe

to do so, and provide more support at home such as equipment to help with every day activities. There is now a single point of access into the authority via the Cheshire West Community Access Team which deals with phone queries or via the Live Well Cheshire West website. Both services offer information, advice and guidance to people who choose whether to contact the department if they cannot find the information they are looking for. We also aim to regularly review the support we are providing, people will now receive the right support, at the right time, in the right setting to help them recover quickly or prevent their needs from increasing so they don't have to wait for a crisis to get help.

Stabilising care providers: We have had increasing instances where our care providers have hit financial difficulties. When this happens, care provided by these organisations needs to transfer to other providers which is very disruptive to service users and sometimes costly. We are working with providers to see what we can do to stabilise the market by offering a fair cost of care, sharing best practice and putting in place an early warning system so we can take action before providers get into serious difficulty. We will also continue to make the case to Central Government that social care should be adequately funded.

Joined-up health and care: Far too often care is provided in a fragmented and reactive way across health and care services. Our vision is to join up social care services with our NHS partners. We also want to join up further the delivery on the ground and build our services around nine care communities, supported by integrated teams of health and care professionals who focus on those most at risk of crisis. This will mean more services being delivered in the community rather than long term care, joined up workforce practices and better sharing of information. Crucially this approach will not just join up health and care services but all support in the community ranging from culture, leisure, housing and the voluntary sector.

Equipping our workforce: Delivering all the above will require us to develop careers pathways for care workers and equip our workforce to be multi-skilled with the right tools to support the independence of residents. This workforce is not just within formal care and health services but across the wider voluntary and independent sector workforce. We will also maintain our commitment to the ethical care charter to benefit care workers and so the people they look after.

How residents can play their part

For some time we have been promoting the five steps that we can all take to improve our wellbeing.

- **Connect** – connect with the people around you: your family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Spend time developing these relationships.
- **Be active** – you don't have to go to the gym. Take a walk, go cycling or play a game of football. Find an activity that you enjoy and make it a part of your life.
- **Keep learning** – learning new skills can give you a sense of achievement and a new confidence. It could even help you change careers or improve your earning potential.
- **Give to others** – even the smallest act can count, whether it's a smile, a thank you or a kind word. Larger acts, such as volunteering at your local community centre, can improve your mental wellbeing and help build stronger communities.
- **Be mindful** – be more aware of the present moment, including your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you. Some people call this awareness "mindfulness".



Community Conversations

We recognise the vital part that local people play in delivering large scale change. The focus of the Community Conversations process was to explore how we can work together to support people with long term conditions to stay as well as possible, for as long as possible.

77 Community Conversations were held with 243 individual participants. In addition, 100 individual participants engaged in condition/ carer specific conversations and 226 individual participants engaged in the process via telephone conversations, supported completion of surveys and self-completed surveys.

The 'What Matters To Us – Community Conversations Report' was launched at a dedicated event, highlighting the 64 recommendations developed by participants. The recommendations were used to inform the Cheshire West Place Plan (2019-24).

Community Conversations featured as an example of good practice in the Local Government Association Case Study of the Cheshire West and Chester Health and Wellbeing Board. Feedback from those involved in the process has also been extremely strong.



Investing in our priorities

We plan to spend £124.9 million on services to support health, wellbeing and independence in 2020-21. This would be 14% more than the current budget for this area.

We also plan to invest £13.7 million of capital into this challenge area over the next four years from Government grants. This will fund improvements to adult social care facilities and adaptation to homes. The Council's wider £77.1 million housing programme will also include ambitious schemes to support housing for older and more vulnerable people.

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?

Key services within the Council that contribute to this priority include:

- Adult Social Care
- Commissioned services including care at home and residential care
- Housing Strategy and Housing Solutions
- Public Health
- Vivo
- Youth Services
- Youth Offending Service

Supporting plans and strategies

- Adult Safeguarding Board Annual Report
- Carers Strategy
- Director of Public Health Annual Report
- Equality and Diversity Plan
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Health Improvement Strategy
- Learning Disability and Autism Strategy
- Market Position Statement
- Place Plan
- Transforming Adult Social Care
- Workforce Strategy-Adult Social Care
- World Health Organisation Age Friendly Cheshire West Strategy

Links to other priorities: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6



5. We will all play our part to make our neighbourhoods even better places to call home

“ Help organise activities where communities could get together, enabling them to socialise more and get to know the wider community ”

Play Your Part Respondent

Our shared challenge

Where you live - your local neighbourhood - is central to your quality of life. Fortunately, in west Cheshire most people live in good neighbourhoods that benefit from good local facilities and a strong community. Our challenge is to ensure this is the case for all. For example:

- we have issues around housing affordability and homelessness that need to be addressed
- many residents are frustrated with the condition of local roads
- certain communities are affected by litter and fly tipping
- communities safety issues will always be a priority
- Not all communities are active and often the Council can be viewed as remote.

