



## ***Housing Strategy 2018-2023***

***Growth and quality of place  
Health, wellbeing and quality of life***

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## Consultation

The Housing Strategy had been initially developed through working with our key partners at consultation events, in which we invited representatives to attend and help shape and inform the priorities. To widen the consultation, we sought the views from both key partners; stakeholders and the public through a 6-week formal consultation period between November 2017 and January 2018.

As part of the consultation, we developed an on-line survey to allow the public and key stakeholders to directly feed into the development of the Strategy to;

- Ensure people agreed with the Strategy themes and priorities
- Allow people to make comments and suggestions in terms of the contents of the Strategy, including the themes and priorities
- Review the Strategy's Delivery Plan

This formal consultation was published through our website; press release; social media; and direct contact with stakeholders. Hard copies of both the Strategy and consultation questionnaire were also made available at the Council's Customer Contract Centres and libraries.

We received over 170 comments and suggestions for the Strategy, both through the online survey and direct contact by emails and letters. The results of the consultation survey are available on the Cheshire East Council website.

# Foreword

Welcome to Cheshire East Housing Strategy 2018 to 2023. The Strategy has two central themes:

## **Growth and quality of place**

Cheshire East has a strong ambition for jobs-led economic growth across all areas and housing is essential to support this continuous growth. If housing is considered in isolation to our planned investment and regeneration, then sustainable growth or successful outcomes are unlikely to be achieved. We know that ensuring new homes delivered of the right type, in the right place and giving residents' choice and support are vital for Cheshire East. Where the market is not currently meeting housing need, we will explore interventions to bring this forward.

## **Health, wellbeing and quality of life**

A key goal of our Housing Strategy is to ensure Cheshire East residents have a place to live that supports their health, wellbeing and contributes to the quality of life. Good quality, safe and affordable housing is essential to meeting this goal. Therefore, this Strategy details how we link our policy decision making with outcomes that support the health and wellbeing of all Cheshire East residents.

These themes allow us to focus on what matters to our communities, support the Council's **Medium Term Financial Growth Strategy**,<sup>1</sup> and the Council's vision of **Putting Residents at the heart of everything we do**, delivered through our key Strategic Outcomes<sup>2</sup>:

Since the publication of our previous Housing Strategy in 2011, there have been significant changes to the local and national political,



<sup>1</sup> Cheshire East Council Medium Term Financial Growth Strategy 2017-2020

<sup>2</sup> Cheshire East Council: Corporate Plan 2017-2020

policy and funding landscape. This new Strategy reflects these changes, and is underpinned by our Local Plan and supportive strategies and policies, which will enable us to achieve our priorities for housing in the Borough.

We have been extremely busy since the publication of the previous Strategy, and in the past 3 years, we have successfully worked with our partners to deliver almost 1400 affordable homes and brought 243 empty homes back into use. We have increased residents' opportunities for homes through our Housing Options Team by providing homes for 5,400 people and families, preventing over 2,000 individuals and families becoming homeless.

We have increased our relationships with private rented landlords, and provided direct support for our most vulnerable residents, for example, we have delivered almost 6,000 adaptations at a cost of over £4 million, to enable some of our vulnerable residents to live independently.

However, there is still more work to be done - which is developed throughout this new Strategy; a Strategy to support Cheshire East for the future.

***Councillor Ainsley Arnold***  
***Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning***



## Introduction

Cheshire East is a great place to live, work, study and visit, and is well placed for the continued opportunities that our thriving job-based economic growth are providing across all areas of the Borough. The Housing Strategy supports the Council's aims and objectives for housing in the Borough, working to improve the quality, choice, and supply of housing for current and future residents. With a population of 376,700<sup>3</sup> and estimated to grow to 427,100 by 2030<sup>4</sup> (13.4% increase), housing of the right type and in the right place is an important part of supporting sustainable growth.

Such growth is being shaped and informed by our **Local Plan** and major regeneration projects, supporting and encouraging growth and prosperity in all parts of the Borough. The Council's success in attracting investment for the creation of new jobs and business growth has created increased demand for housing, whether to rent or buy.

In the process of achieving the successful outcomes, it is acknowledged that the Strategy will play a key role in contributing to the continued economic development of our Borough, sustaining our unique character and identity, and protecting our important environmental assets and heritage. As we work towards supporting Cheshire East Council's key Strategic Outcomes through Putting Residents at the heart of everything we do, it remains clear that housing is a key priority for all of us to make sure we deliver successful outcomes for our residents.

Housing plays a significant role in people's quality of life; their health and wellbeing; access to work, training,

### ***Our housing vision***

***All residents in Cheshire East are able to access affordable, appropriate and decent accommodation***

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<sup>3</sup> 2016 Mid-year population estimates, Office for National Statistics, NOMIS, Crown Copyright

<sup>4</sup> Population forecasts produced by Opinion Research Services for the 2015 Cheshire East Housing Development Study

education, and leisure activities are all influenced by where we live. The quality of housing, its cost, and its location are of primary importance to ensure everyone can participate in their community.

Cheshire East shares the same fundamental aspirations set out in the Government's White Paper 'Fixing our broken housing market', which articulates how they intend to increase housing supply, accelerate delivery and explore the use of modern methods of construction. Where the market is not delivering the type of housing provision needed across Cheshire East, there is a case for intervention, as long as the risks are measured and do not distort or restrict the market.

***Why do we need a Housing Strategy and who is it for?***

<b><i>Ourselves</i></b>	To make sure housing makes a key contribution to the delivery of the Local Plan ambition, protecting and enhancing the 'Quality of Place'
<b><i>Our partners</i></b>	In supporting the delivery, we will make the most of opportunities that are available to work with our partners in seeking new and imaginative ways to inform and influence successful outcomes
<b><i>Our residents</i></b>	We will continue to facilitate opportunities for a mixed tenure of affordable housing and support people with identified need

## *Our priorities*

Facilitate the delivery of affordable housing and stimulate the housing market

Housing offer to support jobs-led growth

Improve the housing offer for an ageing population

**Growth and quality of place**

Promote independent living

Challenge poor quality housing

**Health, wellbeing and quality of life**

Commission housing support for people with complex needs

Support regeneration to improve quality of our place

Prevent homelessness

Promote Affordable Warmth



# Challenges and opportunities

We have achieved a great deal since our previous Housing Strategy, helping to shape and inform the quality, quantity, and choice of housing in Cheshire East. As we now work to support continued growth, we acknowledge that there are challenges and opportunities, emerging from national policy and legislation and some from our unique and diverse local housing market, including:

<b>Affordable housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Facilitating delivery that meets need</li><li>▪ Increasing the number of good quality, mixed tenure, smaller type family homes to meet the needs of existing families and those moving into Cheshire East to take up employment opportunities</li></ul>
<b>Economic regeneration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Maintaining a housing delivery enabling role in our town centres, villages and our neighbourhoods</li></ul>
<b>Rural areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Increasing provision of affordable housing where a need has been identified through working with parish councils and local communities</li></ul>
<b>Welfare reform</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Mitigating against the potential impact of the welfare reform and working with partners to take forward job opportunities</li></ul>
<b>Improve housing offer for ageing population</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Smaller homes for older people to meet changes in household types; help for those with special needs; dementia friendly; making existing homes suitable for independent living and providing a mix of housing on larger developments, including single storey accommodation as a choice</li></ul>
<b>Intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Where the market is unable to meet housing needs, including the stimulation of growth and improving the quality in the private rented sector</li></ul>
<b>Wider infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Through our direct support for the Cheshire East Local Plan, ensure homes are provided which influence major infrastructure decisions that affect the area's economic wellbeing</li></ul>

It is clear that Cheshire East has a need for more homes at different stages of our residents' lives. In shaping our response, housing research including the Cheshire East Housing Development Study 2015<sup>5</sup> identifies the Objectively Assessed Need for housing in Cheshire East, which is reflected in the Council's Local Plan. The Local Plan also identifies sites to meet the overall housing requirement.

While there is a need for new homes to support our

successful economy, there is also a need to address the challenges in the existing stock. The condition of existing stock improves each year. However, there is also still much to be done particularly in the growth and improvement of the private rented sector; the increasing



contribution and challenges Houses in Multiple Occupation is bringing to the market; promoting affordable warmth, and working with our partners as our neighbourhoods go through periods of regeneration and housing renewal.

Previously, a substantial number of local authorities took the decision to transfer their housing stock to external organisations to manage and develop further affordable housing. However, we are now seeing a number of authorities taking the decision to start to develop in their own right, utilising different mechanisms to achieve this including the establishment of Housing Development Companies, Joint Ventures and the utilisation of land assets. Local Authorities are also taking the decision to intervene in the housing market to bring forward additional affordable housing, bringing in vital revenue streams.

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<sup>5</sup> Opinion Research Services 2015

Cheshire East has the opportunity to utilise its own land assets to meet housing needs, which are not being fully met by the market. Disposal of land assets will also provide much needed revenue to the Council.

This Housing Strategy comes at a time of great change and reform. It is evident that recent changes in legislation and national policy have created challenges and opportunities for all areas of Cheshire East, resulting in a need for the Council to think more innovatively about how we deliver quality services with fewer resources. Welfare reform and austerity measures have resulted in reductions of available income to spend on housing for residents and registered housing providers

Therefore, this Strategy will explore our challenges in more detail and provide potential solutions, and in turn highlight opportunities available for all residents of Cheshire East.

*How the Strategy links*

**Sustainable Community Strategy**  
2010-2025

**Corporate Plan**  
2017-2020

**Local Plan**  
2010-2030

**Cheshire and Warrington  
Local Enterprise Partnership**  
Strategic Economic Plan

**Mid Term Financial  
Strategy**  
2017-2020

**Place  
Economic Strategy**

**Cheshire and Warrington  
Local Enterprise Partnership**  
Constellation Partnership

**Housing Strategy**  
2018-2023

**Place  
Regeneration Strategies**  
Crewe Macclesfield

**Health and Wellbeing  
Strategy**

**Place  
Strategy**

# Housing in Cheshire East

## Key Facts

### Supply...

- 1,398 affordable housing units completed in last 3 years, which is 40% above our delivery target of 1,000 units
- Of which, 979 are social / affordable rent
- Through provision of Cheshire Homechoice, we have facilitated on average 1,196 social rent housing lets per year

### Affordability...

- Average property price £214,000
- Median household income at settlement level ranges from £26,300 in some parts of the south of the Borough to £65,100 in areas of the north

Land Registry May 2017 / PayCheck 2017

### Health...

- Last year, we reduced costs in the local health economy by over £2million by helping 173 vulnerable residents with heating problems
- For every £1 we invest in heating there is a cost benefit of £18.51 to the health and care system

Housing Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Policy 2017

### Local economy... Cheshire East provides

- Around 195,000 jobs within the Borough
- The economic output (Gross Value Added) of 8% of the North West GVA
- 7.4% of the region's businesses

BRES 2016 survey, ONS  
Regional GVA data, ONS, Dec 2016 / Business Demography – 2015 - ONS

### Demand...

- Cheshire Homechoice maintained an average of 6,427 individuals and households registrations per year over the past 3 years
- 355 new affordable homes needed each year during the lifetime of this Strategy

### Tenure...

- Of the 157,624 dwellings in Cheshire East;
  - 75% owner occupation
  - 12.5% Private Rented Sector
  - 11.5% Social housing
  - 0.5% Shared Ownership

Tables QS405EW (2011 Census) and KS018 (2001 Census), Office for National Statistics (ONS). ONS Crown Copyright 2018.

