

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Our Productivity Plan

2024-2028



Play your part towards a Stronger Future



Contents

Foreword

Productivity: Our Approach

Our Transformation Plan

Driving value for money

Tackling national barriers to productivity

Monitoring our plan

Appendix A: Benchmarking value for money

Appendix B: Our transformation programme





Foreword

I am pleased to present our productivity plan for 2024-28. Like many Leaders, I'm deeply concerned about the funding situation for local government and wider public services. I believe that a national solution must be found and greater productivity without adequate resourcing for local government will be insufficient. Nevertheless, at the local level, this council has always been committed to ensuring every public pound we spend makes the maximum difference for the communities we serve.

We face a very difficult environment as our resources are stretched, more people need our support, and our economy faces many challenges. Despite this, we always respond positively and have an ambitious vision to ensure more people will play their part in a stronger future. We have six bold missions in our Borough Plan which guide everything we do. To realise this ambition, we have an ambitious programme of reform that will make us even more productive and effective. We also continue to have a relentless focus on getting the basics right to deliver value for money and continuous improvement.

This plan mirrors the commitments we have made in our strategic plans that we have already agreed. In particular, it flows from our Borough Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan, providing further information on our approach.

We have always been a transparent council and we can assure local communities that we will monitor progress through our robust governance processes but also by engaging with the people that we serve.



Councillor Louise Gittins
Leader of Cheshire West and
Chester Council



Productivity: Our approach



Productivity is very difficult to define and measure in a consistent way across local government. We are not just delivering outputs – we are in the business of delivering outcomes that change lives and communities. Councils also have different priorities and different challenges, so local context is vitally important.

Our starting point is our Borough Plan which sets out our six missions. For us productivity is about **making the maximum progress towards our missions with every pound we spend.**

Our six missions

- 

Starting well:
The best possible start for our children and young people, with improved opportunity, a healthier start, greater resilience in families and the best possible support and care when it is needed.
- 

Tackling hardship and poverty:
More people feel more financially secure as the causes and impact of hardship and poverty are addressed by working alongside residents.
- 

Resilient people living their best lives:
Local people are enabled to flourish, be healthy, happy and independent for longer in supportive communities.
- 

Opportunity in a fair local economy:
Local people and businesses contribute to and benefit from a strong and fair local economy.
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Neighbourhood pride:
Residents live in well maintained, connected and safe places with good and affordable homes.
- 

Greener communities:
Individuals, public services and businesses take action to move to tackle the climate emergency, achieve net zero, protect the natural environment and adapt to the impact of climate change.

As the public pound continues to be stretched, we have an ambitious reform agenda so we can continue to make a difference. Set out in our Borough Plan, our commitment to **do things differently** this builds on a proud track record of innovation and collaboration. The key principles that will guide us are as follows:



Productivity: Doing things differently (1)



Working alongside communities

A key part of being efficient and effective, isn't just about delivering services – it is to work alongside the people we serve and empower them to have greater resilience and independence. This means working alongside communities to encourage them to share their views, to shape local decisions, and to get involved in the solutions to local challenges. This covers everything from communities playing their part in tackling climate change through to addressing the cost of living. This style of working is also highly relevant in relation to supporting residents with more complex needs. For example, supporting families to be more resilient or supporting adults with social care needs to be more independent is in line with the approach. Productivity has to be more about outputs in this context. It is a judgement about whether our actions have enhanced the confidence, resilience and ownership of the people we serve.

Digital and data

We have embraced technology to support us to be more efficient and effective. Guided by a comprehensive digital strategy, we have transformed the customer experience enabling the vast majority of services to be accessed online. We have also used technology to improve care services, enhance community engagement, and increase the productivity of our workforce. Using digital tools through 0365, we have enabled the workforce to operate in a hybrid way, improved collaborative working and automated a range of internal processes, Technology has also enhanced our ability to utilise our data to create effective insight, enabling us to better target our resources. Through 2024 we are embarking on a council wide process to understand how Artificial Intelligence will enable us to take further steps to enhance our productivity.

Prevention

Increasingly we are gearing our services towards prevention, taking action in a timely way to avoid needs escalating and costly services being required. This principle cuts across everything we do, from tackling unhealthy lifestyles through to taking early action to avoid the need for more costly crisis social care services. We have a number of additional investments we have made in preventative services that form a significant part of our transformation programme. Cheshire West is part of the Cheshire and Merseyside Marmot community, recognising that the main cause of health inequality is social inequality and committing to reduce both. We are working to promote training and employment opportunities, maximise people's incomes, promote financial inclusion, and providing advice on budgeting and debt support.

Transforming our land and buildings

The council owns assets with a net book value of over £1billion. It is critical that our land and building are organised in way that enable us to deliver effective services, support us to drive good outcomes for residents and businesses, and demonstrate value for money. We have a comprehensive asset management strategy to set out our ambitions and a number of programmes to support us to achieve these objectives.



Productivity: Doing things differently (2)



Investing in the future of our workforce

We strive to be an employer of choice, with an engaged workforce who live our values and are committed to delivering against our borough plan. This plan sets out missions that were developed in conversation with our colleagues, communities and partners. In our last colleague survey, 81% of respondents agreed that the Council is a great place to work and 89% that the Council has a positive impact on society.

We provide our colleagues with access to talent and development pathways, a modern mobile and flexible working approach, a range of well-being support and a strong reward and recognition offer. We continually review and adapt our approach to attraction, recruitment and retention for hard-to-fill posts. There is a particular focus on converting agency colleagues covering posts temporarily to permanent team members to reduce the need for agency cover. We encourage all teams to share ideas that will help us continue to be effective and efficient. We take a One Council approach where we come together to tackle complex issues.

Effective financial stewardship

We will remain strong stewards of the public purse and continue to take action to ensure we are financially resilient for the long term. This will mean prioritising our money and wider resources in line with our priorities, rooting out inefficiencies, seeking out leading practice, and continuing to transform our services in line with the approaches set out in this plan.

Building stronger partnerships

We have effective and impactful partnerships in place that are based on trust, openness and clear communication, aligned to common goals which strengthen communities.

We know that people don't fit into neat boxes and often an effective and more upstream response requires us to work across departments, organisations, and sectors working together with a common aim. We are using these partnerships to promote 'keep it local' procurement and employment principles.



Productivity: How we make it happen



To make this happen we have the following in place

Insight to understand our relative value for money

We compare our cost and performance against councils with similar characteristics (statistical neighbours). Using tools such as [LGINform](#) we have a clear view of our relative position. The majority of our services are delivering good performance at a cost in line with comparators. However, some key services, particularly those that are dealing with complex demand, show some room for further improvement. This information is used to determine what we can learn from others and where we focus our transformation programmes. A brief analysis of our position is included in Appendix A. Wider insight we collect and analyse locally also informs the design and delivery of our services. We also have a strong emphasis on being a 'listening council' to ensure we use the views, insight and energy of communities to shape the things that matter to the people we serve.

Effective systems and processes

We constantly review our internal systems and processes to ensure they are proportionate, effective and efficient. Where appropriate, we streamline and automate our internal processes. We also aim to have a mature and proportionate approach to risk management. We are currently revising our risk management arrangements to ensure that we have clarity on our strategic and operational risks, we have clear risk appetite assessments, and that our controls are proportionate.

Robust leadership and governance

Our productivity agenda is supported by clear leadership alongside robust democratic and officer governance. We report on our performance and financial position [on a quarterly basis](#) and enable scrutiny on our progress. We have a number of officer boards that focus on programme delivery, value for money, commissioning, and good governance. Effective financial controls are in place and are audited to provide assurance.

Capabilities and capacity to deliver

We have an effective corporate core that provides capacity and capability around transformation, organisational development, finance, digital, procurement, business intelligence, and governance. A lot of these skills are deployed to help us to deliver our transformation portfolio, which is covered in the next section.



Our transformation track record



The council has a long track record of transforming our services to ensure they are effective, productive, and efficient. Since the council was formed, we have reimagined service delivery models, digitised services, developed integrated services with partners, and moved toward more flexible and mobile working styles. These changes alongside other significant efficiencies have delivered over £100 million savings over the last 7 years. Examples of significant programmes delivered include:

- **Digital channel shift programme** (2017-21) which created new digital solutions to support customers to access Council services online and reduce telephone demand into services and the customer contact centre
- **Waste strategy and transformation programme** (2020-23) implementing a new strategy for waste services, a chargeable garden waste service and new methodology for kerbside waste
- **Highways programme** (2020-23) Implementation of a new operating model for Highways Services including procurement and mobilisation of a new Term Maintenance Contract
- **Modern workforce programme**, modernising assets to ensure our workforce has the capability and agility to deliver services from anywhere and our assets are fit for the future
- **Modern corporate services**, ensuring the Council has a modern corporate services offer underpinning all its services to help build a fit for purpose 'council of the future'
- **Welfare services review**, maximising resources and delivering good outcomes for those in financial hardship to ensure people are supported at the right time
- **Adult mental health programme**, reviewing and redesigning both Adults Mental Health Social Work and in-house Mental Health Provider Services to promote independence/avoid escalation
- **Transitions programme**, reviewing and redesigning council services supporting child to adult social care transitions for those with disabilities
- **Review of disabled children's services**, reviewing council services for this priority cohort and their parents and carers
- **West Cheshire Offer programme**, reviewing and redesigning specific adult social care assessment and care planning pathways and services with a particular focus on maximising independence for older people



Our Transformation Portfolio (1)



Our current transformation portfolio includes 17 programmes that align to our priorities, enable us to deliver better outcomes for residents, and will help us to be financially sustainable. They don't represent everything we are doing to be more productive but reflect our larger strategic changes. They will deliver permanent savings of over £65 million once delivered and are organised into the following themes:

Early support: Intervening in the right way and at an earlier stage to avoid the need for more costly services

- **Children and families – early help and family support:** Investing further resources into specialist early help and prevention services to support family resilience and reduce the escalation of needs into statutory children's social care and ultimately child in care placements. The programme aims to save £3.8m gross.
- **Adult Social Care demand management:** A new service model which reduces the need for long term care through an occupational therapy first approach integrated with efficient and effective reablement, underpinned by a strengths-based model of practice as part of the council's wider community led support approach. The programme aims to save £10.2m.
- **New care models and accommodation (16 – 64):** A strengths-based approach promoting independence, local provision, greater choice and use of technology enabled care, and an accommodation offer for learning disability 18-64 service users. The programme aims to save £12.2m.
- **Integrated discharge:** A new model of integrated discharge from hospital that will support people to receive timely support, secure support from community response hubs, recover from crisis and reduce the need for long term care. The programme aims to save £1.5m.
- **Homelessness redesign:** Further shifting the focus towards prevention, strengthening multi agency collaboration and delivering the right accommodation pathways to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping. The programme aims to save £0.8m.
- **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities high needs sustainability:** Enabling greater early support and inclusion in mainstream schools, commissioning the right provision that meets needs close to home, supporting the most vulnerable learners and ensuring the right data, systems, processes and staffing are in place to ensure the council's SEND offer is sustainable. The programme aims to reduce the cumulative deficit on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block by c. £27m.