What our residents think

People's satisfaction with their local area as a place to live has remained consistent over the past few years, with around 81% being satisfied. Alongside this though, the gap between how important residents feel all aspects of making somewhere a good place to live are, and how satisfied they are with them has widened, with road condition, pavement condition and clean and tidy streets being the top priorities for improvement.

Almost two-thirds of respondents agree with the Council's ideas on improving neighbourhoods, with particular support for strong partnership working with the Police to enhance community safety, making it easier to report issues and targeted action to clean up neighbourhoods. Discussions focused on bringing communities together through activities and facilities (particularly for young people), improving road safety in specific areas and keeping neighbourhoods clean and tidy. Housing was a notable area where there were differing views, with

some calling for more low cost housing and others concerned that there is too much development.

Over three quarters of respondents agreed with proposals of what residents could do, particularly on taking pride in your community and helping keep it tidy and reporting issues in your neighbourhood.

What our partners think

Our health service partners have highlighted the importance of adequate housing being distributed across the borough to support the development of integrated models of community care. They also echo the fact that strong communities are essential in helping to tackle loneliness and social isolation.

What success will look like?

- an increase in the number of affordable homes
- a reduced rate of homelessness
- improved satisfaction with road condition and cleanliness
- increases in volunteering
- Increased engagement between residents and partners.

How the Council will play its part

Building more affordable homes and tackling homelessness: We will deliver more affordable homes with a mix of tenures to meet a range of housing needs and will commit capital investment that will deliver 1,000 new homes. We will work with local community land trusts and explore alternative forms of construction such as self-build and modular housing. We will continue to support neighbourhood plans where requested to ensure that development is

appropriate to the needs of the local community. Linked to our housing approach we will take action to reduce the number of empty homes and to improve standards in private rented housing. We also want to do more to tackle homelessness, with 105 people confirmed as homeless in the last year compared to 34 in 2010. We will take a partnership approach involving identifying those at risk at the earliest stage, more prevention across all agencies, supporting tenancies, introducing new intensive support for rough sleepers, and ensuring those that become homeless are returned as swiftly as possible to settled accommodation.

Improving our community facilities: The Council owns over 150 buildings that are being used by communities. We have already started talking with communities on how we get the most out of these assets, how we can transform some facilities by moving to more combined uses and how we could transfer some of these assets to community groups and town and parish councils where this is feasible.

Targeted action to clean up our neighbourhoods: We want to continue our campaign to 'Love your Streets', encouraging residents to take pride in their neighbourhoods and to report any issues. The new targeted Streetcare service, known as SMART (Street Maintenance Action Response Team), will be able to respond more quickly to reported issues and has been temporarily funded on a trial basis. Permanent funding will allow us to continue and make the team permanent. Enforcement will continue to play a key role in tackling littering and fly tipping. Building on the new Public Space Protection Order for dog control orders, we will continue to empower communities for enforcement of dog fouling through delegation to town and parish councils, if they wish to do so. We will also deliver the second phase of our Streetcare pledge, allowing communities to apply for specific funding to finance projects that will improve the area where they live.

Making it easier to report issues in neighbourhoods: We will make it easier for residents to report issues like potholes, missed bin collections and fly tipping through the Council website and a mobile app. This will allow residents to check the status of their report on-line and give confidence that we are doing what we can to address any issues.

A new model for the Highways Service: The Highways Service is delivered through a contract with a private provider with some in-house provision. As this contract comes to an end, it provides an opportunity to review the contract and ensure that the service is delivered in line with the needs of residents, drives continuous improvement

and provides value for money. All options for the future delivery of this service will be considered, whether that be in-house, external provision or a combination.

Forging strong partnerships with the police to enhance community safety: Being and feeling safe in your neighbourhood is critical to your quality of life. Utilising our community safety teams, we will continue to support police and community support officers. We will also support the police to tackle serious and organised crime with a particular focus on those vulnerable residents who are criminally exploited.