### Occupiers...

- Between 2010 and 2030 we will see a 65% increase in people of retirement age, with the number of older people (85+) increasing by around 134%
- 7.9% of Cheshire East residents have a long term health condition or disability that causes their day to day activities to be limited a lot, comparable nationally at 8.3%

Cheshire East Housing Development Study 2015  
Census 2011

### Housing costs...

- Required household income to purchase lower quartile housing (x3.5 times income) - £38,571
- Required income to rent lower quartile housing (third of monthly earnings) - £1,440

Land Registry July 2017



## Growth and quality of place

Cheshire East is a popular place to live, work and visit, and through our effective drive to be *the Best in the North West*, we have been enormously successful in attracting investment for the creation of new jobs and business growth, which has led to increased demand for housing, whether to rent or buy. As a gateway to the Northern Powerhouse, Cheshire East is enjoying the benefits of targeted major regeneration programmes and Masterplans from the investment in a high-speed rail connection (HS2) and its significance for Crewe and the wider sub-regional area, through to direct development for Macclesfield.

Our new Housing Strategy comes at a time of funding challenges faced by the council, the wider public sector, registered housing providers, and the third sector. In addition, individuals and



households are experiencing higher costs of living, including spending on accommodation and heating costs, all of which means we must seek to achieve our strategic objectives by making the best use of the resources available and promoting fresh, innovative, and new ideas.

To meet this demand, Cheshire East Council, along with our key stakeholders, acknowledge that our housing enabling role must link key decisions for homes within areas of economic growth and supported by the area's infrastructure throughout the Borough. To make sure that the **Right Homes** are in the **Right Place**, we must ensure that all new housing is located



with good access to employment, healthcare, schools, retail and other facilities, or seek the necessary improvements through ensuring development provides funds supporting infrastructure, enabling low car use, promoting sustainable transport and quality of life.

Housing is far more than bricks and mortar – it is about having an inclusive role to play in the investment of new homes; health and wellbeing of residents and making a major contribution to the economic growth of an area. It is essential that the range of new homes are built and provided in the right place, providing housing options equally for all residents; supporting new jobs opportunities; good public transport links and access to appropriate local facilities, so that communities can grow and thrive

We explore such aspects within the theme of **Growth and quality of place**, set out our priorities and what we intend to do at the end of the section through a Delivery Plan.

### ***Housing need***

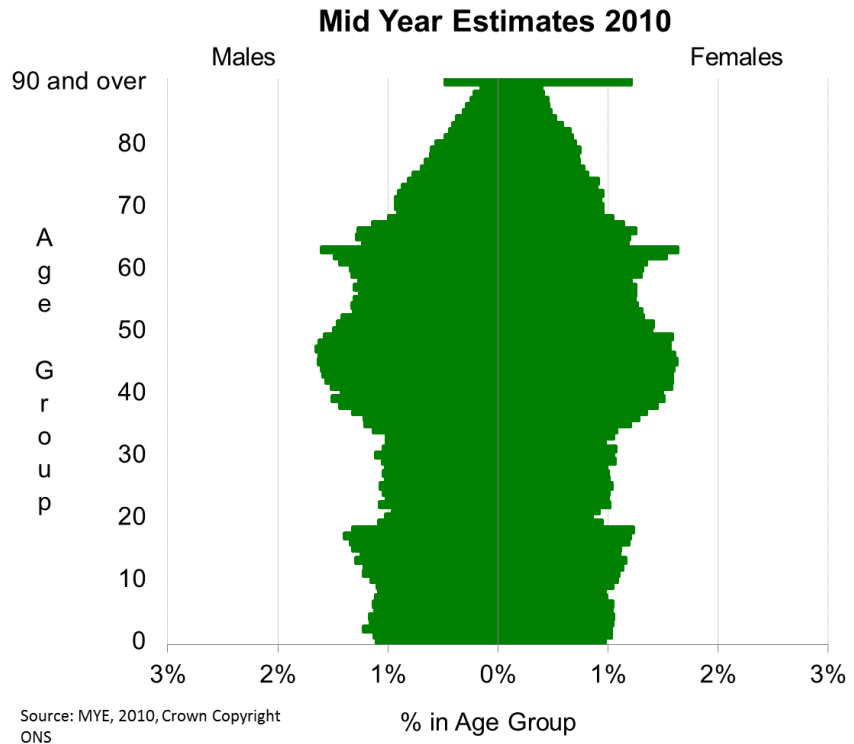
The Local Plan notes that sufficient land will be provided to accommodate the objectively assessed need of 36,000 homes between 2010 - 2030. In addition, as the Local Plan outlines, through economic growth it is projected that 31,400 jobs will be created over the 20-year Plan period. Moreover, whilst we highlight increased housing need through the projection of increased population and job-led economic growth, we also acknowledge the substantial number of families and single people in current housing need within Cheshire East, as they seek advice and support in terms of accessing affordable housing.

Increasing life expectancy means it is crucial we continue to respond to the changing needs of our older population and specific population groups through new developments, refurbishment works to existing homes and improved access to a range of housing options.

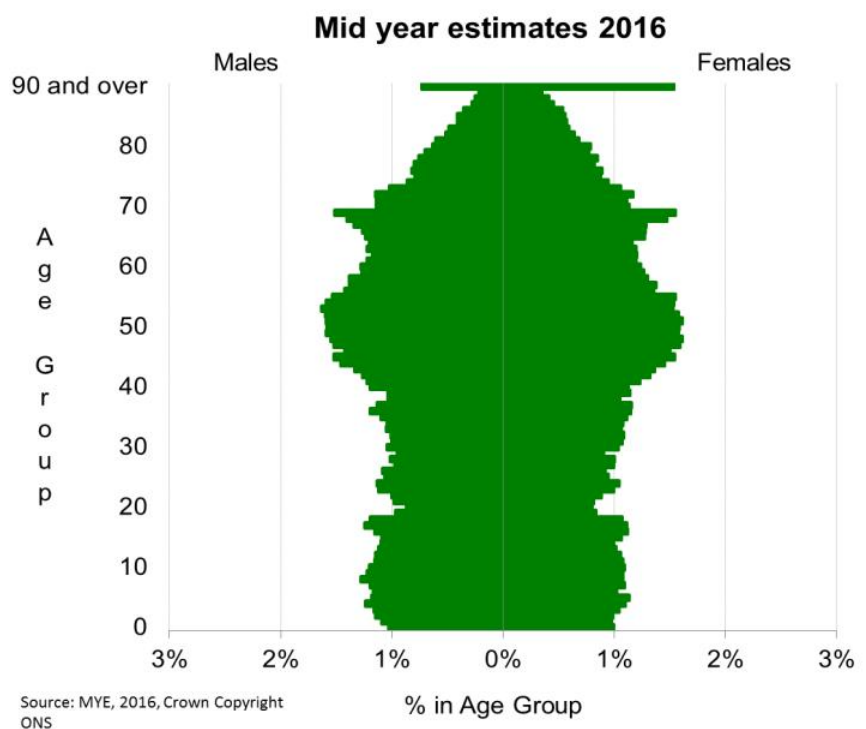
The Local Plan forecasts that Cheshire East will have a 65% increase in the population aged 65 and above, and a 134% increase in the population aged 85 and above over the Plan period. Moreover, with the older population predicted to rise, there may also be a growing number of households that include a member with a disability along with people living with long-term health conditions.

## Demographic change

Between 2010 and 2016, the population of Cheshire East is estimated to have increased by 7,600 residents or 2.1%, which is an average annual increase of around 0.3%.

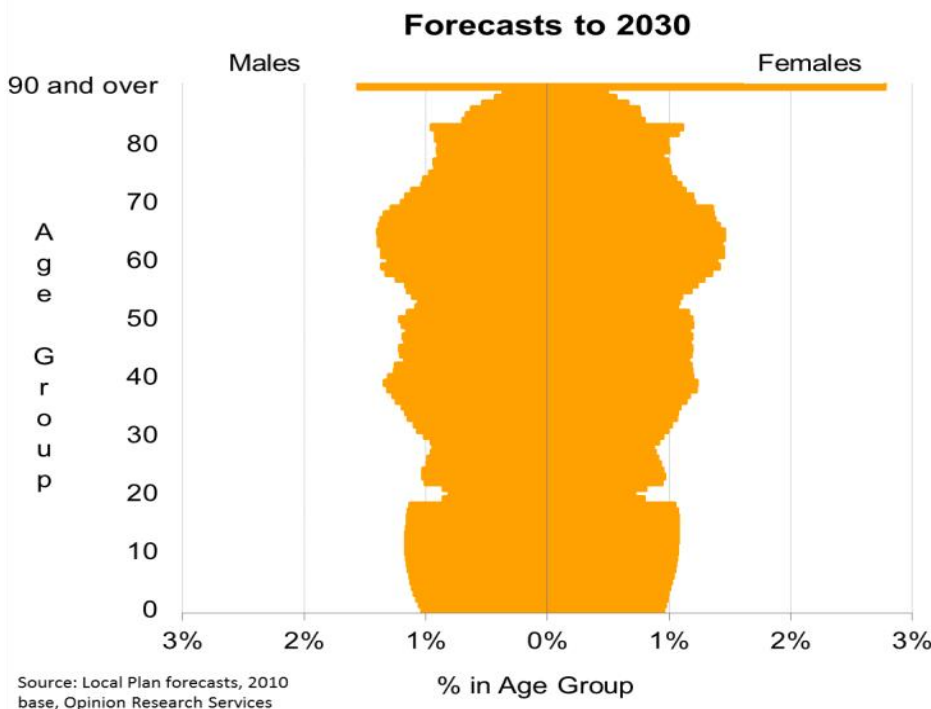
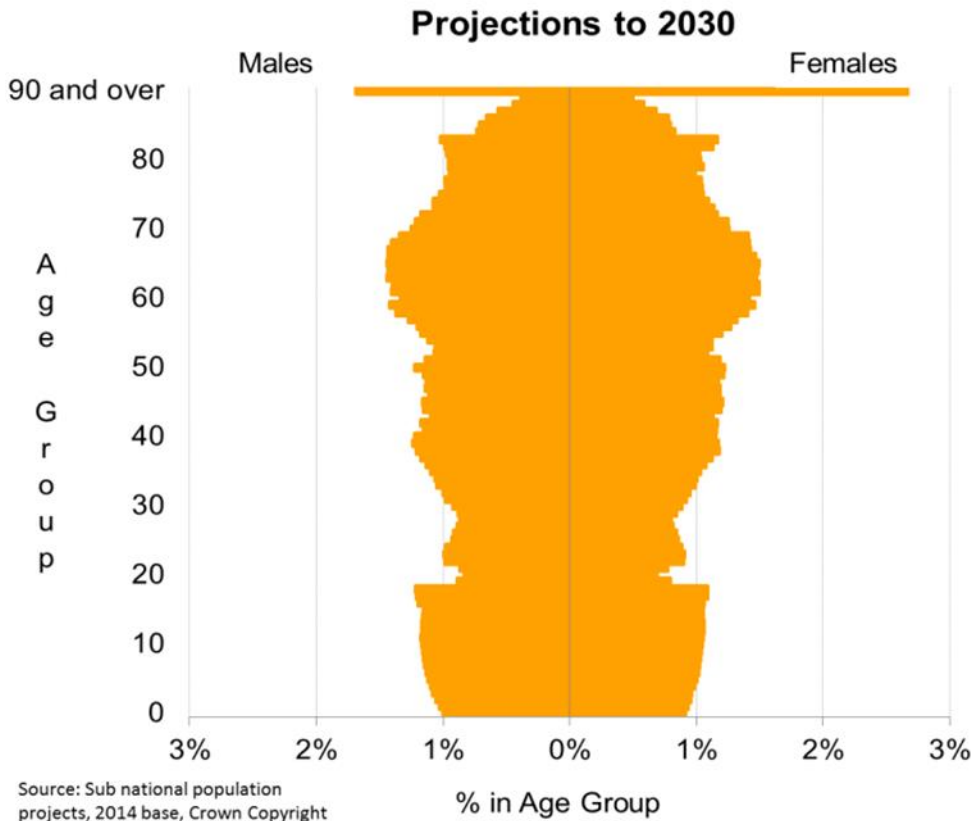