Our Transformation Portfolio (2)



Reimagining our estate: Reshaping our property estate and building based services to deliver better outcomes and financial sustainability.

- **Assets Transformation:** A review of all properties across the estate to ensure they are meeting our objectives and enable us to deliver effective services. The programme aims to save £1.4m.
- **Dementia care home bed provision:** Investment in sites to facilitate care home providers to transform over-subscribed residential care home provision into specialist dementia care within the Borough. The programme aims to save £1.3m
- **Children in care and care leavers accommodation:** Investing in stable homes and targeted support for looked after children and care leavers within the borough including residential provision, integrated targeted mental health support with shared overnight provision, specialist foster carers and joined-up 16 + accommodation and support offers. The programme aims to save £9.3m gross.

Digital and data: Embracing technology to make our services more effective, insight-led and efficient

- **Digital transformation:** A programme covering the whole organisation with a focus on digitising the customer experience, enhancing digital inclusion, supporting technology enabled care, improving connectivity, and improving our digital capabilities as an organisation and wider workforce. The programme has contributed to savings across the organisation.
- **Data transformation:** A council-wide programme designed to fully utilise our data to enable more responsive services. A key focus is on providing the right technical platforms to unlock data from silos, enhance our data governance, grow our analytical and technical capabilities, and enhance more sophisticated and integrated data products to inform service delivery.



Our Transformation Portfolio (3)



New operating models: A range of programmes that are changing the way a service is delivered

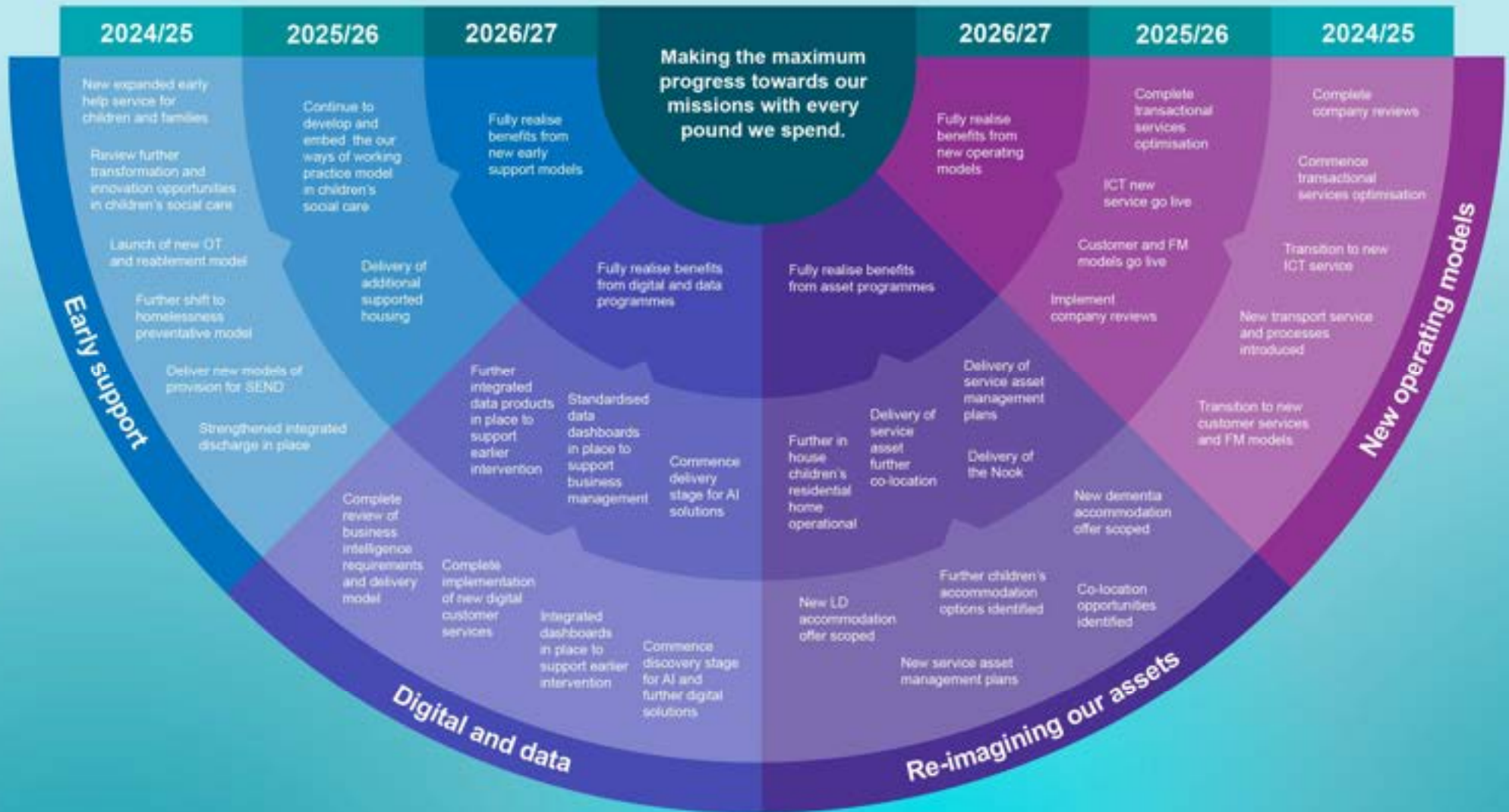
- **Transforming transport:** Ensuring that targeted transport solutions for “home to school” and children and adults, including those with additional needs, are integrated and sustainable. The programme aims to save £2.587
- **ICT Review (Gemini):** Creating a modern and effective ICT service, moving away from a shared service towards an industry best practice model that aligns to the council’s ambitions. The programme aims to save £1.55m
- **Review of council companies:** Ensuring our council-owned companies are delivering against our objectives, are delivering the best value for money and are sustainable. The programme aims to contribute to a savings target of £1.3m
- **Transactional services review:** Optimising our shared payroll and financial administration service. Savings are to be confirmed as the programme develops.
- **Facilities management review:** Recommissioning our facilities management service in line with our estate plans. The programme aims to save £0.3m
- **Customer services review:** Insourcing and further integrating customer services, ensuring the customer experience is enhanced. The programme aims to save £0.2m

Further details on the transformation portfolio, including outcomes, progress, milestones and financial benefits are included in **Appendix One**. The portfolio is under constant review and further programmes will be added over time. Key areas that are likely to be in the portfolio but are at an early stage of scoping include.

- Further transformation of **children’s social care**, to help deliver effective outcomes to further reduce escalation in need and cost
- The use of **generative AI** to enable our services to be more productive and responsive
- The next phase of **digital transformation**



Our transformation portfolio on a page



Driving value for money



Enhanced productivity is not entirely delivered through large scale transformation. There are a number of other key processes in place to ensure we continuously improve. These include

Securing maximum value through our contracts

We spend over c£557m on goods and services delivered by external suppliers. As a result, we have robust processes in place to ensure that when we commission a service or manage a contract, we challenge ourselves and our suppliers to ensure that we are securing value for money. We have a council wide officer board to support this process and have developed our capabilities in commissioning, procurement, and commercial management.

Performance improvement

Our performance management framework and focus on best value enables us to highlight areas where we are succeeding but also areas where we need to drive better performance within available resources. Through effective scrutiny and consideration of leading practice we have been able to continuously improve.

Scrutinising expenditure

Officers have put in place a spending review panel to scrutinise both staffing and non-pay expenditure to provide further assurance that our spend is productive and necessary. We also publish our expenditure to enable local people to scrutinise spend. We only use consultants when we are convinced that they provide specialist and time limited expertise. Activities relating to equality, diversity and inclusion are proportionate, overseen on a cross party basis, and supports the delivery of more accessible services.



Tackling national barriers to productivity



We welcome the opportunity to raise a number of national barriers to productivity where central government could play an active role.

Multi-year settlements

Only having a single year settlement considerably restricts our ability to undertake robust longer term financial planning. The government has been clear that it recognises that providing councils with greater certainty on key aspects of their funding is vital for the budget setting process. A multi-year settlement and a move away from various non-recurrent, ring-fenced grant funding would provide certainty around at least an element of the financial position for a longer period which would allow councils to plan ahead with a greater degree of confidence and focus time and resource on the delivery of good public services that represent value for money, plus allowing councils to make strategic investment in local areas.