Putting culture and heritage at the heart of our communities: Celebrating our culture and heritage brings people and communities together and makes our neighbourhoods distinctive. We will support Action Transport Theatre with their project to develop Whitby Hall in Ellesmere Port, and have committed funding for phase 1 of their plans. We will refresh our cultural strategy and look to develop a new heritage strategy for the borough, introduce a new Biennial Arts Festival, explore the further use of Chester Castle, work with the community to find a sustainable solution for Dee House, grow Cine-window: a shop window space in Winsford Cross Shopping Centre showing home-made and hand-made films that celebrate Winsford, invest in new library facilities for Northwich, and continue to support our Rural Arts Touring network. We have been awarded funding to develop plans for a high quality archives facility, and will also continue to make the case for funding for the delivery costs.

Using technology to improve our neighbourhoods: We are interested in exploring how technology can address issues in our major towns for example to help us monitor air pollution, tackle congestion and to provide free Wi-Fi on the high street. We also want to work with communities that are less confident with digital technology to ensure they are not excluded.

Promote animal welfare and biodiversity: Cheshire West and Chester is a borough of contrasting landscapes - wooded river valleys and sandstone hills, meres and mosses, estuaries and heaths, industrial wastelands and old parklands - all set within a matrix of intensively productive farmland and urban development. We will consider our approach to supporting animals and bio-diversity within west Cheshire through developing a new Wildlife Strategy and a quality mark for animal welfare.

How residents can play their part

- **Share your ideas:** We want all of our residents to share their ideas on what we do and how we work. To find out what we're considering doing or for more information on how to get involved go to participatenow.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
- **Get involved in your local community:** Giving to others has been shown to be good for your wellbeing. It's also good for your local community, whether you support a vulnerable neighbour, join a litter pick or volunteer for a local group or sports club.
- **Report issues in your neighbourhood:** We're looking to make it easier for people to report the issues they have. The more that local people report things like pot holes, the more information we will have on what and where the priority issues are.
- **Take pride in your community and help keep it tidy:** As a council we spend significant resources on cleaning up after people, whether that is people littering and fly tipping or irresponsible dog ownership. The more people take pride in their community, the more beautiful our communities will be.

Cheshire West and Chester Library Service

Cheshire West and Chester Library Service has been recognised nationally for its significant transformation: with our new Chester City library integrated into a broader 'storytelling' organisation Storyhouse, investment in modern technology and a revitalised engagement and activity programme.

The Library Service comprises a borough-wide network of 22 libraries that works in partnerships, with groups and through activities for people of all ages, interests and backgrounds. Whilst maintaining a core offer of free resources including lending of books, eMagazines, eBooks and eAudio, free Wi-Fi and free access to computers at every site we also offer a diverse programme of activity including Rhymetime and storytelling for children; Coding Clubs; Autism and Dementia-friendly sessions; Reading groups for the visually-impaired; stories brought to life by musicians; Reading for Wellbeing collections; English conversation groups; Digital skills support; Family History and Ancestry sessions; Fun Palaces, bringing together the cultural skills of those in different communities to share with others; and a wealth of volunteering opportunities for people looking to increase skills, contribute to their community or rejoin or gain entry into the job market.

The transformed Library Service has contributed significantly to reducing isolation, improving health and wellbeing, increasing employment skills, celebrating diversity and promoting community cohesion. We continue to reach new audiences with more than 14,500 new members joining our libraries, more than 1.8m visiting (including Storyhouse), issuing more than 1.3m items and more than 4900 children taking part in the Summer Reading Challenge in 2018/19.

Investing in our priorities

We are planning to spend £53.6 million on neighbourhood services in 2020-21. This would be 4% more than to the current budget for this area.

We will also invest £180.5 million of capital into this challenge area over the next four years, £48.9 million of which could be funded by the Council and £36.8 million from the Housing Revenue Account.

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?

Key services within the Council that contribute to this priority include:

- Communications
- Community Safety
- Highways
- Housing
- Localities
- Streetcare
- Waste

Supporting plans and strategies

- Local Plan
- Local Transport Plan
- Low Emissions Strategy

Links to other priorities: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6



6. We will all play our part to be an efficient and empowering council

“ Glad to see that you are reaching out to people like this. Good luck ”

Twitter respondent commenting on the Council's engagement around the Council Plan

Our shared challenge

We will need to respond differently if we want to tackle the challenges we've outlined, particularly as we need to meet the budget gap over the next four years. We also need to continue to improve the customer experience and the way that we engage with local people, embracing technology to make us more efficient and responsive. We will do this by considering our relationship with local people and communities, how we can best use our assets, ensuring that we procure and manage contracts to deliver what is best for local communities and developing a lean and efficient workforce that has the appropriate skills to deliver on our aspirations. We will also explore how we can work with local people and communities to support and enable them to play their part.