Between this period, the general trend was for the age groups aged 50+ to increase and for those under 50 to decrease. The largest relative change was in the 90+ age group, an increase of 36.3% from 3,200 to 4,300 residents. One of the largest relative changes was in the 90+ age group.



The two orange charts indicate what the future demographic profile of Cheshire East may look like in 2030. The projections in the first chart take recent demographic trends and project them forward. The forecasts in the second chart use similar trends, but

also account for the anticipated housing and economic development and the level of jobs growth set out in the Cheshire East Local Plan.



Between 2016 and 2030, the projections show a possible increase of 20,200 residents or a 0.4% average annual increase. The forecasts show a possible increase of 50,400 or an average annual percentage increase that is nearly double that of the projections at 0.9%.

## Affordability

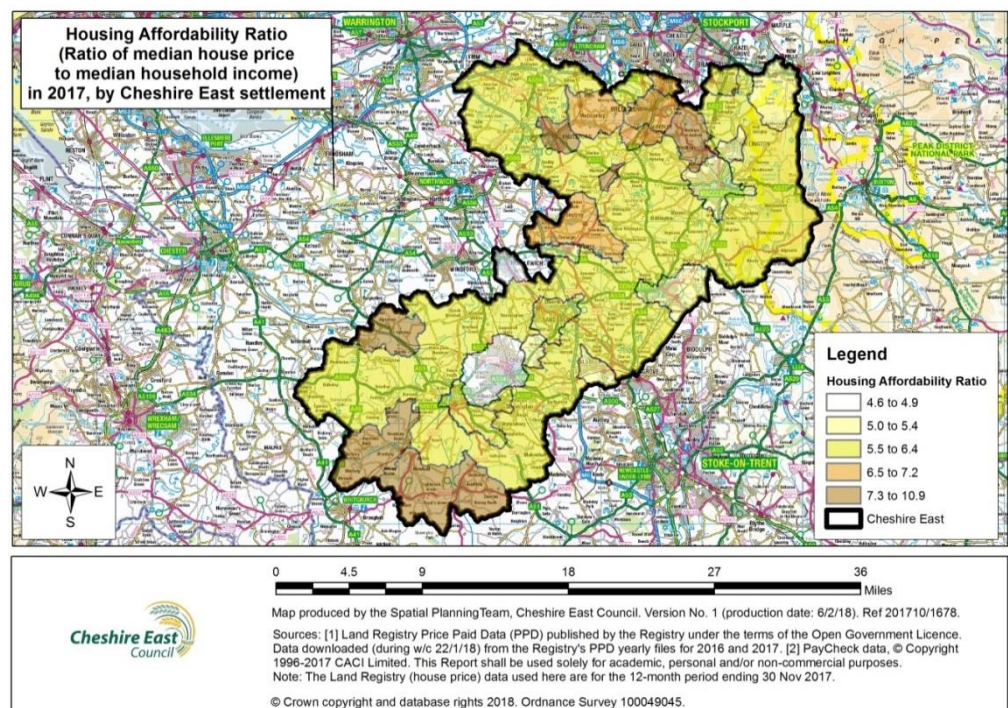
In Cheshire East, the average house price of £214,000 (mean) is currently 9.8% below the England & Wales average (£238,000) but exceeds the regional average (£157,000) by 36.2%.

Household income is a consideration in terms of affordability. At settlement level, 2017 data on household income, together with Land Registry data on house prices, can be used to estimate the ratio of median house prices to median household income, which is another measure of housing affordability.

The resulting affordability ratios places the Borough-wide ratio at 5.8 and suggest that, focusing only on towns, housing is least affordable (with ratios above 6) in Knutsford (which has the highest ratio of any town, at 7.3), Poynton (6.2) and Wilmslow (6.6).

By contrast, housing is most affordable (with ratios below 5.5) in the towns of Alsager, Congleton, Crewe, Macclesfield and Middlewich (which has the lowest ratio of any settlement, at 4.6).

Among smaller settlements the ratio varies widely, from under 5.5 in Bollington, Disley, Haslington, and Holmes Chapel to more than 9 in Bunbury, Prestbury (which has the highest ratio of all settlements, at 10.9), and Wrenbury. In the more sparsely populated areas (outside the Borough's 24 main settlements), housing is slightly more unaffordable than the Borough average, with a ratio of 6.1.





Similarly, high mean incomes are more prevalent in the north of the Borough; Knutsford, Poynton, and Wilmslow are all above the Cheshire East average (as is Middlewich further south). Mean incomes are also above the Borough average in Cheshire East's rural areas.

Notably, over the last two decades the Cheshire East average housing price has declined significantly in

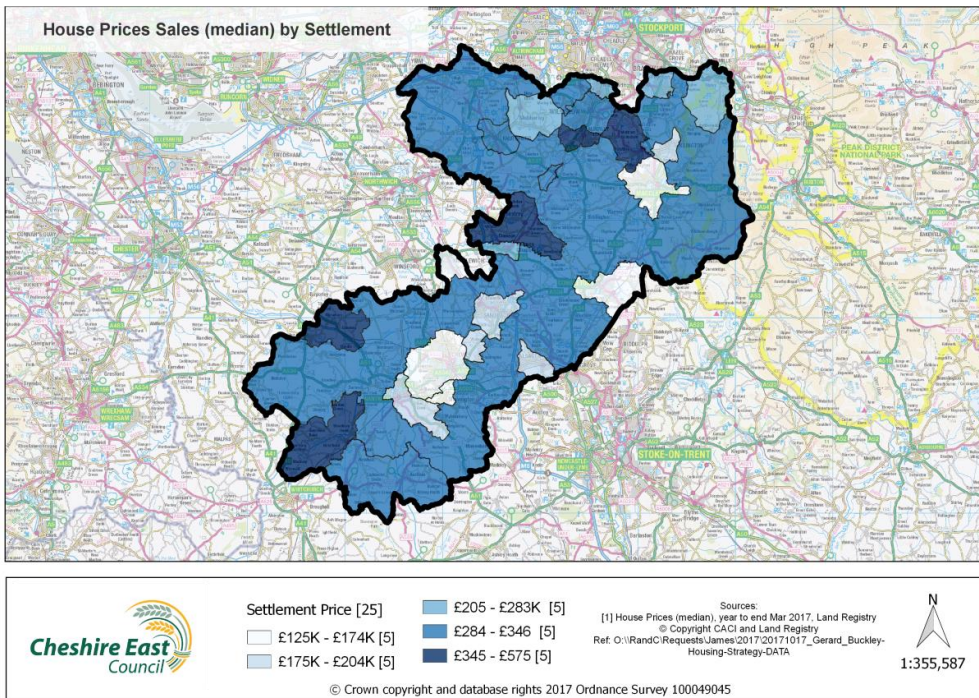
comparison to the England & Wales average. In July 1995, the average Cheshire East property price was 9.7% above the England & Wales figure.

Among the Borough's towns<sup>6</sup>, Crewe has the lowest median house price (£125,000), followed by Middlewich

(£153,000), Macclesfield (£166,000), Congleton (£173,000) and Alsager (£175,000); median prices in Nantwich and Sandbach are close to the Cheshire East average but still below it. In contrast, median prices are far above the Cheshire East median in Wilmslow (£342,000), Knutsford (£330,000), and Poynton (£275,000) and to a lesser extent in Handforth (£225,000).

For smaller settlements, median prices range from under £185,000 in Haslington and Shavington to over £400,000 in Bunbury, Prestbury, and Wrenbury. Outside the 24 main settlements, where the population tends to be more sparsely distributed, the median price is well above the Borough median, at £295,000.

As can be seen, we have seen slight reductions in house prices within the area, residents' experience



<sup>6</sup> Land Registry for the year ending March 2017

considerable disparity in the average purchase prices, between the north of the Borough (with its strong link with south Manchester) to Crewe in the south of the Borough.

In addition, evidence highlights disparities between affordability within smaller market towns and traditional rural areas, for example Prestbury in the north area experiencing median house prices at 9.4 times income; Goostrey in the central area experiencing 7.1 and Wrenbury in the south experiencing 10.8.<sup>7</sup>

Nationally, around 1 in 5 adults aged 31 to 44, who do not already have children, are delaying starting a family because of concerns about housing.<sup>8</sup>

Young people, especially those in vulnerable groups such as people leaving care and people with complex needs are finding it particularly difficult to find a suitable home. Moreover, as the Cheshire East Local Plan outlines, it is projected that the total number of jobs will grow by 7,700 (an average of about 1,500 per year) over the lifespan of this Strategy.

Demand for housing is high and it remains important that we are prepared for such challenges. In doing so, we continually gather information in accordance with affordability for the residents in the Borough and work with stakeholders to make sure we have accurate information to reflect housing need and aspirations.