Fair funding review

The Fair Funding Review was proposed by central government initially on the principle that local government funding should be decided in a fair, robust and evidence-based way and one that reflects the most up-to-date picture of councils' relative needs and resources. The current system for allocating funding is over a decade old, based on out-of-date data on needs and resources that reflect neither the differences between councils nor the changes in the demand for and delivery of the services they provide. The Fair Funding Review was primarily concerned with the distribution of the quantum rather than the quantum itself. It is now clear, however, that without sufficient funding for local government services, fairness will be impossible to achieve. The government should provide additional resources as part of the review, as simply redistributing existing funding will not address the extreme funding pressures that councils are facing.

Investing in prevention

A lack of sufficient funding is forcing councils to prioritise their statutory obligations at the expense of investment in preventative services and early help offers. This simply leads to increased demand on reactive services in the future, and more people falling into crisis situations with a far greater personal, social and financial cost. Consideration needs to be given as to how investment in effective preventative services can be better recognised and protected, particularly where preventative services are provided by one part of the public sector, but the impact of their loss is felt elsewhere in the system.



Tackling national barriers to productivity



Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Powers

Further empowerment of councils can help deliver the Government's objectives in relation to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The Government's SEND and Alternative Provision improvement plan rightly acknowledges that while councils and their partners are working hard to meet the needs of children with SEND in their local areas, not all children and young people with special needs are able to access the support they need. Councils, with their democratic mandate, are ideally placed to convene and lead local SEND systems, bringing health and education partners together to quickly deliver the right support to the children that need it. But councils need the powers to hold partners to account which they cannot do within the existing system. Without further change, sufficiency of funding will remain a major concern, as well as hampering efforts to ensure the needs of all children with SEND can be met effectively.

The way that school performance is reported can also create perverse disincentives to an inclusive approach to mainstream education.

Reform home to school transport

Reform of home to school entitlements is needed to ensure that it becomes more proportionate and affordable. Underlying population growth, new housing developments, increasing numbers of families in temporary housing, increasing numbers of looked after children, the changing landscape of schools and the increasing costs of transport are all driving significant pressures on budgets.

Reduce delays in Family Court and Court of Protection

Delays in the Court of Protection with regards deputy applications not only have a significant impact on the wellbeing of those with impaired decision-making capacity and their families, but also have a negative financial impact. The financial impact on Councils is caused by the fact that assessed client contributions towards adult social care remain unpaid, and contribute towards the rising outstanding debt in Councils, whilst families and carers await on the Court of Protection to grant deputyship.

Delays in family courts also have a considerable impact on the Council, including impacting the efficiency of children's services, with resources that could have been spent on interventions and preventative services being focused on the court process and prolonged court proceedings create uncertainty and insecurity for children. Whilst Cheshire West and Chester lead on both our Cheshire and Merseyside Local Family Justice Board and are the lead authority for the Department for Education Designated Family Judge Trailblazer pilot, the impact of delay on both children and the workforce increases demand and cost.

Intervention in the care market

There is concern about the degree of profit making by private care providers for children's residential care particularly - noting in 2021/22 the largest 20 private providers of residential care for children made profit of £310 million. We are also watching with interest the care cap reforms in Scotland and the not-for-profit requirements in Wales. We would ask that government look at whether further market interventions will incentivise more affordable provision and we understand an advisory group is in place for the Department of Education to explore this challenge.



Tackling national barriers to productivity



Social care reforms and recruitment

Early clarification of Social Care Reforms, including detail on charging, and ensuring that adequate funding is provided to for sustainable social care services. Social care recruitment is a national issue. There is currently significant national attention and drive around NHS, teaching and Adults Social Care staffing (and funding) but a lack of focus on the crisis linked to children's social care recruitment. The option of capping agency rates nationally would be a key option to consider.

One public estate

A renewal of the 'one public estate' approach to drive a consistent approach to estate and property management across local partners. This would need to be supported by bringing together all public property budgets within an area together. This would promote colocation and collaboration, would bring efficiencies in building requirements and usage and would also lead to economies of scale in areas such as facilities management.

Council Tax

To allow local authorities the flexibility to review the level of council tax discounts and disregards, which at present are not means tested. This would provide further flexibility to ensure an equitable and affordable system is in place. In addition, more progress could be made to make better use of data sharing between central and local government, lifting some of the constraints relating to sharing HMRC data with council tax and recovery teams.

Business rate changes

To review the rules and levels under which local authorities may award Mandatory Rate Relief to enable local authorities to react to the prevailing business rates landscape.

Support to digital transformation

The Council is supportive of the Local Digital Declaration and greater collaboration across the sector and supply chain to drive digital solutions. Further sharing of standardised solutions to common digital use cases would be beneficial to move at pace and drive change in the supply chain

Clarity on Extended Producer Responsibility (Packaging) reforms

The impact of the Extended Producer Responsibility (Packaging) reforms on local authorities is currently unclear. Clarity on the potential obligations and income for local authorities that could result from these reforms is needed urgently



Monitoring our plan



To ensure we follow through with our plans we already have effective monitoring processes in place. These include

Performance and financial management reporting

Much of our approach to productivity is covered within our Borough Plan and Our Annual Delivery Plan. We report to Members and officers on a regular basis how we are progressing against this plan. This includes delivery against our budget, key performance indicators and delivery of milestones relating to large programmes of activity. Where we are off track, we identify mitigations and are held to account.

Effective programme management

Key programmes are delivered through a standard methodology for managing programmes. This provides a common language, a set of controls, effective risk management, and effective reporting to drive delivery. A learning offer is in place, and is being strengthened, to support effective programme management across the organisation.

Considering insight

We continue to use comparative information to track our relative value for money over time. We also seek feedback from our service users and wider communities on their experience to drive improvement.





Appendix A:
Benchmarking value for money



Appendix A



Reviewing the value for money of our services in comparison to other authorities

The Council reviews comparative information on its expenditure and performance using the [LGA's LG Inform tool](#). This tool takes eight service areas and compares cost and performance across the Council's CIPFA nearest neighbours, reporting on trend and performance quartile. Comparative value for money data raises useful questions but further work is always needed to understand the extent to which differences reflect actual cost and service levels or the result of different approaches to attributing costs to budgets in different councils.

Service Area	Cost (Quartile)	Performance (Quartile)
Central services	Lower cost – 4th quartile	2nd quartile for Non-domestic rates collection, 3rd for Council Tax
Adult services	Lower cost – 3rd quartile	4th quartile for social care quality of life and satisfaction with care and support
Education services	Higher cost – 1st quartile	2nd quartile for attainment 8 and exclusions. 3rd for the percentage of young people not in employment, education or training and for percentage qualified to NVQ2
Children's services	Lower cost – 3rd quartile	2 nd quartile for child protection plans, and care leavers in suitable accommodation and in employment, education or training. 2 nd quartile for children looked after and 4 th quartile on timeliness of child protection cases
Housing services	Higher cost – 1 st quartile	Top quartile on affordable homes completion, 2 nd quartile on households in temporary accommodation and vacant dwellings. 4 th quartile on households on the waiting list and housing benefit processing times.
Highways & Transport	Lower cost – 4th quartile	Top quartile for principal roads requiring maintenance, 2 nd quartile for non-principal, 3 rd quartile for people within 15 mins walk/public transport of an employment centre
Planning & Development	Higher cost – 1 st quartile	Top quartile for major and minor planning timeliness, 2 nd quartile for others. 3 rd quartile for business births
Environment & Regulatory	Higher cost – 2nd quartile	Top quartile performance on waste collection and recycling



Appendix B:
Our transformation
programme – further detail





Early support



Children and families: Early help and family support

Investing further resources into specialist early help and prevention services to support family resilience and reduce the escalation of needs into children’s social care and ultimately child in care placements.

Portfolio Theme

Early support



Alignment with our missions

What will the programme deliver?

- Starting Well ✓
- Tackling Hardship and Poverty ✓
- Resilient people living their best lives ✓
- Opportunity in a fair local economy
- Neighbourhood Pride
- Greener communities
- Doing things differently ✓

- Enhanced targeted family support and interventions
- Bolstered trauma informed parenting service offer including better offer to schools
- Additional early help navigators
- Strengthened processes and ways of working including Team Around the Family (TAF) and the interface with statutory children’s social care

What will be different for residents?

- More comprehensive early help offer available at the right time
- Better access to parenting and group work support and other specialist interventions
- More targeted proactive support available

Roles and responsibilities

How will we know it is successful?

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Senior Responsible Owner: Executive Director of Children and Families

- The rate of escalations from council early help and prevention services to a child in need plan should reduce
- The number of joiners to care (placements) with recent early help and prevention involvement should reduce
- Qualitative feedback from partners, children and families on the services in scope and how to improve/what has worked well

Children and families: Early help and family support

Investing further resources into specialist early help and prevention services to support family resilience and reduce the escalation of needs into children's social care and ultimately child in care placements.

Portfolio Theme

Early support

Progress to date

- Business case approved – December 2023
- Staff recruitment underway – January 2024
- New model soft launch (internal family intervention 'live' first) – April 2024 onwards

Focus for the next stage

- Embedding the changes and transitioning the programme to 'business as usual' in Quarter 3 2024/25.
- Tracking the benefits from Quarter 1 2024/25 onwards.

High level milestone plan

New staff recruitment complete – Summer 2024



New parenting offer rolled out – Summer 2024



New early help navigator model live – Summer 2024



New low-level parenting and home conditions offer available – Autumn 2024



Programme anticipated to transition to 'business as usual' – Autumn 2024



Year 1 benefits realisation report – March 2025

Transformation investment and savings (2023-2029)

Total investment: £1m ongoing revenue investment phased over 23-24 and 24-25

Total planned savings: £3.8m gross (£2.8m net) from 25-26 to 28-29

Adult social care demand management (65+)

A new service model which reduces the need for long term care through an occupational therapy first approach and efficient and effective community reablement, underpinned by a strengths-based model of practice as part of the council's community-led support approach.

Portfolio Theme

Early support

Transformation phase

Define ✓ →

Design ✓ →

Deliver In progress

Alignment with our missions

What will the programme deliver?