What success will look like

- Improved customer satisfaction
- People feeling better informed about council decisions and services
- Residents feeling more able to influence local decisions
- Reduced administration costs
- High levels of satisfaction with internal support services
- More projects delivered on time and on budget
- Delivery of budget proposals
- Improved staff wellbeing

What our residents think

The most recent residents' survey shows that over the past two years the proportion of respondents who are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the way that the Council runs things has increased to 32%. Alongside this, the proportion

who are satisfied has fallen to 47%. Similarly, the percentage of respondents who feel that the council provides value for money has fallen to 33%, and the proportion who agree that they can influence decisions made by the Council which affect their local area has fallen to 20%.

Discussions on this priority focused on improving communications with the public and service users whilst avoiding a 'one size fits all' approach and exploring other ways of raising money, including fundraising activities and external funding resources. Cutting through this, as well as being raised against other priority areas, is an appetite for community engagement and further, continued involvement in taking forward plans for west Cheshire.

How the Council will play its part

Across the Council we will take the following actions so we can continue to balance the books and address the challenges faced by our communities.

Continue to maintain **good democratic and transparent decision-making** with a robust scrutiny function and careful use of public money. As part of this we will work to become a more responsive organisation and build on the way that we engage with local people. We will look at innovative engagement techniques such as a citizens' jury to enable residents to engage in depth with some of the complex challenges we face and provide recommendations. We will also explore 'participatory budgeting' where local communities can vote on where to spend allocations of council funding in their communities. We will help local councillors to develop ward plans to tackle local issues and support them to fully engage with their communities. Strong links with town and parish councils, emerging Care Communities, district advisory panels, community groups and resident associations are essential and we are interested in how relationships can be further improved.

Use **digital technology** to automate key process and to make our services more accessible to residents. This will include a new digital engagement platform that makes it easier for residents to engage with the Council and have their say, as well as the development of an on-line residents' survey panel.

Use more sophisticated **data and intelligence** to ensure we are focusing on the right things and making a difference.

Strengthen links with and support for the **voluntary and community sector**. The sector plays a vital role in delivering services and support across all our communities with the support it brings to the Cheshire and Warrington region having an estimated value of over £266 million. The Council provides funding of around £11 million for grants, commissioned services and support with things like business rates and rent every year. As funding becomes tighter, we want to work with the sector to identify improvements to make this support go further and potentially identify efficiencies. Areas we want to explore include how we support the sector to bid for funding; how we support smaller organisations to access grants; how the sector could have more certainty over its funding over a longer period of time; how the sector supports itself and shares best practice; and where the sector can add the greatest value to the objectives of the Council and the borough.

Explore different ways of **encouraging volunteering** in communities through models such as time credits where volunteers are given access to a leisure or cultural opportunity in return for their time.

Share our costs with other organisations whether they are local agencies or neighbouring authorities.

Support people across the **whole system of service delivery** not just through individual services working in isolation.

Support a **programme of service redesign** to ensure everything we deliver adds value to the customer.

Review our **models of delivery and consider all options for future delivery, including insourcing services back from private organisations**.

Ensure our **Council-owned companies** are successful, good employers and are fully aligned to the values and priorities of the borough.

Ensure our **contracts for services** have the right focus, engage local suppliers where possible, and are delivering value for money.

Reviewing our **property estate** to reduce our running costs and support more staff to work flexibly.

Make prudent, **local investments** that have a return to the taxpayer.

Review our **back office support** services to ensure they are fully focused on delivering against the Council's priorities.

Work with staff to ensure they have the skills, support and opportunity to make a contribution to the challenges outlined in this document.

Improve the **effectiveness and value for money** of the services we share with other councils; including our joint transactional services in partnership with Cheshire East.

How residents can play their part

- **Get online:** By transacting with us through digital mechanisms such as the website and Council app you will get a faster response, know where things are up to and reduce our costs
- **Share your ideas:** Good services meet the needs of customers. We want to hear your ideas on where we can improve and also what we do well.
- **Recognise our challenges:** The Council has a wide range of responsibilities, particularly in relation to vulnerable adults and children. We will not always have the resources to respond as quickly as we would like and we would hope this would be recognised by our communities.