## ***Land supply***

The ability for us to achieve our vision, aims, objectives and aspirations for Cheshire East are affected by the lack of affordable homes to both purchase and rent.

The Local Plan Strategy has allocated sites to support the continued supply of available land to meet both current and future housing need, working with residents and strategic partners to help us identify sites for housing. This work will be further supplemented by the

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<sup>7</sup> Measured in terms of settlement. Average (median) household income is from PayCheck 2014, © Copyright CACI Limited. This Report shall be used for academic, personal and /or non-commercial purposes. Housing price data produced by Land Registry © Crown copyright 2014. Obtained from the Land Registry website on 22/12/14.

<sup>8</sup> Council for Mortgage Lenders October 2016



second part of the Local Plan; the Site Allocations and Development Policies document which will seek to meet the residual development requirements up to 2030.

The Council recognises the important role of the Green Belt in the Borough. The Local Plan Strategy has maintained the general extent of the Green Belt, but to achieve sustainable development over a period of several decades, some limited alterations to the detailed Green Belt boundaries around settlements in both the north and south of the Borough have been necessary.

The Local Plan Strategy is also supported by policies which seek to provide for the efficient use of land including encouragement for the redevelopment / reuse of previously developed land and buildings.

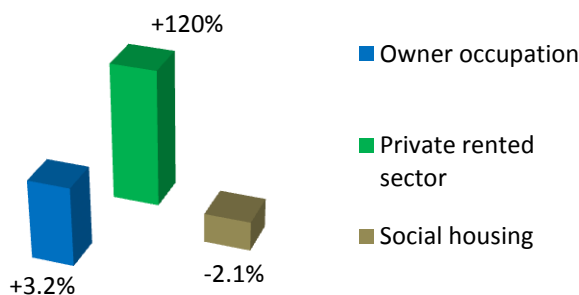
### **Private Rented Sector**

The private rented sector (PRS) makes an important contribution to the housing offer and offers tremendous flexibility to directly support our continued job-led growth for existing and incoming labour force. Traditionally, the sector has not been the tenure of choice, mainly due to concerns of security of tenure and property conditions. The private rented sector has seen rapid growth and is now the second largest tenure

behind home ownership; with the number of people in owner-occupations totalling 118,766; private rented total is 19,938 and social housing total is 18,141, which equates to a 119.8% increase for the PRS over a ten-year period.<sup>9</sup>

Cheshire East fully supports a well-managed and flexible PRS, in which it will offer opportunities in all areas of the Borough for further housing

solutions. Moreover, the major regeneration of our town centres in Crewe and the area in and around Macclesfield offer unique possibilities for higher-end PRS flats and family size accommodation, to attract younger people and further support the ambitions of jobs-led growth within the Borough. The Council has



**Cheshire East:  
Housing tenure change 2001-2011**

<sup>9</sup> Tables QS405EW (2011 Census) and KS018 (2001 Census), Office for National Statistics (ONS). ONS Crown Copyright 2018.

carried out a study into the PRS in Cheshire East and has found there is a need for new development in all towns in Cheshire East but particularly in Crewe and Macclesfield.

Additionally, through legislation, the sector now enables our Homelessness Service to support homeless or at risk of homelessness individuals or families with an immediate solution. As such, we will work to increase the supply of good quality and well managed private rented accommodation available to manage demand and offer a flexible, quick housing option.

Since 2010, consecutive central Governments' have highlighted the increased capacity of the PRS as a tenure of choice, to which we are now seeking to explore our role in successfully enabling direct investment into further growth of the sector.

### ***Market Housing***

A neighbourhood with a mix of housing type, tenures, and sizes will be more able to meet the changing needs and aspirations of its residents, through their changing life stages, household shapes and sizes or changes in income. Providing greater housing choice increases the opportunities for households to remain within their communities and promotes social equality and inclusion by easing geographical constraints on the search for appropriate homes.

The Local Plan sets out the requirements for new residential developments by stating that they should maintain provision of and contribute to a mix of housing types, tenure and size to help support the creation of mixed, balanced and inclusive communities. This includes meeting the needs of an ageing population, smaller properties, and opportunities for self-build.

## ***Affordable Housing***

For those whose housing needs cannot be met through market provision - Affordable Housing is; social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing,<sup>10</sup> provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined by local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Cheshire East Council and its partners have continued to be successful in attracting funding from Homes England to develop new affordable housing, in which registered housing providers have benefited from over £10 million of funding during the period 2016 to 2021 to fund the delivery of a further 334 affordable homes.

However, more affordable homes are needed to meet an increasing demand and need to be in the right location. Housing needs, work undertaken for the Local Plan estimated that the objectively assessed need for affordable housing was a minimum of 7,100 dwellings, which equates to an average of 355 per annum over the lifetime of the Local Plan.<sup>11</sup> Planning Policy details that in residential developments affordable housing will be provided as follows:

- In developments of 15 or more dwellings (or 0.4 hectares) in the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres at least 30% of all units are to be affordable
- In developments of 11 or more dwellings (or have a maximum combined gross floorspace of more than 1,000 sqm) in Local Service Centres and all other locations at least 30% of all units are to be affordable

We continually review the approaches we are using to increase the provision of affordable housing. However, we must acknowledge that the affordable housing sector has experienced rapid change because of tighter budgets, development viability, and recent changes in Government policy for more investment.

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<sup>10</sup> Intermediate housing is described by The National Planning Policy Framework as homes for sale and rent below market level, such as shared ownership and equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing

<sup>11</sup> Cheshire East Housing Development Study 2015, ORS, June 2015

## ***Rural housing***

Approximately 27% of Cheshire East's population live in Local Service Centres (LSCs)<sup>12</sup>, other settlements and rural areas. The provision of affordable housing is vital to the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities in these areas. There is a need to provide affordable housing for people who work in rural areas in order to avoid rural decline.

Outside the 24 main settlements, where the population tends to be more sparsely distributed, the median price is well above the Borough median at £295,000. In addition, the availability of affordable properties for rent in rural areas is much lower than in urban areas. The Council's policy for Rural Exceptions for Housing Local Needs is contained within Policy SC6 of the Council's Local Plan Strategy, which states Rural Exceptions affordable housing will be permitted as an exception to other policies concerning the countryside to meet locally identified need, subject to certain criteria being met.

Many rural areas now have neighbourhood plans, which contain information about need for affordable housing. If there is an identified need for affordable housing in rural areas, it will be a priority for the Council to bring forward affordable housing on exceptions sites where appropriate.

## ***Brownfields First***

In accordance with national policy, the Council is committed to the development of brownfield sites, which has been achieved over recent years through our Brownfields First approach. In seeking to increase the scope, we will continue to work towards implementation of our LDO in Macclesfield, monitoring if the aim to increasing their capacity has been successful.

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<sup>12</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2016 mid-year population estimates for small areas (October 2017 release). ONS Crown Copyright 2018. ONS licensed under the Open Government Licence v.3.0

## ***Empty Homes***

Empty homes are recognised as a wasted resource, depriving people of a much-needed home and contributing to the need for more housing. Properties will become empty at some point as part of the normal operation of the housing market, usually during the rental or buying process.

It is only when properties stay empty longer than six months without any obvious signs of renovation or rental that they become 'true' empty homes. When left empty, they have the potential to cause blight to local communities, prevent investment and regeneration, devalue surrounding properties, and attract anti-social behaviour.

We have been successful in reducing empty homes by 53% during the lifetime of the previous Housing Strategy through direct intervention, information and advice, enforcement, and policy changes around Council Tax.

Our approach through this Strategy is to work with the owners of empty homes, to support and encourage voluntary action to bring these homes back into use. Where co-operation fails, we will determine the extent to which the empty home affects its neighbours and the wider community, which in turn will inform our decision whether to intervene using our enforcement powers.

### ***Our priorities.***

***Priority: Facilitate the delivery of affordable housing and stimulate the housing market***

As clearly identified within the Local Plan, our aim is to improve the supply of homes in Cheshire East; affordable, market and homes to rent. In supporting the Government's housing policy approach, we will work to improve the housing offer through a package of measures to stimulating the investment in our housing market to support our continued economic growth.

Demand for homes in Cheshire East is being shaped by our growth, with the creation of newly formed households who are unable to access the market housing and seek options to access affordable housing. Moreover, we are experiencing demand for smaller size homes of mixed tenure to meet the need of older

residents looking to downsize and single person households.

As demand from those who are struggling to find a home increases in conjunction with increases in household numbers, the Council and its partners will have to be creative and flexible in securing the levels of affordable housing that the Borough needs for the future. This will involve consideration of innovative forms of affordable housing within the context of emerging Government policy, including affordable home ownership.

***Priority: Support regeneration to support quality of place***

Quality of place contributes to both the economic sustainability and the well-being of an area and its residents. As we seek to further support the Corporate aims and objectives that promote our future prosperity - we must ensure that housing focuses on quality of design and appropriate development as outlined within the Council's Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, which can help increase return on economic and social value to our communities. At the same time, we need to ensure that there is the right mix of housing available to meet the needs of residents.

To this end, we will maintain our commitment to ensure the supply of housing continues to be central to regeneration and renewal of our neighbourhoods, working directly with our partners in areas of housing need through facilitating and encouraging sustainable development of affordable homes.

***Priority: Improve the housing offer for an ageing population***

It is essential that a housing offer is available to our residents at all stages of their lives, to enable them to live in a good quality affordable home. With the proven forecast of an ageing population within Cheshire East, it is crucial that we have a clear vision and support the shaping of a housing market for older people that is responsive to their changing need.

While we will continue to support older people who choose to live in their own home, by the further integration of housing; care and health, there must be



an opportunity for older people to seek to 'rightsize' (downsize). It is important that there is access to a choice of market housing,; affordable housing of mixed tenure and type and where practical, a well-designed home that is 'care-ready' for their future need. Therefore, we will continue to promote the need for age friendly housing design in identified areas of need.

***Priority: Develop a housing offer to support jobs-led growth***

Cheshire East is part of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), whose vision is to make Cheshire and Warrington the best performing economy outside of the South East. The recently reviewed Strategic Economic Plan sets out the role of housing in future economic development and replicates our ambition to increase supply and to make sure that affordability issues across the authority are addressed. Working in collaboration can bring forward opportunities for Cheshire East including the sharing of best practice and a collective approach to delivery.

As detailed in the LEP, the Constellation Partnership (formerly referred to as the Northern Gateway Partnership) is a boundary breaking partnership between two Local Enterprise Partnerships and seven Local Authorities, with a unified fast-track approach to ambitious, plan-led economic development, bringing further opportunities for housing growth.

The Partners share a common vision: a single economic footprint creating a coherent investment market, boosted by the international investment magnet of High Speed Rail (HS2) connectivity, producing attractive growth opportunities for investors across the Growth Zone area including Stoke and North Staffordshire.