- Starting Well ✓
- Tackling Hardship and Poverty ✓
- Resilient people living their best lives ✓
- Opportunity in a fair local economy
- Neighbourhood Pride
- Greener communities
- Doing things differently ✓

- An 'occupational therapy first' (promoting independence through equipment and adaptations including assistive technology) approach to adult social care wherever possible, as part of our reablement ethos
- A redesigned efficient and effective reablement service (short term intensive home outreach support to maximise independence) – integrated with occupational therapy to promote independence
- A strengthened approach to the council's online information, advice and guidance 'self-serve' offer, particularly for equipment and adaptations

What will be different for residents?

- More people will receive the right enabling/reabling support at the right time, preventing or reducing the need for reliance on long term care services
- People will be able to find the right information online to 'self-serve', empowering people to help themselves where possible
- Waiting lists for complex occupational therapy services will reduce, allowing people to access crucial services to build independence

Roles and responsibilities

How will we know it is successful?

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

Senior Responsible Owner: Executive Director of Adult Services

- Reducing the percentage of people new to the service that require long term home care following reablement
- Reduced average size of care packages for those individuals that do need long term home care following reablement
- Improved feedback from staff and residents
- Waiting lists will reduce for complex occupational therapy

Adult social care demand management (65+)

A new service model which reduces the need for long term care through an occupational therapy first approach and efficient and effective community reablement, underpinned by a strengths-based model of practice as part of the council's community-led support approach.

Portfolio Theme

Early support

Progress to date

- Business case approved – January 2024
- Staff consultation complete – March 2024
- New model soft launch – April 2024
- New rostering system live – April 2024
- Ask SARA online tool live – April 2024

Focus for the next stage

- All new staff in post – June 2024
- Transition programme to 'business as usual' – July 2024

High level milestone plan

New rostering system live – April 2024



Soft launch of new model – April 2024



All new staff in post – Summer 2024



Training plan in place - Trusted Assessors for equipment – Autumn 2024



Programme transitions to BAU – Autumn 2024



From 2024/25 - Benefits tracking and benefits realisation commences

Transformation investment and savings (2024-2027)

Total investment:
Nil – all investment asks met within existing budgets

Total planned savings:
£10.2 million in total profiled between 2024 and 2027

New care models and accommodation (16-65)

A strengths-based approach supporting local provision, greater choice and use of technology enabled care and an accommodation offer for learning disability 18-64 service users, ensuring that it promotes greater independence and local provision.

Portfolio Theme

Early support

Transformation phase

Define ✓ →

Design ✓ →

Deliver In progress

Alignment with our missions

What will the programme deliver?

- Starting Well
- Tackling Hardship and Poverty
- Resilient people living their best lives ✓
- Opportunity in a fair local economy

- An all-age autism strategy and partnership board that recognises autism as a distinct characteristic in its own right.
- Development of a shared approach to risk management and standards of care models that are resilient, evidence based and rooted in community led support, with the aim of embedding of the Progression Model to ensure that practice is right sized and informs commissioning leading to sustainable future service delivery models.
- Review of short breaks and day opportunities to enable greater choice and better outcomes for people and their carers
- Established direction panel: early identification and tailored support for people with complex needs moving from Childhood to Adulthood.
- Cheshire West and Chester Specialist Housing Prospectus and delivery plan
- Redesign ways of working with a dedicated team to support people with housing and statutory care needs

- Neighbourhood Pride
- Greener communities ✓
- Doing things differently

What will be different for residents?

- Care models that optimise people’s independence providing opportunities employment – embedding the ‘Progression Model’
- Standards of care models that are resilient, evidence based and rooted in community led support
- Greater access to suitable accommodation to meet people’s statutory care needs in borough
- Joined up ways of working across social care, health and housing/benefits teams to support people into suitable lifetime homes

Accountabilities

How will we know it is successful?

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

Senior Responsible Owner: Executive Director of Adult Services

- Sustainable Commissioned care packages embedded within the Progression Approach of optimising independence
- Reduction in costs of commissioned care packages to be more in line with statistical neighbours
- Greater use of assistive technology to support people into independence
- Improved ‘Better Lives Framework’ outcomes
- Reduced number of out of area placements and reduced placements in ‘poor’ quality supported living facilities

New care models and accommodation (16-65)

A strengths-based approach supporting local provision, greater choice and use of technology enabled care and an accommodation offer for learning disability 18-64 service users, ensuring that it promotes greater independence and local provision.

Portfolio Theme

Early support

Progress to date

- Savings within existing work plans for Complex Care and Review Team and Continuing Health Care team.
- Specialist team developed to undertake targeted review and support planning, Programme of review activity scheduled to include highest cost packages, overnight care and people with complex health needs
- Cheshire Disabled People's Panel engaged to support coproduction of local Housing Prospectus.
- 47 People Housed & 78 People forecasted with current projects in flight
- NHS partner funding agreed for recruiting a 'Health and Housing Options' officer.
- Technology partner identified for pilot to reduce sleeping night support.

Focus for the next stage

- Engage Alders Advice to support with embedding Progression Approach to care model development
- Implement NRS Technology pilot and use finding to develop scope of technology hub
- Detailed benefits management planning based on 725 reviews to be completed
- Develop target operating model; end to end processes and toolkits to support new ways of working for accommodation

High level milestone plan

April 2024: Baseline benefits realisation and delivery plans for 24-25 work programme



April 2024-July 2024:

- Process redesign and Housing templates/toolkits
- Target Operating Model of Health and Housing Team



May 2024-March 2025: CCR++ Team conduct prioritised Reviews of LDA and MH Cohorts to right-size packages of care



May 2024-Sept 2024: Phase 1 'Embedding the Progression Approach' across the health & social care operational and commissioning teams



June 2024-October 2024: Development and Publication of local Specialist Housing Prospectus and delivery plan

Transformation investment and savings (2022-2028)

Total investment: CW&C recurrent resource costs of £301,125 plus year one costs: £95,812
Place resource Costs: £239,035
NHSE Funding for health and housing officer role £79,500
Capital funding of £2m earmarked for property projects subject to detailed business case planning

Total planned savings: £12.2million

Integrated hospital discharge

A new model of integrated discharge from hospital that will support people to receive timely support, secure support from community response hubs, recover from crisis and reduce the needs for long term care.

Portfolio Theme

Early support

Transformation phase

Define ✓ →

Design ✓ →

Deliver In progress

Alignment with our missions

What will the programme deliver?

- Starting Well
- Tackling Hardship and Poverty
- Resilient people living their best lives ✓
- Opportunity in a fair local economy
- Neighbourhood Pride
- Greener communities
- Doing things differently ✓

- A joined-up transfer of care hub will support people with complex needs to leave hospital in a safe and timely way. This will include an offer for carers providing support to family and loved ones.
- A fully funded Community Response Hub model will ensure that most people who require support upon discharge can return home and receive a rehabilitation and reablement
- The right numbers of recovery beds to provide short term bed-based care for people recovering with the right levels of professional wrap around support to improve independence and support an onward journey home
- Clear and simple information and advice available in a wide variety of formats to ensure local people know what to expect when they are discharged from hospital
- A comprehensive community sector support offers to make the most of community assets.

What will be different for residents?

- Residents will receive therapy-led support from multi-disciplinary teams to support safe discharges and avoid hospital admission, regardless of where they are discharged from/to.
- People will be discharged within 24 hours and assessed, where possible, at home within 48 hours, rather than being added to a waiting list
- More people will be discharged to their own home.

Accountabilities

How will we know it is successful?

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

Senior Responsible Owner: Executive Director of Adult Services

- Reduction in hospital length of stay.
- Reduction in wait time for an assessment post discharge.
- Long term care demand will reduce.
- Reduction in bed-based placements.

Integrated hospital discharge

A new model of integrated discharge from hospital that will support people to receive timely support, secure support from community response hubs, recover from crisis and reduce the needs for long term care.

Portfolio Theme

Early support

Progress to date

- The joined-up transfer of care hub is under development and health and social care colleagues are working to align processes to ensure smooth discharges.
- The Winsford Community Response Hub is live with positive outcomes realised. The Rural hub is live with ongoing development to processes. The business case for roll-out is under development with partner leads.
- The community sector offer is rolled out and utilised by hospitals, Community Response Hubs and Social Work.
- Pathway 3 process in development.

Focus for the next stage

- Deliver business case for Community Response Hubs
- Go live with agreed pathway 3 model
- Review bed based intermediate care services
- Go live with remaining Community Response Hubs

High level milestone plan

April 2024: Finalise business case for Community Response Hub roll-out



Summer 2024: Develop and finalise implementation plan for roll-out



Summer 2024: Ongoing integrated recruitment drive to ensure capacity to deliver the goals.



Autumn 2024: Go live with 2 further Community Response Hubs



March 2025: Go live with 3 further Community Response Hubs.



September 2025: Go live with the final 3 Community Response Hubs.

Transformation investment and savings (2022-2025)

Total investment (Place): £2,240,645
 Council – £643,652
 NHS – £1,242,993
 Community Sector – £354,000

Total planned savings: £1.5m

Homelessness redesign

Further shifting the focus towards prevention, strengthening multi agency collaboration and delivering the right accommodation pathways to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping.

Portfolio Theme

Early support

Transformation phase

Define ✓ →

Design ✓ →

Deliver In progress

Alignment with our missions

What will the programme deliver?

- Starting Well ✓
- Tackling Hardship and Poverty ✓
- Resilient people living their best lives ✓
- Opportunity in a fair local economy
- Neighbourhood Pride
- Greener communities
- Doing things differently ✓

- Targeted preventative services to reduce homelessness
- The provision of appropriate supported housing for use as temporary accommodation to support people out of homelessness

What will be different for residents?

- Improved and timely to support to those at risk of becoming homeless
- Fewer people sleeping rough
- Reduced costs

Roles and responsibilities

How will we know it is successful?