Transforming Adult Social Care

Cheshire West and Chester's Pathway to Independence Programme was designed to overcome a number of challenges facing our Adult Social Care Teams, and to better deliver the right care in the right place at the right time for many of our Borough's most vulnerable residents. As a result, our staff feel better able to perform their roles effectively, our residents are receiving a far more effective service; and the programme is set to save the Council more than £1million over a four-year period.



Investing in our priorities

Corporate services support good decision-making, efficient support across the organisation and innovation. In 2020-21 we plan to spend £36.1 million on the delivery of these services (a reduction of 1% from the current budget). In addition we will hold £45.3m centrally on behalf of all Council services to support the delivery of all Council priorities (a reduction of 2% from the current budget).

We are considering proposals to invest £71.8 million of capital over the next four years to support our plans on technology, buildings and an efficient Council fleet.

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?

- Finance
- Legal
- Localities
- Property
- Transformation
- Human Resources
- Communications
- Insight and Intelligence
- Information Communication Technology

We will also work with our partners, particularly neighbouring councils, to deliver reduced costs.

Supporting plans and strategies

- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Procurement Strategy




Links to other priorities:
1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Play
your part
to thrive

Our Vision

By 2024 we will all play our part in building **greener, fairer and stronger communities**. The changes that we need to make the borough thrive will only happen when we recognise that there is more that unites than divides us. We will continue to build relationships with every community, family and resident so more of us can play our part.

Our Priorities

-  Tackling the climate emergency
-  Supporting our local economy to grow and deliver good jobs with fair wages for our residents
-  Supporting children and young people to get the best start in life and achieve their full potential
-  Enabling more adults to live longer, healthier and happier lives
-  Making all our neighbourhoods even better places to call home
-  Delivering an efficient and empowering Council

Our Values

Teamwork **H**onesty **R**espect **I**nnovation **V**alue for money **E**mpowerment

What Cheshire West and Chester Council will do

The processes we must put in place

Tailoring our approach to the needs of different localities

Investing in prevention

Supporting our communities to play their part

Stronger partnerships with public sector agencies, voluntary organisations and neighbouring councils

Citizens, communities and businesses are supported to embrace digital opportunities

All our services demonstrate their contribution to priorities

To fund our vision we must:

Prioritise resources

Deliver efficiencies

Transform our services around the needs of customers

Base our decisions on sound evidence, insight and analysis

Generate income through economic growth

Maximise the value of our land and buildings

To deliver our vision we need to learn and develop through:

Involving staff in improving services

Multi-skilling staff to support residents

Developing our leaders

What you can do

- Think and buy green – recycle, travel sustainably and switch to green energy
- Support local businesses and town centres
- Look after the health and wellbeing of yourself and your family
- Get involved in your local community

Appendix 2: Council Budget 2020-21 Allocated to Challenges

This plan has been developed alongside the Council's budget for the next four years. We have mapped the Council's 2020-21 budgets against our priorities to provide a transparent overview of the resources we currently have available and how we are planning to distribute them.

As a result of the considerable uncertainty regarding funding for 2021-24, budget plans for this period will continue to be developed to bridge the estimated budget gap of between £22m and £31m and to align to the Council Plan.

Priority	Revenue budget allocation	Capital expenditure to 2024
We will play our part to tackle the climate emergency.	This priority cuts across all budget areas. All available council resources will be marshalled to tackle the climate emergency.	*£16.2 million
We will play our part to grow our local economy and deliver good jobs with fair wages to our residents.	In 2020-21 we are planning to deliver a surplus of £4.5 million a year on this priority which will be reinvested into services.	£94.6 million
We will play our part to support children and young people to get the best start in life and achieve their full potential.	In 2020-21 we are planning to spend £66.6 million a year on this priority (20.7% of our net budget).	£29.3 million
We will play our part so more adults live longer, healthier and happier lives	In 2020-21 we are planning to spend £124.9 million a year on this priority (38.8% of our net budget).	£13.7 million
We will play our part to make our neighbourhoods even better places to call home.	In 2020-21 we are planning to spend £53.6 million a year on this priority (16.7% of our net budget).	£180.5 million
We will play our part to be an efficient and empowering council.	In 2020-21 we are planning to spend £81.4 million a year on this priority (25.3% of our net budget). This includes both the provision of corporate services (£36.1 million) as well as budgets held centrally on behalf of all Council services to support the delivery of all Council priorities (£45.3 million).	£71.8 million

* We will also ensure our whole capital programme of £400m aligns to tackle the climate emergency

Appendix 3:

Performance Management Framework

An updated performance management framework is currently under consideration and will be updated within this plan once approved.