To deliver this scale of growth, partners must ensure that the growth proposed considers connectivity, markets, sectoral options and skills, but will also improve quality of life and create access to improved, sustainable services and facilities. This includes sustainable local housing growth that drives footfall to sustain and develop existing town centres that may otherwise continue to struggle, and by offering high quality design and innovative build opportunities to attract new professionals and families and retain graduates in urban centres.

**Delivery Plan: Growth and quality of life**

<b>Priority: Facilitate the delivery of affordable housing and stimulate the housing market</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>How we will do this?</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>When by</b>
<b>HS01</b>	1. Facilitate the delivery of 355 affordable homes per year through partnership working	A mix of small and family sized homes to meet housing needs, including overcrowded families and people who are looking to downsize	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quarterly review meeting with Registered Housing Providers</li> <li>2. Explore funding opportunities through Homes England and other agencies</li> <li>3. Explore the most effective use of Section 106 Funding</li> <li>4. Quarterly update reports</li> </ol>	March 2019
	2. Support the Private Rented Sector housing offer	Increase the provision and attractiveness of the Private Rented Sector offer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Exploring opportunities to simulate growth</li> <li>2. Developing appropriate policies</li> </ol>	March 2020
	3. Explore development of Joint Venture	Development of mix of housing provision and opportunities for increased revenue	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formalise business case</li> <li>2. Progress business case through the formal approval routes</li> <li>3. Procurement (subject to approval)</li> </ol>	March 2019
	4. Use of surplus Council assets	Residential opportunities in unused Council buildings and land	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quarterly reviews to be undertaken with Assets</li> <li>2. Establish business cases for appropriate sites and best route for development</li> <li>3. Progress through formal approval routes</li> </ol>	Strategy lifespan
	5. Implement our Brownfield First approach across Cheshire East	Increase residential opportunities on brownfields sites, increasing provision within town centres	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work with Regeneration to establish residential opportunities within town centres (Crewe and Macclesfield)</li> <li>2. Completion of Macclesfield Development Orders and monitor progress</li> <li>3. Review the In Town Living Project for further opportunities</li> <li>4. Review the Brownfield Register for residential development opportunities</li> </ol>	Strategy lifespan

**Priority: Facilitate the delivery of affordable housing and stimulate the housing market**

<b>Ref:</b>	<b>How we will do this?</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>When by</b>
<b>HS01 (con)</b>	6. Facilitate the delivery of affordable housing in rural areas with identified need	Increasing the amount of affordable housing	Proactively working with Parish Councils who have identified a need for affordable housing to bring forward such opportunities	Strategy lifespan
	7. Development of Supplementary / or appropriate Planning Policies	Facilitate the delivery of affordable housing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formulate the evidence base for mixed provision including; affordable; older persons; self-build specialist and private rented</li> <li>2. Development of appropriate policies</li> <li>3. Implementation of policy approach</li> </ol>	March 2020
	8. Self-build and custom build	Increase self-build and custom build Opportunities in the delivery of planning policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain register</li> <li>2. Seek appropriate sites for self / custom build</li> </ol>	March 2019
	9. Attract investors in the Multihousing Sector	Stimulate the opportunities to increase the provision of private rented and increase housing options for residents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore council led opportunities to increase private rented provision</li> <li>2. Work with Registered Providers and investors to progress and develop in Cheshire East</li> </ol>	Strategy lifespan
	10. Funding opportunities	Increase the housing options for residents	Explore funding opportunities to increase housing provision. for example Housing Infrastructure Funding, Accelerated Construction, Modern Methods of Construction	Strategy lifespan
	11. Support the development of the Handforth Garden Village	Support the delivery of a mixed tenure scheme	Direct involvement in the Masterplan	Mach 2020
<b>Who will help us to achieve this?</b>		Elected Members Engine of the North Homes England	Housing developers Housing Providers Neighbourhood Planning	Private landlords Regeneration Residents

**Priority: Support regeneration to support quality of place**

<b>Ref:</b>	<b>How we will do this?</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>		<b>Milestone</b>	<b>When by</b>
<b>HS02</b>	1. Work with partners on programmes of regeneration and renewal within the Borough	Ensure the importance of the housing offer remains principal in jobs-led economic growth		1. Working with Regeneration to identify residential opportunities 2. Develop appropriate policies and strategies to bring forward these opportunities	Strategy lifespan
	2. Work with housing provider and developers to increase market and intermediate product sales	Improved choice of affordable housing options to meet diversify of need		Understanding the housing market needs within an area	Annual review
	3. Explore collaborative opportunities to bring forward housing opportunities	Support aims and objectives of Constellation Partnership		Work with the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Constellation Partnership to bring forward opportunities for housing growth	Annual review
	4. Support providers in funding applications for Estate Regeneration	To make sure our neighbourhoods benefit from direct investment		Actively engage with Providers to review and input into plans	Annual review
	5. Maintain strategic links with providers as they seek to diversify their business culture	Support our partner providers		Providers review meetings	Strategy lifespan
<b>Who will help us to achieve this?</b>		Elected Members Engine of the North Homes England	Housing developers Neighbourhood Planning Private landlords	Regeneration Housing Providers Residents	

**Priority: *Improve the housing offer for an ageing population***

<b>Ref:</b>	<b>How we will do this?</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>When by</b>
<b>HS03</b>	1. Promote a housing offer which provides a mix of type, affordability, tenure and size for older people	Support health and wellbeing of an ageing population	1. Update evidence base in relation to housing needs for an ageing population 2. Explore downsizing development opportunities	March 2020
	2. Support Local Plan (Part 2) in the provision of housing choice for older people	Housing offer is of appropriate specification and age positive	Work with Spatial Planning to develop appropriate policies	March 2019
	3. Provision of housing offer to rightsize for ageing population	Housing offer is promoted as attractive and sustainable	Customer engagement	Strategy lifespan
	4. Review the Vulnerable and Older People Housing Strategy	Informing commissioning decisions o enable us to improve the housing offer	1. Review evidence base 2. Consultation 3. Development revised Strategy	March 2019
<b>Who will help us to achieve this?</b>		Elected Members Engine of the North Homes England	Housing developers Neighbourhood Planning Private landlords	Regeneration Housing Providers Residents

<b>Priority: <i>Develop a housing offer to support jobs-led growth</i></b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b><i>How we will do this?</i></b>	<b><i>Outcomes</i></b>	<b><i>Milestone</i></b>	<b><i>When by</i></b>
<b>HS04</b>	1. Sustain the housing requirements in the Local Plan	High quality housing offer	Quarterly report on the number, tenure, type, size, and funding of housing in areas of identified growth	Strategy lifespan
	2. Mix of housing offer in area of growth	A range of affordable housing types	Development of appropriate policies in conjunction with Spatial Planning	Strategy lifespan
	3. New homes are in areas of growth	New homes of the right quality, in the right location at the right price	Development of appropriate policies in conjunction with Spatial Planning	Strategy lifespan
	4. Promote the contribution of the Private Rented Sector	Attractive housing offer	Development of appropriate policies in conjunction with Spatial Planning	Annual review
<b>Who will help us to achieve this?</b>	Elected Members Engine of the North Homes England	Housing developers Neighbourhood Planning Private landlords	Regeneration Housing Providers Residents	



## Health, wellbeing and quality of life

Living in suitable good quality housing is critical to our health and wellbeing, and provides a base from which to access education, training, and employment, participate and contribute to the community and achieve a decent quality of life. Safe and suitable housing also enables people to manage their own health and care needs, live independently, complete treatment and recover from substance misuse and ill health, and move on successfully from homelessness and other traumatic life events.



Poor housing puts pressure on the health and social care system through emergency admissions and use of acute hospital services, delayed transfers of care from hospital to home, provision of care packages, and ongoing treatment for ill health.

Our ambition is to improve health through the home. Co-ordinated approaches to securing access to housing,

commissioning preventative services and improving the quality of homes will generate positive outcomes for residents and reduce the burden on the NHS and other services. We are committed to stimulating and shaping a diverse, active market where people with care and support needs, their families, and their carer's are included and involved in community, economic and social life.

Housing is recognised in the Care Act 2014 as a fundamental component of wellbeing. The general duty to promote wellbeing includes specific reference to housing; information and advice should include housing options, local authorities should promote housing that facilitates choice and control, and multi-agency working should include work with housing partners. We will secure opportunities for residents to make informed choices about their housing, to access and maintain good quality homes and sustain independent living by connecting them to services across housing, welfare

rights, health, social care, education, training, and employment, focusing on those who need the most support to achieve independent lives.

The dynamics of the relationship between housing and health can be complex and require a collaborative and co-ordinated approach between the housing, health, social care, voluntary, community and faith sectors. Health and social care is integrating; we need to ensure that housing is a key factor in that integration. Our priority must be to design and commission services with our partners in Adult Services, Childrens Services, Public Health, and Partnerships and Communities that promote choice, control and self-help to address health and housing needs; early intervention to stop residents' health and housing needs from escalating and respond effectively to complex needs and people in crisis. Our Strategy and associated commissioning must be firmly linked to health outcomes for residents, and must build on the key evidence within the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

We explore such aspects within the theme of **Health, wellbeing and quality of life**, set out our priorities and what we intend to do at the end of the section through a Delivery Plan.

### ***Independent Living***

For many older people, their preference is to stay living in their own home. Some however feel unable to manage in their home and consider alternative options for housing, whether that is making their current home more suitable, downsizing, moving to a different tenure, or looking for housing with support. Community based independent living can take several forms, from living in mainstream general needs housing with floating visiting support for people with low level needs, shared living in houses or single storey accommodation with on-site support for those with higher needs and purpose built supported housing schemes.

In extreme circumstances, older people make a move into residential / nursing care, normally through need but sometimes through choice. Supporting people to live well and independently costs less than residential care and can avoid emergency hospital admission.

Of course, independent living is critical for people of all ages as their needs change in response to life events. There is a growing body of evidence demonstrating that an accessible, adapted home can make a significant contribution to improving older and disabled people's quality of life. Because low income often coincides with disability, many disabled people rely on help to adapt their home.

Handyperson services play a key role in keeping people safe and early intervention, with around 1,500 people each year helped to prevent falls and the subsequent hospital admissions, as well facilitating getting people home from hospital.

Major adaptations are also a critical part of reducing the burden on social care and health, and support provided by the home improvement agency guides people through the practical elements of designing adaptations, applying for grants, and appointing contractors.

Over the past 3 years, the home improvement agency has facilitated £4.3million of Disabled Facilities Grants for 839 disabled people. Ensuring residents can access adaptations services is important. Collaborative working with occupational therapists in Adult Services is vital, but we also need to make sure that people who have a substantial physical disability and struggle to access parts of their home but don't need formal care, can access the disabled facilities grants, and that vulnerable people who can afford the adaptations but need a helping hand with organising the repairs can access support from the home improvement agency.

Registered Providers are proactive in working with tenants who are assessed as needing adaptations, exploring options for rehousing first before homes are adapted. At the time of writing, there are 309 households registered with Cheshire Homechoice who are waiting for an adapted property, of which 114 are waiting for a wheelchair accessible property. More needs to be done to match tenants to suitable properties to reduce the number of requests for adaptations at the start of new tenancies.

## **Care Leavers**

Care leavers are entitled to receive support from Personal Advisers (PAs). The new Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduces duties on local authorities to offer this support to all care leavers up to the age of 25. This duty means local authorities are required to have regard to corporate parenting principles to guide the provision of services to children in care and care leavers.

In 2016, Cheshire East developed 'Ignition,' a local housing panel for care leavers. This was developed jointly and co-ordinated by Housing and Children's services to support care leavers transition to adulthood and support their readiness for taking on a future tenancy;

- This provides care leavers with access to specialist advice on housing options before they leave care
- CEC chooses to give reasonable preference to care leavers in housing allocations
- It also aims to prevent homelessness amongst care leavers and the service takes action to assist care leavers becoming homeless
- Takes a corporate decision to exempt care leavers from paying Council Tax up to the age of 25

The aim of housing and care leaver support is to support care leavers so that they can live independently, and this level of support will be reflected in joint working protocols with our housing partners and Children's and Adult services.

## **Complex needs**

Despite increasing interventions to prevent homelessness, we are still experiencing an increasing number of individuals approaching as homeless tonight or within 56 days.

Evidence suggests that the complexity and level of chaos is increasing for those households who end up requiring the services of the Homeless Team. Of note is the number of single people experiencing mental ill health that are becoming homeless because of a lack

of intermediate options to support them following any short inpatient stay in local hospitals. While some individuals will fall within the Council's statutory homelessness duties as being vulnerable due to mental health is a priority need, however in some circumstances this may not be the case for many single person households, many of whom have complex needs.



We have worked with colleagues from health agencies on several projects to improve the services for people experiencing substance misuse issues and / or mental illness. The joint approach identified a

need for recovery based accommodation programmes across the Borough and subsequently 32 bed spaces have now been made available for people who are still using substances but need a stable, safe space to begin their recovery

In 2016, we explored the need for more joined up services and accommodation for people needing to step down from mental health services into the community. This led to the introduction of a new working protocol between Housing and Health and additionally saw the introduction of two link workers and some emergency accommodation provision. Housing is keen to maintain and develop these strong relationships with Health colleagues to provide successful pathways for people with complex and chaotic lifestyles.

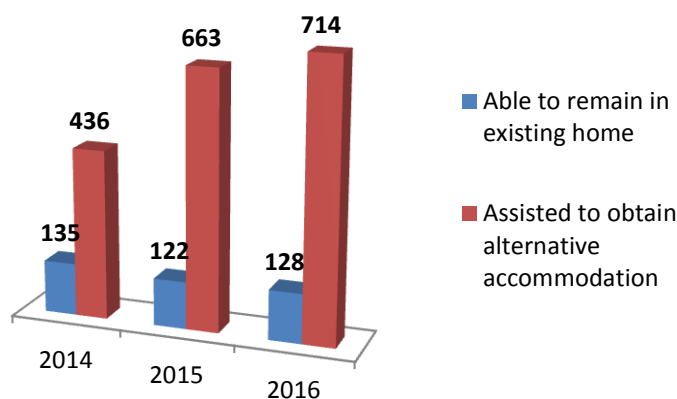
For most residents of Cheshire East, accessing and maintaining accommodation comes without too much difficulty or they may rely on friend, family, and wider networks to support them when things don't go to plan. For some others, they need the helping hand of accommodation-based support or floating support to assist them in getting their housing situation on track.



## Homelessness

Access to suitable housing advice and effective housing interventions are vital in promoting health and wellbeing of all residents, our homelessness prevention service is embedded at the forefront of our Housing Options service to provide advice, support, or advocacy before homelessness arises. This approach has been acknowledged as effective as we have progressed through the ten challenges associated with the National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS) Gold Standard model, which gives local authorities a model for continuous improvement. Cheshire East continues to prioritise homeless prevention and has seen the number of cases prevented from becoming homeless increase year on year with 571 households prevented in 2014; 785 in 2015 and 842 in 2016.

### Homelessness prevention



The most common reasons for households accepted as homeless in Cheshire East are: they have been asked to leave by family or friends, they have experienced domestic abuse, or have come to the end of an assured shorthold tenancy. It is imperative that we continue to focus our work around proactive intervention in these areas to try to avoid the homelessness occurring. Our prevention activities are most effective by finding suitable alternative accommodation for households due to the priority awarded through the Cheshire Homechoice Allocations Policy.

As detailed, over the past 3 years we have directly helped 2,198 households through our homelessness prevention. Progress on reducing homelessness is monitored each quarter via the P1E homelessness form. Housing related support helps vulnerable homeless people with temporary accommodation, from which they are helped to move on to a home of their own once they are ready. A measure of success will be those who have sustained their own accommodation for 6 months. This is recorded every quarter in performance reports.

The Allocations Policy underpins the ability to move people who are in housing need to appropriate social housing. With approximately 6,500 registered for housing needs each year and only an average of 1,300 properties available annually it is vital the policy strikes the balance between supporting sustainable, settled neighbourhoods whilst giving priority to those people who are in urgent housing need.

The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) came into force in April 2018 and makes provision about new measures for reducing homelessness. It has amended the Housing Act 1996 to change the definition of being threatened with homelessness, obliging councils to assess people at risk of homelessness from 56 days before a person is likely to become homeless, increased from 28 days, giving people longer to seek help from us. It applies to local housing and social services authorities, who are required to have regard to the Act in exercising their functions in relation to homelessness. This also includes a duty upon public authorities to refer people to the Council who they feel are at risk of homelessness from October 2018.

The Council's new *Homelessness Strategy 2018-2021* has embedded the HRA into our practices. The Homelessness Strategy Steering Group is responsible for driving forward the delivery of the action plan and ensuring that progress is made in meeting the objectives of the Homelessness Strategy. Task and Finish groups support the work of the Steering Group, focusing on specific projects, such as a 'hard to house' panel which seeks to provide interventions to prevent the homelessness of vulnerable people who have exhausted current options. Task and Finish Groups report back to the Steering Group on progress, and on any areas of concern.

One of the main priorities of the Homelessness Strategy is to prevent rough sleeping, through initiatives such as the **Upstream Project** which identifies those at risk of rough sleeping; **No Second Night Out** which works with those who are new to rough sleeping, and the **Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)**, which helps anyone sleeping rough when night time temperatures fall below freezing. We anticipate that this will significantly increase the number of individuals who approach or are referred to the Housing Options Team for assistance and increase the resources required to meet the new duties.

## *Housing quality*

Poor housing can contribute towards the prevalence of many preventable diseases and is connected to injuries due to falls particularly in older people. Household overcrowding can result in an increased risk in the spread of infection. Poor housing conditions have also been identified as having an adverse effect on mental health.

The private rented sector has seen rapid growth and is now the second largest tenure behind home ownership; owner-occupations 118,766; private rented 19,938; social housing 18,141,<sup>13</sup> which is an increase of 119.8% between 2001 and 2011. It offers a flexible form of tenure and meets a wide range of housing needs. It contributes to greater labour market mobility and is increasingly the tenure of choice for young people. The Council plays an essential role in quality assurance in this sector, and through information, guidance, and enforcement of housing legislation.



We are intervening in around 300 single-household private rented properties each year, but there is a concern, like other areas of the country, that tenants are under-reporting disrepair due to concerns about their security of tenure; more needs to be done to encourage tenants to report issues and provide support to safeguard their tenancy.

Older people are more likely to live with chronic health conditions, which are exacerbated by poor housing, and most will spend a greater amount of time at home. Most older people are homeowners with Cheshire East at 81%, (highest proportion for any county or unitary authority in the North West); when an ageing population

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<sup>13</sup> Tables QS405EW (2011 Census) and KS018 (2001 Census), Office for National Statistics (ONS). ONS Crown Copyright 2018.

and dwindling incomes combine there are consequences for adult social care and the NHS as lower income older home owners struggle to meet the costs of home repairs and maintenance.

The Council has successfully operated a policy of home repair grants and loans for vulnerable people for a number of years. Between 2012 and 2017, the Council has invested nearly £7million into improving the homes and lives of over 1,450 vulnerable households in Cheshire East. The Policy has also drawn in over £2.1million of match funding from Government grants, Registered Providers, and charitable trusts.

Central Government investment in housing repairs ceased in 2010, so continued local investment is testament to the Council's appreciation of the impact that the quality of housing has on people's lives. A new grants and loans policy has been adopted in 2017 with a focus on residents achieving outcomes around having a place to live with independence that they can afford to keep warm and which safeguards their wellbeing.

### ***Houses in multiple occupation***

Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) are a vital component of our housing offer, providing accommodation for tenants who are unable to afford to rent a self-contained property, or who enjoy the flexibility that renting a room in a property offers to them.

Most tenants in HMOs are unrelated and live separate lives; this can make management of tenancies more challenging compared to a single let property, and risks to health and safety are higher in shared accommodation, as tenants have less regard to the welfare of other occupants. In larger HMOs, the risk of death from fire is sixteen times higher than a single let property.

HMOs have been a growth sector of our rental market, with the greatest concentrations to be found in Crewe and Macclesfield; that said; HMOs still only represent around 0.3% of the housing stock (an estimated 600 properties). Many are managed to good standards by reputable landlords, but there is evidence of poor management practices in some HMOs, although only a minority, the impact on tenants and communities can be disproportionate and causes reputational damage to the HMO sector.

The mandatory licensing scheme for HMOs will be extended from 1 October 2018 following a change in legislation; any HMO accommodating five or more people will require a licence, significantly increasing the scale of the licensing scheme in Cheshire East from 50 properties to an estimated 300-400 properties. As well as implementing the legislative changes, HMOs accommodating less than five people will remain a focus of our attention, and we will keep the need for a discretionary licensing scheme and the removal of permitted development rights through the planning process under review.

## ***Hoarding***

As more services are delivered into people's homes, hoarding is becoming more apparent. Whilst many people may think of themselves as hoarders, for most the trait doesn't do any harm. For some, it reaches extremes that can affect their health and even put their lives at risk. The scale of the hoarding problem is unknown, with many people able to go about their daily lives seemingly unaffected, but it affects their social lives and people become isolated as they keep people away from their home.

Hoarding disorder is a recognised mental health condition, and resembles obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) in many ways, but on the other hand is also distinct from OCD, as many people who hoard may not experience negative or unwanted thoughts about hoarding, and distress only occurs when the person is forced to discard. Hoarding is complex and requires a collaborated and integrated approach across services to be able to effectively support people to break the cycle of hoarding.

A multi-agency practitioners' forum has been integrated into the Local Adults Safeguarding Board structure, and a toolkit has been developed to aid professionals working with people who hoard. There remains a gap in services for hoarders, with a clear need for practical one to one support to provide support and coaching to reduce the amount of belongings and to engage with other services.

## ***Gypsy and Travellers***

The Government's overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of Travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community. Local planning authorities should ensure that Traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally to ensure access to health and education services and employment, integration and social inclusion within local communities.

We have worked sub-regionally with partner local authorities to obtain an assessment of need reflected in our Local Plan Strategy (Policy SC7 Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople), based on the findings of a survey undertaken in 2014. In addition, the Local Plan (SC7) sets out the considerations that should be considered in considering future proposals for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson sites.

We are in the process of updating our assessment of need, again with sub-regional partners in preparing a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, following a change in national guidance in 2015. We are also preparing the Part 2 of our Local Plan, the Site Allocations and Development Policies document, which will provide further detail and consider the allocation of sites to meet future need.



## ***Affordable warmth***

A warm, dry home is fundamental to good health. Whilst residents rarely identify themselves as being in fuel poverty, they will experience a range of problems that arise from being unable to adequately afford to heat their home, including difficulty paying their energy bills, risk of disconnection, cold, damp home, and respiratory illnesses.

There isn't one single cause of fuel poverty, leading to the need for a range of approaches and agencies to promote affordable warmth. Older people, children under 5 and people with health problems and reduced mobility are at greater risk of ill health from cold housing; in 2015/16, there were 231 excess winter deaths in Cheshire East.



Respiratory diseases have a marked seasonal effect, with 48% more people dying from respiratory disease in the winter of 2015/16 than in the non-winter months. The seasonal effect on deaths from circulatory diseases was not large with a 12% increase during the winter months; in 2015/16 there was a larger proportion of deaths from dementia and Alzheimer's disease (16%).

With a growing ageing population and the prevalence of dementia, it is important that we address affordable warmth within this group, ensuring that they are on the best available energy tariff, they can control their heating and can heat their home, and they can afford their energy bills. Residents using fuels other than gas pay more to heat their home. 24.3% of properties in Cheshire East are not connected to the gas grid, with around 9,000 homes using electric to heat their home, and around 8,300 using oil. The largest off-gas area is rural Nantwich, where the incidence of fuel poverty is slightly above the Cheshire East average of 10%.

Research by National Energy Action and the Campaign to Protect Rural England has found that people in rural areas are paying as much as 55% more to heat their homes than people in urban areas.

However, the highest incidences of fuel poverty in Cheshire East can be found in urban areas – in parts of Crewe, there are an estimated 28.8% households in fuel poverty, compared to the Cheshire East average of 10%<sup>14</sup>.

### ***Our priorities.***

#### ***Priority: Promote independent living***

While the term ‘independence’ is often used in the context of older people and ageing and how this specific group of the population can maintain independence in their later years when poor health and disabilities are more prevalent – promoting independence is important across all stages of life, young children, throughout adulthood and into old age.

Our priority is to reach people early and keep them in their own homes through prevention and early intervention to reduce people reaching crisis point. We will provide equipment and adaptations to support continued independence and enable care to be provided at home, and work with Registered Providers to improve the use of existing accessible housing stock. By working with our key stakeholders, we will promote and deliver initiatives that provide choice and opportunities to sustain independent living for all our residents.

#### ***Priority: Commission housing support for people with complex needs***

A new programme of Housing Related Support projects was commissioned by Housing in April 2017, to provide supported accommodation and floating support for over 300 individuals at any one time across Cheshire East.

The first twelve months of the new projects has evidenced that there is significant demand for the services, with over 415 referrals to supported accommodation and 165 to floating support. It is too soon within the contracts to analyse the impact of these support services on improving people’s housing

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<sup>14</sup> Sub-regional Fuel Poverty England 2017 (2015 data), Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, June 2017

pathway, but the new providers are working collaboratively with Housing services to provide high quality outcomes.

**Priority: Prevent Homelessness**

A focussed response to preventative processes and pathways will be delivered through our Homeless Strategy 2018-2021 and has four key aims for the Council and partners to act upon through the lifetime of the Strategy. The four broad aims are:

- Help people who are homeless to secure appropriate affordable accommodation
- Enable more people to remain in their home and prevent them from becoming homeless
- Provide interventions so no-one should sleep rough in Cheshire East
- Ensure adequate support is in place to help people maintain and sustain accommodation

**Priority: Challenge poor quality housing**

Our Strategy is to support, regulate, and intervene. We will target our investment and services to ensure that the most vulnerable people are able to live in well-maintained housing that safeguards their health and wellbeing.

We will support by providing information, education, and financial help. We will continue to provide a support service for homeowners to repair and maintain their homes. We will improve landlords' knowledge of their legal responsibilities through better information and tailored advice, and will increase tenants' awareness about their housing rights. A key area of focus in the private rented sector is the effects of damp and mould on physical and emotional health: we will increase landlords and tenants' knowledge of the importance of heating and ventilation.

We will regulate by operating a mandatory licensing scheme for HMOs. We will extend and adapt this scheme in line with changes to legislation, and communicate these changes to ensure we capture licensable HMOs and regulate the management and quality standards. We also regulate by keeping housing

conditions under review and improving reporting mechanisms to remove any barriers for tenants to report their concerns.

Where support and regulation are ineffective, we will use our enforcement powers to intervene. We will improve the way we use our powers, while ensuring our interventions are fair, equitable, and proportionate, which sends out a clear message that poor quality housing and poor management will not be tolerated.

We will enforce the management standards in all HMOs. We will monitor the private rented market across Cheshire East and where it is clear that an area is suffering from problems that can be improved through a landlord-licensing scheme, or by removed permitted development rights, we will take steps to introduce this.

***Priority: Promote affordable warmth***

Fuel poverty is caused by a number of factors and there isn't a 'one size fits all' solution to help everyone. We will continue to work collaboratively with our partners to make sure residents receive the advice, information, and support they need to afford to adequately heat their home.

We will improve our strategic links with the health sector and JSNA in terms of intelligence to further support our approach, and dovetail our actions to promote affordable warmth with the health and wellbeing Strategy priority to reduce excess winter deaths. .

Changes to energy efficiency regulations in the private rented sector are a significant challenge. From 01 April 2018, it will be unlawful to let a new tenancy, or renew a tenancy, in the private rented sector if the property does not achieve at least Band E on the Energy Performance Certificate. From 2020, this will apply to all existing tenancies. This has the potential to significantly reduce the availability of private rented stock, and increase our regulatory role in enforcing the regulations. We will work with private landlords to increase take up of energy efficiency schemes. .

**Delivery Plan: Health, wellbeing and quality of life**

<b>Priority: Promote independent living</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>How we will do this?</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>When by</b>
<b>HS05</b>	1. Deliver an efficient and effective Disabled Facilities Grant programme	People can live independently in their own home	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>350 households helped each year</li> <li>Explore benchmarking and learning and innovation opportunities</li> <li>Carry out a systems review and implement improvements</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual review</li> <li>March 2019</li> <li>March 2020</li> </ol>
	2. Deliver initiatives that are focused on early intervention and reducing non-elective hospital admissions	People prepare for older age at an earlier stage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement and promotional activities with residents</li> <li>Develop tailored service offers with health and social care partners</li> </ol>	Strategy lifespan
	3. Develop the home improvement agency service for self-funders	People have choice and control over their lives	Explore options to deliver an improved and expanded service	March 2019
	4. Maximise the best use of accessible housing stock	People can live independently in their own home	Establish protocols with housing providers	March 2019
	5. Preparing clients as tenancy ready and / or maintain a tenancy	People are less likely to be admitted to hospital	Reduction in early tenancy termination	Strategy lifespan
	6. Promoting independence for care leavers – through the Ignition Panel	Housing protocol with Children and Family Services / Strategic housing and care leavers through Ignition Panel	Monitoring / Review the effectiveness of the Ignition Panel	Strategy lifespan

<b>Priority: Promote independent living</b>					
<b>Ref:</b>	<b><i>How we will do this?</i></b>	<b><i>Outcomes</i></b>		<b><i>Milestone</i></b>	<b><i>When by</i></b>
<b>HS05 (con)</b>	7. Partnership working between the Housing and Childrens Services:	To support the Cheshire East Children and Young People Local Offer		Effective working relationship which maintains the key purposes of the Local Offer	Strategy lifespan
	8. Promoting independence for residents with learning and / or autism and physical disabilities	People can live independently in their own home		Establish a clear evidence base in relation to specialist provision	March 2019
	9. Commission specialist support for people with complex hoarding problems	People can manage their health and care at home		Developing an effective support programme	Strategy lifespan
<b>Who will help us to achieve this?</b>		Elected Members Handyperson Service	Housing providers Private Landlords	Registered Housing Providers Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector	



**Priority: Commission housing support for people with complex needs**

<b>Ref:</b>	<b><i>How we will do this?</i></b>	<b><i>Outcomes</i></b>	<b><i>Milestone</i></b>	<b><i>When by</i></b>
<b>HS06</b>	1. Continue to effectively commission and manage the programme of Housing Related Support projects across the Borough	Reduction of recurring customers into commissioned services	Collate quarterly monitoring those in sustainable accommodation 6 months after leaving supported accommodation	March 2022
	2. Direct provision of Key Support Workers to support individuals at risk of homelessness from hospital discharge	Work with the Clinical Commissioning Group and Public Health to increase positive move-on from all commissioned pathways	Reduction in homelessness referrals from hospital	Annual review
	3. Work with housing providers in shaping permanent move-on accommodation, with continued measured support to ensure sustainable outcomes	Improvements in health and wellbeing inequalities experienced by customers with complex needs	Collected quarterly to monitor those in sustainable accommodation	March 2022
	4. Establish good quality intelligence and useful data on complex needs	Reduction of recurring customers into commissioned services	Maintained evidence base	Annual review
	5. Ensure the workforce and / or providers are equipped and supported to effectively understand and support multiplicity of need	Work with the Clinical Commissioning Group and Public Health to increase positive move-on from all commissioned pathways	Training opportunities / Performance Development Review	Annual review
<b>Who will help us to achieve this?</b>	Elected Members Engine of the North Homes England	Housing developers Neighbourhood Planning Regeneration	Registered Housing Providers Residents Spatial Planning	

**Priority: Prevent homelessness**

<b>Ref:</b>	<b>How we will do this?</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>When by</b>
<b>HS07</b>	1. Implement new Homelessness Strategy 2018-2021 Action Plan	Support individuals and households threatened with homelessness to find suitable housing before they become homeless	1. Action Plan reviewed bi-annually by the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group 2. Task and Finish Groups active	1. Bi-annually 2. Strategy lifespan
	2. Work with our partners to help improve the health and wellbeing of homeless people and identify those who are at risk of homelessness	Personalised pathways into supported / settled accommodation, and break the link between homelessness and ill health	1. Report: Sustained tenancy accommodation 6 months after leaving supported accommodation 2. Support Needs Assessment Pathways - help people obtain or keep accommodation	1. Annually 2. Annually
	3. Continue working with partner agencies to deliver our successful 'No Second Night Out' initiative	A reduction in rough sleeping to as close to 0 as possible through a range of interventions providing temporary and longer term housing solutions so that no one has to sleep rough	1. Upstream Project over next 3 years to assist up to 120 people who will be at risk of sleeping rough 2. Severe weather provision available during November – March each year reducing the likelihood of a death, and creation of a <i>Hard to House</i> panel in 2018	Strategy lifespan
	4. Continue to develop partnerships with housing providers across all tenures, including the private rented sector	Increased access to permanent safe accommodation for homeless applicants	Increase in homeless preventions recorded quarterly in P1E returns and assessed for trend data and any areas for concern	Strategy lifespan
<b>Who will help us to achieve this?</b>	Elected Members Engine of the North Homes England Homelessness Strategy Steering Group		Housing developers Neighbourhood Planning Regeneration	Registered Housing Providers Residents Spatial Planning

**Priority: Challenge poor quality housing**

<b>Ref:</b>	<b>How we will do this?</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>When by</b>
<b>HS08</b>	1. Ensure the continued success of the Cheshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme	Improved housing standards (Gold Standard)	1. Review the scheme output and efficiency 2. Explore continued expansion	Strategy Lifespan
	2. Promote landlord and agent responsibilities to effectively manage safe housing	Landlords provide a quality housing offer	Communication campaign	Strategy Lifespan
	3. Raise awareness of tenants' rights to safe and healthy housing	Tenants understand and have control over their housing choices	Communication campaign	Strategy Lifespan
	4. Promote and deliver grants and loans through the Home Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Policy	People live in safe well-maintained homes	1. Performance monitoring 2. Review policy 3. Contributory factors to Cheshire East JSNA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strategy Lifespan</li> <li>▪ March 2021</li> </ul>
	5. Deliver a home improvement agency service for older and vulnerable homeowners to maintain their home	People have choice and control over their lives	1. Performance monitoring 2. Explore options to deliver an improved and expanded service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strategy Lifespan</li> <li>▪ March 2019</li> </ul>
	6. Regulate houses in multiple occupation through a mandatory licensing scheme	Quality and management standards in the HMO sector are improved	1. Implement legislative changes 2. Communications campaign	Strategy Lifespan
	7. Keep the need for extra controls in the private rented sector under review	A strong, healthy and vibrant private rental sector	In-depth analysis for selective licensing	January 2019
	8. Targeting of regulatory activity at the worst management and poorest housing standards	The private rental sector's reputation is improved and protected from poor quality management	1. Performance monitoring 2. Contributory factors to Cheshire East JSNA	Annual review
	9. Develop greater use of enforcement tools	Safeguard health and wellbeing in housing	Rolling review of Housing Enforcement policy	Strategy Lifespan
<b>Who will help us to achieve this?</b>	Elected Members Home Office	Private Landlords Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service	Police Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector	

**Priority: Promote affordable warmth**

<b>Ref:</b>	<b>How we will do this?</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>When by</b>
<b>HS09</b>	1. Develop the multi-agency referral network for affordable warmth	Residents can afford to heat their home	Year on year increased use of the referral network	September 2018
	2. Develop and deliver an action plan to implement the NICE Guidance <sup>15</sup>	Reduction in excess winter deaths	1. Action plan developed 2. Monitor and report progress 3. Contributory factors to Cheshire East JSNA	Annual review
	3. Promote traditional methods of improving the thermal comfort of homes	Residents can afford to heat their home	Increase in the use of national funding streams	Strategy Lifespan
	4. Explore opportunities to use new technologies to improve energy efficiency	Residents ability to heat their home is improved	Improvements in energy efficiency	Strategy Lifespan
	5. Improve our knowledge base	Reduction in household fuel bills	Effective targeting of resources	Annual review
	6. Develop initiatives to improve affordable warmth and lever affordable warmth funding	Residents' ability to heat their home is improved	Funding secured for affordable warmth initiatives	Annual review
	7. Work with private landlords to promote minimum energy efficiency standards and improve the energy efficiency of their properties	Continued availability of good quality private rented housing	1. Awareness campaign delivered 2. Successful engagement with vulnerable households 3. Contributory factors to Cheshire East JSNA	Strategy Lifespan
	8. Deliver seasonal campaigns to raise awareness of affordable warmth solutions	Residents can maintain their health and wellbeing	1. Successful engagement with vulnerable households 2. Contributory factors to Cheshire East JSNA	Strategy Lifespan
<b>Who will help us to achieve this?</b>	Elected Members Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service	Housing providers Private Landlords	Registered Housing Providers Winter Wellbeing Partnership	Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector

<sup>15</sup> National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

## Conclusion

Our Housing Strategy is making a significant contribution to achieving the aims and objectives of the Corporate Plan and the Medium Term Financial Strategy, resolving to support the drive for 'Growth and quality of place' and 'Health, wellbeing and quality of life,' as we deliver on the resident focused outcomes.

Our approach is based upon the continuation and building of strong relationships with our partners to further improve the quality, quantity and choice of housing within Cheshire East, through meeting the aspirations and needs of all our residents both now and in the future - enhancing place and wellbeing. In doing so, we will continue to maintain sensitivity to any environmental or social issues from new developments and work to mitigate these in consultation with the existing local communities.

New housing supply must reflect the needs and aspirations of a more inclusive community, having regard to prospective economic growth. As such, working with our partners we will focus on our resources in seeking imaginative ways of utilising all available housing assets to maximise housing options for local people, facilitating innovation in the scope of housing provision – to ensure housing initiatives will stimulate the housing market and bring a mix of tenure and type of homes for our residents.

## *Delivering the Strategy*

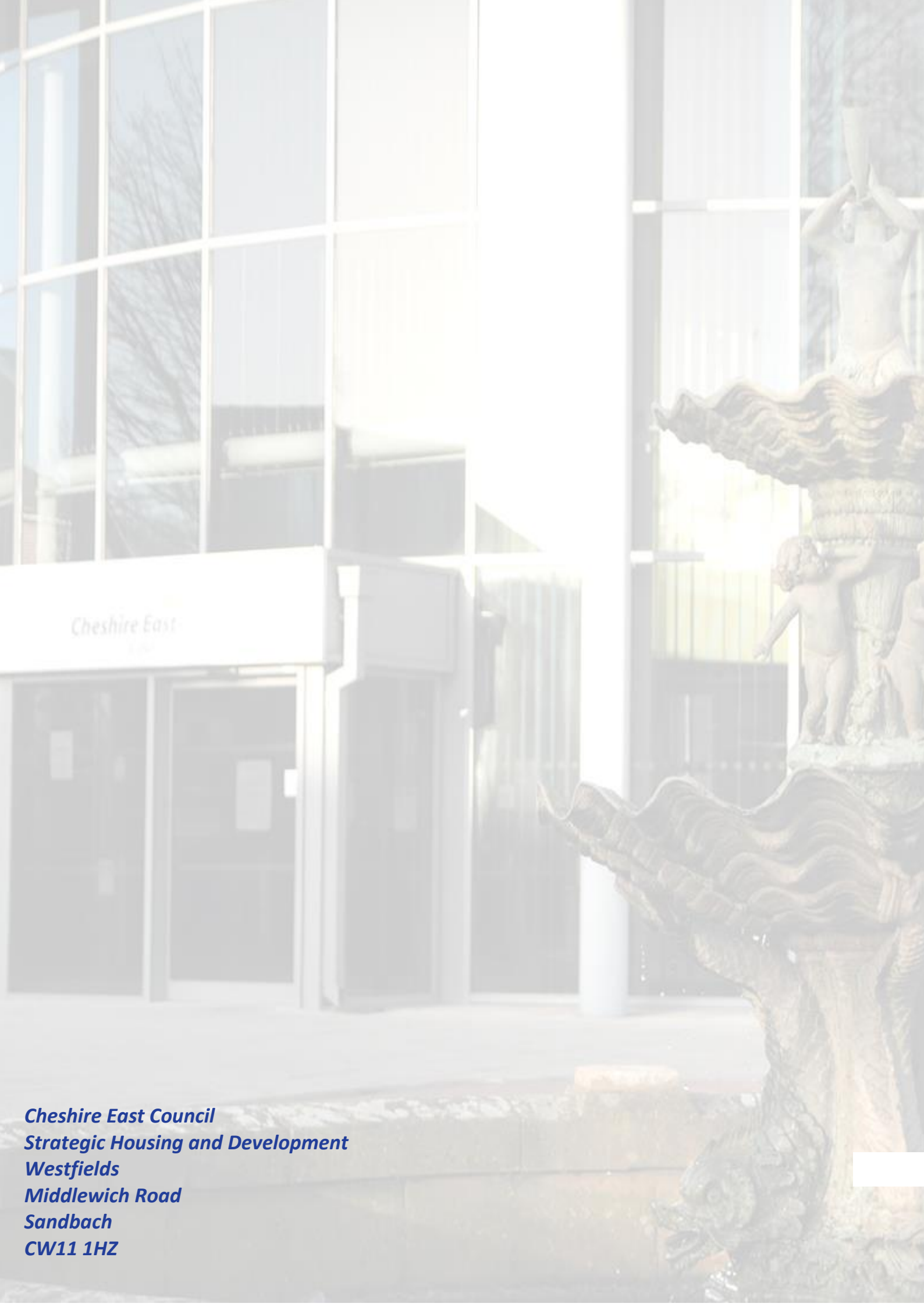
Central to making this Housing Strategy a success is to ensure we effectively plan, measure and monitor how we will deliver the priorities detailed within this document, which will be achieved through the outlined Delivery Plan within each strategic theme.

The Delivery Plan will contribute to a wider portfolio of strategies; policies and procedures, for example Public Health; Adult Services; Children Services; NHS Trust Commissioning and Community Safety. Therefore, it remains essential that the plan is distributed to all key stakeholders through an agreed reporting mechanism.

The monitoring of the Delivery Plan will be undertaken by Cheshire East Strategic Housing and Development, through completion of services performance management framework and progress reports will be submitted quarterly to the Directorate Senior Management Team and published annually to support the Strategy aims and objectives.

The strategic objectives within the Delivery Plan will remain valid for the lifespan of the Strategy, although regular reviews will be undertaken to ensure they are tangible and reflective of changing associated national, regional, and sub-regional strategies.





Cheshire East

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