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Homes, Planning and Safer Communities

Senior Responsible Owner: Director of Economy and Housing

- Reduced rough sleeping and homelessness in the borough
- Reduced usage of hotels as temporary accommodation
- Reduced costs of the homelessness service

Homelessness redesign

Further shifting the focus towards prevention, strengthening multi agency collaboration and delivering the right accommodation pathways to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping.

Portfolio Theme

Early support

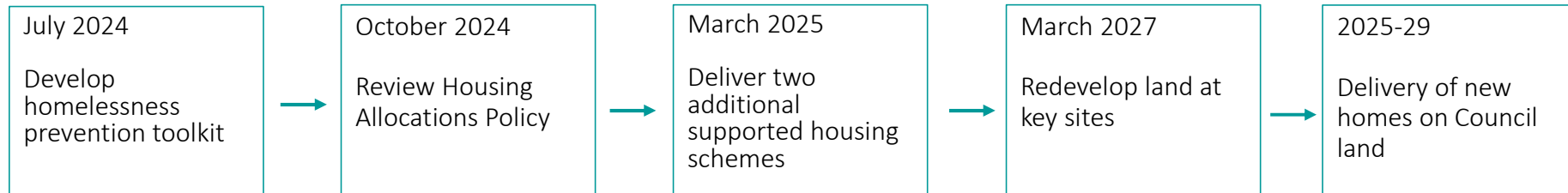
Progress to date

- Provided an interim additional supported housing option
- Implemented the rough sleeping pathway
- Reduced use of hotels for a wider cohort of homeless individuals
- Increased dispersed temporary accommodation for families using Council housing stock

Focus for the next stage

- Improve homelessness prevention through development of a homelessness prevention toolkit
- Review the Housing Allocations Policy to ensure that it prioritises prevention
- Deliver new and refurbished supported housing schemes to provide additional housing options and avoid the use of inappropriate hotel accommodation
- Work with Registered Providers to prioritise housing delivery programmes

High level milestone plan



Transformation investment and savings (2024-2029)

Total investment: £0.915m (capital)

Total planned savings: £0.8million

SEND High Needs Review

Enabling greater early support and inclusion in mainstream schools, commissioning the right provision that meets needs close to home, supporting the most vulnerable learners and ensuring the right data, systems, processes and staffing are in place to ensure the council's SEND offer is sustainable.

Portfolio Theme

Early support

Transformation phase

Define ✓ →

Design ✓ →

Deliver In progress

Alignment with our missions

What will the programme deliver?

- Starting Well ✓
- Tackling Hardship and Poverty
- Resilient people living their best lives ✓
- Opportunity in a fair local economy
- Neighbourhood Pride
- Greener communities
- Doing things differently ✓

- Improved sufficiency of the right provision to meet need close to home including resourced and satellite provision
- More inclusive mainstreams schools through a robust support offer and culture change
- Better understanding of SEND data and finances to enable more accurate forecasting and planning
- An enhanced pathway for vulnerable learners
- Rolling out the 'inclusion matters' communications campaign

What will be different for residents?

- More of the right provision within the borough to meet needs at the right time
- Better transitions between settings
- More inclusive mainstream schools
- Better information on the council's offer for SEND high needs

Roles and responsibilities

How will we know it is successful?

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
Senior Responsible Owner: Chief Operating Officer

- Reducing the number of distant placements required outside the borough
- More early support provided to prevent needs escalating unnecessarily wherever possible
- Improved child, parent, carer and staff feedback
- More successful transitions between settings for our vulnerable learners
- The council SEND offer is financially sustainable in the medium to long term through meeting needs effectively

SEND High Needs Review

Enabling greater early support and inclusion in mainstream schools, commissioning the right provision that meets needs close to home, supporting the most vulnerable learners and ensuring the right data, systems, processes and staffing are in place to ensure the council's SEND offer is sustainable.

Portfolio Theme

Early support

Progress to date

- SEND High Needs Strategic Assessment produced – 2022/23
- SEN staffing reconfigured – 23/24
- 'Inclusion Matters' strategy and communications campaign launched – 23/24
- Expanded places in resourced provision on mainstream school sites – 23/24
- Significant improvements in data capability to inform demand forecasting and planning – 23/24

Focus for the next stage

- Identifying further costed recommendations to support with making the council SEND offer sustainable in the medium and long term
- Continuing to deliver on the original recommendations from the Strategic Assessment, including increasing sufficiency of a range of provision in Borough
- Continuing to roll out 'Inclusion Matters' across the local SEND system
- More focus on early SEN support and ways of working that support this ethos learning from best practice

High level milestone plan

Complete review of SEN Panels – Summer 2024



Finalise further costed recommendations focused on sustainability – Summer 2024



Implement enhanced pathway for vulnerable learners – September 2024



Expansion of SEN Resourced Provision and Special School Satellites complete – September 2025



Delivery of specialist post-16 provision complete – September 2026

Transformation investment and savings (2022-2026)

Total investment: Under review and subject to further recommendations report in Autumn 2024

Total planned savings: Reduction in the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block cumulative deficit of £27m.



Reimagining our Estate

Assets Transformation

Ensuring the Council's property estate meets the needs and priorities of the Council and its residents.

Portfolio Theme
Reimagining our Estate

Transformation phase

Define ✓ →

Design ✓ →

Deliver In progress

Alignment with our missions

What will the programme deliver?

- Starting Well ✓✓
- Tackling Hardship and Poverty ✓✓
- Resilient people living their best lives ✓✓
- Opportunity in a fair local economy ✓✓
- Neighbourhood Pride ✓✓
- Greener communities ✓✓
- Doing things differently ✓✓

- Producing Service Asset Management Plans to match the overall Property estate to the needs of Council services– this will allow identification of those assets that should be retained and invested in for effective service delivery and those that are no longer required and should be advertised for Community Asset Transfer (CAT), sold or redeveloped for another purpose (either immediately or in the short or medium term)
- Carrying out all required activities to vacate (if required) and transfer, sell or redevelop those assets that have been identified as surplus by the Council.

What will be different for residents?

- The Council's retained property estate will be fit for purpose, well maintained, and maximise opportunities for co-location of local services to improve efficiency and accessibility for residents.
- The Council will no longer spend money on retaining assets that are no longer required.
- The Council will be in a better position to identify suitable Council owned assets that could be transferred to community organisations, to enable provision of services that benefit residents.
- The Council will receive income from the sale of some of its surplus property assets to reinvest in the Capital Programme which aims to make strategic investments in local services and assets to benefit residents.

Roles and responsibilities

How will we know it is successful?

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Finance and Legal

Senior Responsible Owner: Chief Operating Officer

- There will be clear Asset Management Plans in place for all Council services.
- The Council's retained property estate will be fit for purpose, maximise all opportunities for co-location and will be more affordable to maintain and manage.
- Total backlog maintenance liabilities against our Property Assets will reduce over time.
- The Council will have an identified list of surplus assets for repurposing, transfer, sale or redevelopment.
- There will continue to be a clear process to ensure appropriate decision making around the transfer of suitable assets to community organisations.
- Income will be generated from the sale of appropriate surplus property assets.

Assets transformation

Ensuring the Council’s property estate meets the needs and priorities of the Council and its residents.

Portfolio Theme

Reimagining our Estate

Progress to date

- 6 Property Assets have been transferred or repurposed since Summer 2023
- 19 additional sites have been identified for potential repurposing, transfer, sale or redevelopment
- 7 assets are progressing for market sale.
- All Service Asset Management Plan workshops have now been completed and draft documents are being finalised

Focus for the next stage

- Finalise the Service Asset Management Plan documents and action plans
- Use all the asset information collated through the planning process to inform strategic proposals
- Continue to carry out all required activity to declare appropriate assets as surplus and proceed to repurpose, transfer, sale or redevelopment
- Plan for co-location of appropriate services.

High level milestone plan

Finalise the Service Asset Management Plans - **May - July 2024**



Workshops with Programme Board and Senior Leadership Team to develop key proposals and approach to Programme Workstreams **May – Sept 2024**



- Mobilise agreed programme workstreams (key proposals)- **Sept 2024 onwards**
- Delivery of service level action plans – **Sept 2024 onwards**
- Ongoing review and refresh of SAMPs

Transformation investment and savings (2022-2027)

Total investment: Additional delivery resources of approx. £195,000 per year & any identified Capital asset investments (which will be approved on a case-by-case basis)

Total planned savings: £1.45m

Dementia care home bed provision

Investment in sites to facilitate providers to support specialist dementia care within the Borough.

Portfolio Theme
Reimagining our Estate

Transformation phase

Define ✓ →

Design →

Deliver

Alignment with our missions

What will the programme deliver?

- Starting Well
- Tackling Hardship and Poverty
- Resilient people living their best lives ✓
- Opportunity in a fair local economy
- Neighbourhood Pride
- Greener communities
- Doing things differently ✓

- The Council has an abundance of Residential Care Home placements within borough although a deficit in residential dementia (EMI) beds.
- We are aware that due to
 - A) The Adult Social Care’s vision of Enabling Great Lives, we will support more people where appropriate within their own homes, therefore the demand for residential beds will reduce
 - B) We are expecting to see a projected increase of people who require dementia support, therefore will need increase in capacity within residential dementia beds.
- The capital investment will allow the Council to work with Care Homes who supply Residential Care Beds to adapt their environment, upskill their staff and change CQC registration to allow for the increase in demand of Residential Dementia beds.
- All homes that agree to be part of this programme, must work with the Council to agree Council declare placement rates, therefore reducing off contract spend.

What will be different for residents?

- Residents will receive the appropriate care and support within an environment closer to their home
- Due to the increase in capacity, for those living outside of the area – an assessment can be made to see if appropriate to bring back in area and near family and friends.

Roles and responsibilities

How will we know it is successful?

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

Senior Responsible Owner: Executive Director of Adult Services

- Increase capacity within bed provision
- Reduce waiting list for placement
- People are receiving the correct support

Dementia care home bed provision

Investment in sites to facilitate providers to support specialist dementia care within the Borough.

Portfolio Theme

Reimagining our Estate

Progress to date

- Developed the business case
- Created project plan

Focus for the next stage

- Secure capital funding
- Create task and finish group

High level milestone plan

Soft market Testing to understand the geography, dynamics and logistics of homes in the borough
April 2024



Review of all spot bed services and specialist beds arrangements to ascertain where savings can be made by redirecting these provisions
May 2024



Develop approach to safeguarding investment and ensuring a return
May 2024



Specification and Procurement Documents drafted including finalisation of awarding process
May 2024



Beds to be identified and timeline of works to be drafted
September 2024

Transformation investment and savings (2022-2024)

Total investment: Investment plan under development

Total planned savings: £1.3million

Children in care and care leavers accommodation

Ensure sufficient good quality, value for money provision for children in care and care leavers within the Borough to meet needs effectively to prevent needs and cost escalating wherever possible

Portfolio Theme

Reimagining our Estate

Transformation phase

Define ✓ →

Design ✓ →

Deliver In progress

Alignment with our missions

What will the programme deliver?

- Starting Well ✓
- Tackling Hardship and Poverty
- Resilient people living their best lives ✓
- Opportunity in a fair local economy
- Neighbourhood Pride
- Greener communities
- Doing things differently ✓

- Enhanced good quality children in care and care leavers provision within the borough
- Grow the number of good quality residential homes in the borough
- Set up and grow an effective specialist foster carer scheme
- Establish a short-term integrated offer for those children discharged from a Tier 4 mental health acute setting or likely to be admitted into Tier 4 and local authority care (looked after status). This project is known as the 'The Nook' and is in partnership with the NHS.
- Grow supported tenancies for our care leavers with a Floating Support service
- Expand our Care leaver Group Home accommodation offer
- Develop a Supported Lodgings offer

What will be different for residents?

- Children in care and care leavers will have access to more good quality provision in the borough – reducing distant placements
- The Nook project will prevent unnecessary entries to care and Tier 4 mental health acute settings
- Foster carers supporting complex children will be supported through the specialist foster carer scheme
- Care leavers will be supported with a range of joined-up accommodation and support options

Roles and responsibilities

How will we know it is successful?

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Senior Responsible Owner: Director of Children and Families

- The % of distant placements outside the borough will reduce
- The % of high-cost residential placements will reduce as we expand our offer in effective, lower cost placements including specialist fostering
- Qualitative feedback from children, families and foster carers using our services
- The average unit cost of a placement in Cheshire West and Chester will be tracked and a positive trajectory should be seen compared to the current direction of travel
- Increased children placed with foster carers

Children in care accommodation

Ensure sufficient good quality, value for money provision for children in care and care leavers within the Borough to meet needs effectively to prevent needs and cost escalating wherever possible

Portfolio Theme

Reimagining our Estate

Progress to date

- Specialist foster carer scheme operational and expanding – 23/24
- New 4 bed residential care home in Ellesmere Port area live – 23/24
- New care leaver group accommodation in Winsford live alongside a new floating support commissioned service with charity Depaul UK – 23/24
- Partnership project business case for 'The Nook' approved by the council and Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust – 23/24

Focus for the next stage

- Acquire and set up a residential home in Northwich and Winsford area
- Ensure 'The Nook' collaboration project is mobilised effectively
- Continue to expand the specialist foster carer scheme further and evaluate impact
- Explore innovative models for delivering residential provision in borough at further scale and pace

High level milestone plan

Decision on further scale up of specialist foster carer scheme – Summer 2024



Options report and recommendations presented on further residential provision – Summer 2024



Further in house residential home fully operational – Spring 2025



The Nook integrated project delivered including support offer and overnight unit – Spring 2025

Transformation investment and savings (2023-2027)

Total investment: £6.7m revenue investment
£3.55m capital investment

Total planned savings: £9.3m gross, £2.6m⁴⁰ net



Digital and data



Digital Transformation

A programme covering the whole organisation with a focus on digitising the customer experience, enhancing digital inclusion, supporting technology enabled care, improving connectivity, and improving our digital capabilities as an organisation and wider workforce.

Portfolio Theme

Digital and Data

Transformation phase

Define ✓ →

Design ✓ →

Deliver In progress

Alignment with our missions

What will the programme deliver?

- Starting Well ✓
- Tackling Hardship and Poverty ✓
- Resilient people living their best lives ✓
- Opportunity in a fair local economy ✓
- Neighbourhood Pride ✓
- Greener communities ✓
- Doing things differently ✓

- **Digital customers:** A new website, new customer portal, automated workflows, new voice routing system for telephony
- **Digital care:** New technology enabled care service commissioned
- **Digital communities:** Further develop web-based consultation and crowdfunding, A new digital inclusion plan including device lending library
- **Digital connectivity:** Delivery of superfast and ultrafast broadband
- **Digital capability:** Roadmaps for all applications, rollout of productivity tools for staff, cloud migration, improving digital skills across the workforce

What will be different for residents?

- Improved access to services
- Improved customer experience
- Services are more productive and responsive
- Access to a wider range of care options
- Improved digital connectivity
- New platforms to engage with the council and to get involved in the local community

Roles and responsibilities

How will we know it is successful?

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy, Regeneration and Digital Transformation

Senior Responsible Owner: Assistant Chief Executive

- An increase in the proportion of residents engaging with the council through digital channels
- Improved customer satisfaction
- Increased service productivity
- Increased staff satisfaction with digital services
- Delivery of financial benefits

Digital transformation

A programme covering the whole organisation with a focus on digitising the customer experience, enhancing digital inclusion, supporting technology enabled care, improving connectivity, and improving our digital capabilities as an organisation and wider workforce.

Portfolio Theme

Digital and Data

Progress to date

- New website delivered
- Soft launch of customer account and portal
- Mystery shopping network of residents formed to test digital services
- Automation of revenue and benefits processes and council tax is now live
- New telephony solution in place including voice routing and automated transactions
- Enhanced chatbot powered by AI
- New digital inclusion partnership formed
- Proportion of residents accessing customer services via digital increased from 56% in 2020 to 75% in 2024
- Device lending scheme with 338 loans having been completed since the scheme launched
- New customer services telephony solution delivered
- New Technology Enabled Contract commissioned
- Rollout of gigabit voucher scheme to support connectivity across communities

Focus for the next stage

- Further rollout of digital services for customers
- Scoping solutions to enhance productivity using generative AI using a whole-council discovery approach informing a further business case and delivery plan
- Scoping further digital developments for 2024-26 informing a further business case and delivery plan

High level milestone plan

- 2022
- Agree new digital strategy and programme
 - Commissioning TEC contract
 - Digital inclusion partnership formed
 - Rollout of device lending scheme
 - Implement new customer services telephony solution

- 2022
- New website
 - Phased rollout of new digital services

- 2023
- Further rollout of digital customer services
 - Capability strategy in place and roadmaps for applications
 - Soft launch of new customer portal

- 2024
- Launch of council tax automation
 - Commence discovery work on generative AI
 - Commence scoping work on next phase of digital transformation
 - Rollout of Alexa as new digital channel

- 2025 onwards
- Delivery against refreshed digital programme – milestones TBC
 - Refreshed digital strategy

2025 onwards:
Benefits realised from the programme

Transformation investment and savings (2022-2025)

Total investment: For current scope, £2.55m capital and £250,000 ongoing revenue

Total planned savings: Current programme enables larger savings across the wider organisation

Data Transformation

A council-wide programme designed to fully utilise our data to enable more responsive services. A key focus is on providing the right technical platforms to unlock data from silos, enhancing our data governance, growing our analytical and technical capabilities, and delivering more sophisticated and integrated data products to inform service delivery.

Portfolio Theme

Digital and Data

Transformation phase

Define ✓



Design ✓



Deliver

Alignment with our missions

What will the programme deliver?

- Starting Well ✓
- Tackling Hardship and Poverty ✓
- Resilient people living their best lives ✓
- Opportunity in a fair local economy ✓
- Neighbourhood Pride ✓
- Greener communities ✓
- Doing things differently ✓

- A review of the Council's strategic data requirements to focus delivery on areas of biggest impact
- A set of automated reporting based on centralised and trusted datasets to enable self-serve access to information and insight across key business areas such as Adult Social Care and SEND
- A skilled and data-enabled workforce through the continued delivery of the Data Hive and data apprenticeship programmes
- A proof-of-concept data matching process to develop a technical and ethical way of bringing data together to show need across different service areas
- A robust data ethics and governance framework to underpin delivery
- A published data strategy for 2024-28 to share the Council's vision and roadmap with residents and partners

What will be different for residents?

- Residents will see earlier intervention and support to avoid increased hardship and vulnerability
- Residents will have easier access to data and insight about local services and places
- Residents will have greater confidence in Council delivery to statutory targets as performance will be more transparent
- Over time service provision will be focused in areas of the borough to meet greatest need

Roles and responsibilities

How will we know it is successful?

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy, Regeneration and Digital Transformation

Senior Responsible Owner: Assistant Chief Executive

- **Improved data management** – The quality of core datasets will be improved which will enhance the insight through a single and trusted version of the truth. The work will be underpinned by enhanced information governance and a new data ethics framework to minimise risk to the Council and our residents.
- **Insight at our fingertips** – Data and insights will be readily available to services in a usable format, driving continuous improvement and targeted interventions.
- **Enhanced ability to manage complex demand** –Joining different datasets will provide a new and richer picture of need and enable the Council to forecast demand for key services, such as children's and adults' social care.

Data transformation

A council-wide programme designed to fully utilise our data to enable more responsive services. A key focus is on providing the right technical platforms to unlock data from silos, enhancing our data governance, growing our analytical and technical capabilities, and delivering more sophisticated and integrated data products to inform service delivery.

Portfolio Theme

Digital and Data

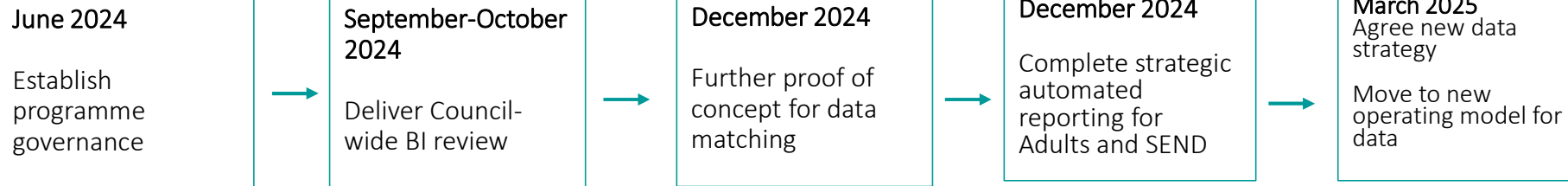
Progress to date

- Establish data engineering function as part of Digital Data and Technology Service
- Launch of Data Hive and Multiverse partnership with 100 data apprentices signing up for programmes since 2023
- Implementation of strategic automated reporting for Adults
- Implementation of new cloud data platform and related technology
- Delivery of new external-facing State of the Borough dashboard
- Developed academic partnership with Chester University
- Delivered a new intelligent forecast of adult social care demand
- Developed a new data model for SEND pupils matching data from different systems
- Delivered a deep-dive data project focusing on looked after children

Focus for the next stage

- Delivery of a Council-wide business intelligence review
- Completion of strategic automated reporting for Adults and SEND
- Establish programme governance
- Develop new data matching project
- Establish Insight centre of excellence
- Deliver a new data strategy

High level milestone plan



Transformation investment and savings (2024-2025)

Total investment: £0.865m (capital)

Total planned savings: The programme will facilitate savings across the council



New Operating Models



Targeted Transport

To ensure that targeted transport solutions for “home to school” and children and adults, including those with additional needs, are integrated and sustainable

Portfolio Theme

New Operating Models

Transformation phase

Define ✓



Design ✓



Deliver In progress

Alignment with our missions

What will the programme deliver?

- Starting Well ✓
- Tackling Hardship and Poverty ✓
- Resilient people living their best lives ✓
- Opportunity in a fair local economy ✓
- Neighbourhood Pride ✓
- Greener communities ✓
- Doing things differently ✓

Ensuring sustainable and fit for purpose transport solutions for home to school and children and adults with additional needs. Key deliverables include:

- New processes to ensure transport solutions are commissioned efficiently, maximising the use of technology, minimising duplication and inefficiency
- Full utilisation of the public bus network and internal fleet, alongside other transport solutions, to better meet needs.
- New structures, roles and responsibilities, culture and processes for the transport service so they are better equipped to meet needs
- More independent transport solutions
- A new approach to using data to ensure clear understanding of spend and likely future demand, to inform decision making and to manage costs wherever possible

What will be different for residents?

- Ensuring Independent Travel Training is in place for people who need it to maximise their independence and confidence
- Ensuring transport solutions that enables increased independence to access to future learning, training, employment and social opportunities.
- Greater inclusion and equality for people with additional needs.
- An improved digital offer including journey planning and contact channels

Roles and responsibilities

How will we know it is successful?

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Transport

Senior Responsible Owner: Director of Transport and Highways

- Travel routes will be re-planned and optimised, reducing costs and carbon emissions
- Processes will be streamlined, utilising digital capabilities where possible
- The Public Bus Network will be better utilised to deliver targeted transport services and enable independent and sustainable travel
- The internal fleet will be expanded and maximised to meet targeted transport needs.
- The service has appropriate resources and structures in place to deliver
- A stronger, more competitive external market for transport services
- A high-quality Independent Travel Training offer will be in place – training approximately 70 children, young people and adults per year
- Target savings will be achieved.

Targeted Transport

To ensure that targeted transport solutions for “home to school” and children and adults, including those with additional needs, are integrated and sustainable

Portfolio Theme

New Operating Models

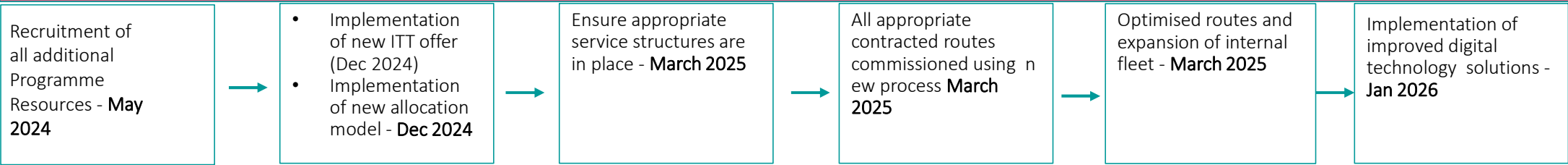
Progress to date

- All processes mapped, time and motion studies applied, and data captured to support with baseline and monitoring of planned benefits.
- A new allocation process designed. This ensures that when transport is requested there is greater emphasis on meeting transport needs through solutions which promote independence and are more cost effective
- A new commissioning process designed (including Reverse Auctions) to secure future transport contracts
- Soft market testing and best practice research for Independent Travel Training (ITT)
- Development of specification for future digital enhancements
- A fully costed and approved business case – including best practice research at national and regional level
- Secured initial additional resources to deliver the programme
- Delivery of £68,300 of financial savings

Focus for the next stage

- Secure final programme resources
- Training and roll out for Reverse Auctions
- Further options assessment for Independent Travel Training (ITT)
- Local Bus Network research and engagement to develop options
- Production of a dashboard to support data driven decision making
- Begin work with Fleet and Logistics expert on route optimisation and expansion of internal fleet offer.

High level milestone plan



Transformation investment and savings (2023-2026)

Total investment: £141,000 of additional temporary delivery resources plus approx. £200,000 per annum permanent revenue investment in the service

Total planned savings: £2.587m

ICT Review (Gemini)

Creating a modern and effective ICT service, moving away from the current shared service with Cheshire East Council, towards a new service model for Cheshire West and Chester that aligns to the council's ambitions.

Portfolio Theme

New Operating Models

Transformation phase

Define ✓



Design ✓



Deliver: In progress

Alignment with our missions

What will the programme deliver?

- Starting Well
- Tackling Hardship and Poverty
- Resilient people living their best lives
- Opportunity in a fair local economy
- Neighbourhood Pride
- Greener communities
- Doing things differently ✓

- A new ICT best practice service for Cheshire West and Chester Council covering strategy, user support, end user computing, applications support, digital, data engineering, and cloud hosting
- The population of a new organisational structure for ICT through appropriate HR processes.
- A new Cheshire West and Chester environment (tenancy) for Office 365
- Migration of all Cheshire West and Chester staff and elected Members to this environment (tenancy)
- A smaller shared service with Cheshire East Council for data centre and networks

What will be different for residents?

- Improved digital solutions enabled by a more effective service
- Reduced running costs enabling resources to be deployed on other council priorities

Roles and responsibilities

How will we know it is successful?

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy, Regeneration and Digital Transformation

Senior Responsible Owner: Director of Public Service Reform

- Business continuity and resilience is maintained when the service launches on 1 April 2025.
- Improved staff satisfaction with ICT
- Improved service responsiveness
- Greater alignment between ICT and the organisation
- Acceleration of pace in relation to digital transformation
- The organisation can better utilise its data to provide valuable insight
- Staff within the new service feel supported, welcomed and equipped to deliver and develop
- Target savings of £1.5m are achieved, reducing current service overspend and providing further efficiency savings

ICT Review (Gemini Programme)

Creating a modern and effective ICT service, moving away from the current shared service with Cheshire East Council towards a new service model for Cheshire West and Chester that aligns to the council's ambitions.

Portfolio Theme

New Operating Models

Progress to date

- Programme governance and resources in place
- Oversight arrangements for the Shared Service Joint Committee and Scrutiny Task group in place
- New service designed, aligned to the council's objectives, with a costed organisational structure
- A review of all contracts held by the shared service to maximise efficiency
- A new tenancy for office 365
- Commenced migration of Cheshire West and Chester users to the new tenancy
- Completed review of the long-term future for the data centre and network
- Initial informal engagement with Trade Unions and structured process in place for further engagement
- Significant savings released by moving away from Citrix to a new application hosting solution

Focus for the next stage

- Migration of remaining users to new office 365 environment
- Population of new organisational structure in line with HR processes
- Decisions on the future of the data centre and network
- Assurance that the service will be ready to go live for 1 April 2025

High level milestone plan



Transformation investment and savings (2023-2026)

Total investment: £2.5m temporary investment

Total planned savings: £1.55million permanent savings from 2025/26

Review of Council companies

Ensuring our council-owned companies are delivering against our objectives, are delivering the best value for money and are sustainable.

Portfolio Theme

New Operating Models

Transformation phase

Define ✓



Design ✓



Deliver In progress

Alignment with our missions

What will the programme deliver?

- Starting Well ✓
- Tackling Hardship and Poverty ✓
- Resilient people living their best lives ✓
- Opportunity in a fair local economy ✓
- Neighbourhood Pride ✓
- Greener communities ✓
- Doing things differently ✓

- Alignment to One Council approach and Borough Plan, adherence to contractual milestones and good governance practice
- A company group fit for the future – supporting growth, innovation and continued efficiencies.
- Identification of the most appropriate structural options for delivery of each service.

What will be different for residents?

- Effective service delivery will be supported to continue across all Council companies

Roles and responsibilities

How will we know it is successful?

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Finance and Legal

Senior Responsible Owner: Assistant Chief Executive

- We will have effective council companies in place supporting the Council to deliver against its missions
- Possibly fewer companies but a refocused, strategically important group of delivery partners
- Efficient and effective delivery structures

Review of Council companies

Ensuring our council-owned companies are delivering against our objectives, are delivering the best value for money and are sustainable.

Portfolio Theme

New Operating Models

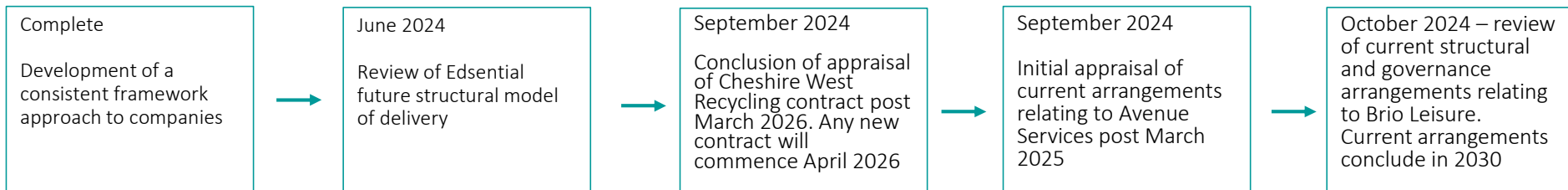
Progress to date

- Qwest – Programme Q established major programme. Market commissioning underway for facilities management /mobilisation of services coming back in house for customer and digital
- Cheshire West Recycling (CWR) – Joint programme with Commercial Mgt undertaking an assessment of CWR’s performance, governance arrangements and strategic delivery. Final stages of review
- Brio –review has commenced supported by Public Health client leads and Commercial Management. Seeking specialist external advice on position relating to VAT and leisure services
- Avenue Services – review has commenced supported by a cross working group of council officers in
- Edsential – initial options appraisal on future structural models undertaken, with a more detailed options appraisal in development

Focus for the next stage

- Avenue Services contract position post March 2025
- Cheshire West Recycling contract position post March 2026
- Initial tax advice regarding Brio and then development of options appraisal
- Short to medium term plan for Edsential (in consultation with Wirral Council)
- Qwest – Programme Q. Procurement process for strategic FM Partner/ migration and mobilisation of customer and digital functions back as in house services
- Exploration of future best practice models regarding governance and oversight of commissioned services.

High level milestone plan



Transformation investment and savings (2022-2026)

Total investment: Within current resources

Total planned savings: £1.3million

Transactional Services Review

Optimising our shared payroll and financial administration service.

Portfolio Theme

New Operating Models

Transformation phase

Define in progress



Design



Deliver

Alignment with our missions

What will the programme deliver?

- Starting Well
- Tackling Hardship and Poverty
- Resilient people living their best lives
- Opportunity in a fair local economy
- Neighbourhood Pride
- Greener communities
- Doing things differently



- An effective and efficient payroll and financial administration service for both Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East councils.

What will be different for residents?

- Improved digital solutions enabled by a more effective service
- Reduced costs enabling resources to be deployed on other council priorities
- Ensure that local businesses are supported through the timely and accurate processing and payment of invoices

Roles and responsibilities

How will we know it is successful?

- Lead Cabinet Member:** Cabinet Member for Finance and Legal
- Senior Responsible Owner:** Director of Finance

- A consistently high level of accuracy will be maintained across processes and payments whilst working within agreed timescales
- Low levels of failure demand
- Positive customer feedback

Transactional Services Review

Optimising our shared payroll and financial administration service.

Portfolio Theme

New Operating Models

Progress to date

- Baseline diagnostics undertaken
- Stakeholder engagement with Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East Councils
- Jointly commissioned an end-to-end Healthcheck of the UNIT4 System focussing on HR and Payroll functionality, reporting and the broader integration framework.

Focus for the next stage

- Develop and agree project governance
- Confirm indicative timeline
- Mobilise a service improvement plan
- Develop and agree the new target operating model

High level milestone plan

Summer 2024

Mobilise the service improvement plan



Spring 2025

Develop and agree the transformation approach



Autumn 2025

Complete the delivery of the Phase 1 service improvement plan



Spring 2029

Complete the service transformation

Transformation investment and savings (2024-2029)

Total investment: Investment plan under development

Total planned savings: Savings plan under development

Facilities Management Review

Delivering a new strategic partnership arrangement for the Councils Facilities Management Service.

Portfolio Theme
New Operating Models

Transformation phase

Define ✓ →

Design ✓ →

Deliver In Progress

Alignment with our missions

What will the programme deliver?

- Starting Well
- Tackling Hardship and Poverty
- Resilient people living their best lives
- Opportunity in a fair local economy
- Neighbourhood Pride
- Greener communities
- Doing things differently ✓

A new Strategic Partnership Contract for Facilities Management Services. This will involve transferring the existing staff and infrastructure from the Councils Joint Venture Company Qwest Services at the end of the current contract. This arrangement will include;

- A centralised Facilities Management Digital system to ensure consistency and control
- End to end help desk system to support our services and customer journey
- Master planning to ensure our estate is suitable for the evolving and future needs of our residents and services
- Flexibility within core contract delivery enabling the council to add or remove assets as required
- Appropriate internal specialist team to oversee and support the work of the new partner

What will be different for residents?

- To continue to ensure safe, well maintained and clean building environments for the delivery of services to residents and staff
- Ensuring an affordable and efficient future service arrangement that provides best value
- Delivery of social value outcomes including utilising the local supply chain wherever possible and meeting our carbon reduction ambitions.

Roles and responsibilities

How will we know it is successful?

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Finance and Legal

Senior Responsible Owner: Chief Operating Officer

- The new contract is successfully mobilised on the 1 April 2025 supported by a new system and internal specialist team in the Council.
- Achieving KPI metrics to include Customer satisfaction, Employee satisfaction, H&S compliance, sustainability, responsiveness and performance
- Ensuring we align with council's climate emergency policy through a sustained maintenance programme to include solar panels, LED replacement, and the air source heat pump programme
- Driving social value outcomes which can monitored throughout the contract term.

Facilities Management Review

Delivering a new strategic partnership arrangement for the Councils Facilities Management Service.

Portfolio Theme

New Operating Models

Progress to date

- Business case has been developed and approved by Cabinet
- Service specification has been produced and procurement exercise started

Focus for the next stage

- Completion of Procurement exercise
- Evaluation and award to successful bidder
- Mobilisation of new contract
- Demobilisation of current arrangement (including TUPE transfer of staff from incumbent provider)

High level milestone plan

Tender Submission (July 2024)



Evaluation and Contract Award (July to November 2024)



Pre-contract mobilisation activity (December 2024 to March 2025)



Contract go live (1 April 2025)

Transformation investment and savings (2022-2026)

Total investment: £250,000 (non-recurrent) for FM review and customer services review

Total planned savings: £0.33million

Customer Services Review

Successfully transferring and integrating Customer Services into the Council from April 2025

Portfolio Theme

New Operating Models

Transformation phase

Define ✓



Design ✓



Deliver In progress

Alignment with our missions

What will the programme deliver?

- Starting Well
- Tackling Hardship and Poverty
- Resilient people living their best lives
- Opportunity in a fair local economy
- Neighbourhood Pride
- Greener communities
- Doing things differently ✓

- A new Customer Services model delivered by the Council from 1 April 2025 – this will involve transferring existing staff and infrastructure from the Councils Joint Venture company Qwest Services at the end of the current contract.
- A clear vision and plan for future service improvements.
- Ensure successful transfer into the Council of other services currently delivered by Qwest in line with the Cabinet decision.

What will be different for residents?

- Building the best possible relationship with our customers through an excellent customer experience when engaging with Council services
- Consistent service delivery across all customer channels
- A deeper and broader front door to improve efficiency and time taken to resolve queries
- Enhanced partnership working

Roles and responsibilities

How will we know it is successful?

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Finance and Legal

Senior Responsible Owner: Director of Governance

- Customer Services continues to operate successfully from 1 April 2025 onwards
- A clear plan in place to ensure the service is performing well against targets for;
 - Response times, and the time taken to resolve issues
 - First call resolution
 - Customer satisfaction scores
 - Call abandonment rate and wait times
 - Employee satisfaction
 - Repeat / chase up calls
 - Self-service and digital access

Customer Services Review

Successfully transferring and integrating Customer Services into the Council from April 2025

Portfolio Theme

New Operating Models

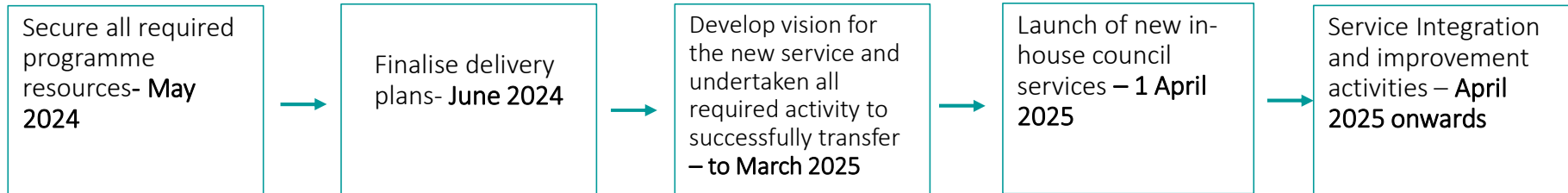
Progress to date

- Business case has been approved by Cabinet.
- Collation of key information and early engagement with staff to inform delivery plan.

Focus for the next stage

- Secure all required resources to support the programme.
- Put in place all required plans for delivery including transfer of staff, systems and other infrastructure to successfully run the services in the Council.
- Work in partnership with key stakeholders and customers to set a vision for the new service.
- Undertake all required actions to successfully transfer the services in house.

High level milestone plan



Transformation investment and savings (2022-2028)

Total investment: £250,000 (non-recurrent) for FM review and customer services review

Total planned savings: £0.2million