Glossary

Adverse experiences:	Potentially traumatising events that can have a lasting effect on health and wellbeing
Assets:	Buildings, land and technology owned by the Council
Attainment gap:	The gap between the average academic achievement of all pupils and the average achievement of disadvantaged pupils, such as those who are looked after by the Council or who qualify for free school meals
Apprenticeship levy:	A tax on businesses with a payroll of over £3 million that is used to fund apprenticeships
Brownfield sites:	Land that has previously been used for housing or industrial purposes
Capital programme:	Planned spending on assets such as vehicles, buildings and IT equipment
Carers:	Residents who provide help or support to children, family members, friends, or neighbours who have physical or mental ill-health, disability, or issues related to old age
Circular economy:	An economic system which aims to continually reuse resources and not create waste
Commissioning:	The process of arranging and purchasing services that meet the needs of residents
Community safety:	Services the Council provides to tackle issues such as anti-social behaviour
Community wealth:	An economic approach which tries to stop wealth flowing out of a local area, by encouraging organisations, communities and individuals to reinvest and spend money within the local area
Co-operative values:	Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others
Corporate:	Activities that cover the whole Council rather than a single service
Devolution:	Negotiated deal by which Central Government agrees to transfer (devolve) some national powers and resources to a region/county
Domestic abuse:	Incidents or patterns of behaviour that include controlling, coercive or threatening actions between those aged 16 or over, who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality
Digital connectivity:	The ability, and ease, with which people and organisations can access electronic communications, broadband and the world wide web
Economic resilience:	A measure of how well an economy can cope with external events and shocks
Economic shock:	An event occurring outside an economy which results in a significant impact within the economy
Edsential:	A community interest company owned by Cheshire West and Chester Council and Wirral Council that provides services to the education sector
Gross budget:	This is the total spend of the Council on a service or project before taking into account any income from grants, sales, fees or charges

Growthtrack 360 Programme:	A campaign launched to secure £1 billion of rail improvements to transform the North Wales and Cheshire regional economy
Highways:	The service that supports the development and maintenance of the road network
Holiday hunger:	Children and young people going hungry during school holidays when family incomes have to go further with no access to free school meals
ICT:	Information Communication Technology including computer systems and internet systems
Inclusive growth:	Growth that is distributed fairly across society and produces opportunities for all
In-house:	Services directly provided by the Council rather than provided by an outside organisation on the Council's behalf
Local living wage:	A voluntary campaign in west Cheshire asking employers to sign up to pay the local living wage of £9 per hour for those over 25, in comparison to the national living wage of £8.21 per hour for those over 25
Net budget:	The net budget accounts for the total budget of the Council, but also accounts for our income through fees, charges and dedicated grants
Partner:	An organisation that works closely with the Council
Poverty Truth Commission:	The PTC is an approach to tackling the root causes of poverty. It provides safe spaces for community inspirers, those with lived experience of poverty, to tell their stories. It also provides opportunities for those making and influencing decisions to listen.
Productivity:	A measure of the efficiency of a person completing a task, or of a workforce in creating value.
PSPO:	Public Spaces Protection Order – this allows a council to prohibit certain things, or require specific things within a defined geographic area to deal with nuisance. Examples could be the requirement for dogs to be kept on a lead in a park, or to ban the consumption of alcohol on the street in a town centre
Secondary Care Services:	Health and care services that you would generally need a referral from a GP to use
SEND:	Special Educational Need and Disability
Social prescribing:	A means by which GPs, nurses and other health care providers can refer people to a range of non-clinical services such as exercise programmes or social activities
Sub-region:	The area covered by Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East and Warrington Councils. Often this is where issues such as economic growth are coordinated
Time Credits:	Time Credits encourage individuals to volunteer for the community by giving them a Time Credit for every hour contributed. Time Credits can be 'spent' on community, cultural and leisure activities in the local area.

Accessing Cheshire West and Chester Council information and services

Council information is also available in audio, Braille, large print or other formats. If you would like information in another format or language, including British Sign Language, please email us at:

equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Tel: 0300 123 8 123 **Textphone:** 18001 01606 275757

email: equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

web: www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk