



Cheshire West & Chester Council

**Council Housing
Asset
Management
Strategy
Consultation
Feedback**



Building futures, opening doors



Cheshire West
and Chester

Background to the survey

Cheshire West & Chester Council retains ownership of 5,500 homes in the borough, concentrated in the areas of Ellesmere Port, Neston and Winsford. Although as a council we are both the owner and landlord, the management and maintenance of the stock is carried out by ForHousing who have signed a 10-year contract with the Council which runs from 2017 to 2027, with the option to extend for a further 2 years.

What is the draft Council Housing Asset Management Strategy?

The new draft Council Housing Asset Management Strategy sets out how the Council, working with its strategic housing partner Forhousing, will maintain and improve its housing stock. The draft strategy details how we will make sure our stock meets the requirements set out in the Building Safety Act 2022 as well as meeting all the requirements around gas, electrical and fire safety. The draft strategy also proposes a programme of refurbishment works, measures to tackle climate change and an overview of our plan to continue to build new housing to help meet the housing needs of our residents.

The draft strategy also compliments and supports our council housing vision statement, namely:

“We aim to provide affordable homes of the right type and quality to meet the housing needs of those who are unable to meet their own needs in the housing market now and in the future.

We will continue to work in partnership to support our tenants to prosper and improve their wellbeing and ensure neighbourhoods and communities are sustainable, safe and pleasant”.

How the survey was carried out

The survey was open for 12 weeks, from 11 September to 3 December 2023.

As the consultation was asking for comments in relation to a draft Council Housing Asset Management Strategy, feedback from council tenants and leaseholders were being sought. There are approximately 5,500 council tenants and leaseholders. Those tenants and leaseholders which had an email address were sent an email containing a copy of the draft strategy and a hyperlink to the online survey. The 1,800 tenants and leaseholders with no email address were sent a covering letter which provided details of how a hard copy of the draft strategy and survey could be provided. In addition to the online survey, tenants were also able to attend a workshop with staff from both Forhousing and the Council which provided an opportunity to ask questions.

Communication methods to ensure that key stakeholders were made aware of the consultation and given the opportunity to have their say included a press

release, Member Briefing, social media posts and presence of the consultation on the Council website.

The survey received a total of 69 responses, made up of 44 respondents who identified themselves from the main target cohort and the workshop was attended by 13 tenants. In addition, 5 emails were received asking for paper copies of the survey/strategy to be provided.

Key messages – a summary of the main findings

The key messages to emerge from the consultation, were as follows:

- Some people mentioned that when building new housing, sufficient local services such as doctors, schools, and public transport must be provided.
- Some people mentioned that it was right that the Council was consulting with existing and potential tenants and the wider public on the draft Council Housing Asset Management Strategy.
- Some people mentioned that properties must be habitable and fit for purpose, well maintained and free from damp and mould.
- A couple of people mentioned that it was good that the Council Housing Asset Management Strategy had been devised with ForHousing, the Council, and tenants in mind.
- Some people mentioned that they felt that properties should be repaired promptly and to a good standard and, it was felt that the current repairs process is too slow.
- Some people mentioned that properties must be of good quality and should be fit for purpose.
- Some respondents said how more money needed to be spent on making homes safer.
- Some people mentioned how it needed to be easier for people to downsize which would potentially allow larger properties to become vacant for families who were on the housing register.
- Some people mentioned how there needed to be more playgrounds and green spaces when planning neighbourhood improvement schemes.
- Some people felt that any reduction in carbon emissions had to produce long-term benefits for tenants for example, reducing the number of tenants facing fuel poverty.
- A few people thought that meeting housing need and making sure homes were fit for purpose should be more of a priority than reducing carbon emissions.
- A few people stated that it was important that properties can be adapted to suit residents with disabilities.
- Some people mentioned how it needed to be easier for people to downsize which would potentially allow larger properties to become vacant for families who were on the housing register.

- Some people mentioned how there needed to be more playgrounds and green spaces when planning neighbourhood improvement schemes.
- Some people felt that any reduction in carbon emissions had to produce long-term benefits for tenants for example, reducing the number of tenants facing fuel poverty.
- A few people thought that meeting housing need and making sure homes were fit for purpose should be more of a priority than reducing carbon emissions.

Headline findings

The Council Housing Asset Management Strategy consultation took place from Monday 11 September up to and including Sunday 3 December 2023. In total 69 formal responses were received with headline findings as follows:

1. 81% either agreed or strongly agreed with the aim of the draft Council Housing Asset Management Strategy.
2. 85% either agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed six objectives detailed in the strategy.
3. 82% either agreed or strongly agreed with the homes are fit for purpose commitments.
4. 83% either agreed or strongly agreed with the homes that are safe to live in commitments.
5. 75% either agreed or strongly agreed with the meeting housing needs commitments.
6. 73% either agreed or strongly agreed with the social and environmental wellbeing commitments.
7. 65% either agreed or strongly agreed with the reducing carbon emissions and environmental impact commitments.
8. 70% either agreed or strongly agreed with the financial control commitments.

Detailed findings from the survey

The following pages detail the specific responses to the consultation questions as well as any key messages arising from respondent feedback.

Graph 1: Agreement with the aims of the Council Housing Asset Management Strategy

Q1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the aim of the Council Housing Asset Management Strategy? (Please select one option only)

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		36%	25
2	Agree		45%	31
3	Neither agree nor disagree		8%	6
4	Disagree		6%	4
5	Strongly disagree		5%	3

69 responses
(Strongly agree 36%; Agree 45%; Neither agree nor disagree 8%; Disagree 6%; Strongly disagree 5%)

The above chart shows that the majority of respondents (81%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the aims of the Council Housing Asset Management Strategy.

Respondents were also invited to give further comments or suggestions about the aims of the Council Housing Asset Management Strategy. 19 comments were received and the key messages from those comments were:

- Some people mentioned that it was right that the Council was consulting with existing and potential tenants and the wider public on the draft Council Housing Asset Management Strategy.
- A few people stated that when building new housing, sufficient local services such as doctors, schools, public transport must be provided.
- Some people said that properties must be habitable, fit for purpose and free from damp and mould.
- Some people mentioned how repairs must be dealt with promptly, and carried out to a high standard and that jobs must not be left unfinished.

Graph 2: Agreement with the six objectives in the Council Housing Asset Management Strategy

Q2. Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed six objectives detailed in the Council Housing Asset Management Strategy? (Please select one option only)

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		45%	31
2	Agree		40%	27
3	Neither agree nor disagree		5%	3
4	Disagree		9%	6
5	Strongly disagree		1%	1

68 responses
(Strongly agree 45%; Agree 40%; Neither agree nor disagree 5%; Disagree 9%; Strongly disagree 1%)

The above chart shows that the majority of respondents (85%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the six objectives detailed in the Council Housing Asset Management Strategy.

Respondents were also invited to give further comments or suggestions about the objectives in the Council Housing Asset Management Strategy. 20 comments were received and the key messages from those comments were:

- Some people commented that properties should be repaired promptly and to a good standard. They mentioned that the current system is slow and sometimes jobs are left unfinished.
- A few people stated that it was important that properties can be adapted to suit residents with disabilities.
- A couple of people mentioned how they felt it was good that the Council Housing Asset Management Strategy had been devised with ForHousing, the council, and tenants in mind.

Graph 3: Prioritising the objectives in the Council Housing Asset Management Strategy.

Q3. Which of the six objectives do you think is the most important? Please rank the six objectives by dragging and dropping the objectives so that your most important is at the top and least important at the bottom.

Item	Total Score ₁	Overall Rank
Ensure homes are fit for purpose	342	1
Ensure homes are safe to live in	319	2
Ensure homes help meet housing needs	251	3
Help contribute to social and environmental wellbeing	178	4
Ensure there is effective financial control overseeing our work	157	5
Reduce carbon emissions & environmental impact	139	6

69 responses

(Ensure homes are fit for purpose ranked 1st; Ensure homes are safe to live in ranked 2nd; Ensure homes help meet housing needs ranked 3rd; Helped contribute to social and environmental wellbeing ranked 4th; Ensure there is effective financial control overseeing our work ranked 5th; Reduce carbon emissions and environmental impact ranked 6th).

Respondents ranked ensuring homes are fit for purpose as their first priority objective, closely followed by ensuring that homes are safe to live in as their second priority objective. ¹ Score is a weighted calculation. Items ranked first are valued higher than the following ranks, the score is a sum of all weighted rank counts.

Graph 4: Agreement with the ensuring homes are fit for purpose commitments.

Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the ensuring that homes are fit for purpose commitments? (Please select one option only)

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		36%	25
2	Agree		46%	32
3	Neither agree nor disagree		9%	6
4	Disagree		5%	3
5	Strongly disagree		4%	3

69 responses
(Strongly agree 36%; Agree 46%; Neither agree nor disagree 9%; Disagree 5%; Strongly disagree 4%)

The above chart shows that the majority of respondents (82%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the ensuring homes are fit for purpose commitments.

Respondents were also invited to give further comments or suggestions about the homes that are fit for purpose commitments. 12 comments were received and the key messages from those comments were:

- Some respondents mentioned that repairs must be of good quality and carried out in a reasonable timescale.
- A few respondents said that properties must be of good quality and fit for purpose.

Graph 5: Agreement with the homes that are safe to live in commitments.

Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the homes that are safe to live in commitments? (Please select one option only)

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		43%	30
2	Agree		40%	27
3	Neither agree nor disagree		7%	4
4	Disagree		3%	2
5	Strongly disagree		7%	5

68 responses
(Strongly agree 43%; Agree 40%; Neither agree nor disagree 7%; Disagree 3%; Strongly disagree 7%)

The above chart shows that the majority of respondents (83%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the homes that are safe to live in commitments.

Respondents were also invited to give further comments or suggestions about the homes that are safe to live in commitments. 12 comments were received and the key messages from those comments were:

- Some respondents said how repairs must be carried out using a “getting it right first-time approach.”
- Some respondents said how more money needed to be spent on making homes safer.
- A few respondents mentioned how it was important to send correctly trained operatives to the job.

Graph 6: Agreement with the meeting housing needs commitments.

Q6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the meeting housing needs commitments? (Please select one option only)

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		33%	23
2	Agree		42%	29
3	Neither agree nor disagree		13%	9
4	Disagree		6%	4
5	Strongly disagree		6%	4
69 responses (Strongly agree 33%; Agree 42%; Neither agree nor disagree 13%; Disagree 6%; Strongly disagree 6%)				

The above chart shows that the majority of respondents (75%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the meeting housing needs commitments.

Respondents were also invited to give further comments or suggestions about the meeting housing needs commitments. 13 comments were received and the key messages from those comments were:

- Some respondents felt that as a Council with its own housing stock the council should play an key role in building new homes.
- Some respondents mentioned how it needed to be easier for people to downsize which would potentially allow larger properties to become vacant for families who were on the housing register.

Graph 7: Agreement with the social and environmental wellbeing commitments.

Q7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the social and environmental wellbeing commitments? (Please select one option only)

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		33%	23
2	Agree		40%	28
3	Neither agree nor disagree		19%	13
4	Disagree		2%	1
5	Strongly disagree		6%	4
69 responses (Strongly agree 33%; Agree 40%; Neither agree nor disagree 19%; Disagree 2%; Strongly disagree 6%)				

The above chart shows that almost three quarters of respondents (73%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the social and environmental wellbeing commitments.

Respondents were also invited to give further comments or suggestions about the social and environmental wellbeing commitments. 10 comments were received and the key messages from those comments were:

- Some respondents mentioned how there needed to be more playgrounds and green areas when planning neighbourhood improvement schemes.

Graph 8: Agreement with the reduce carbon emissions and environmental impact commitments.

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the commitments to reduce carbon emissions and environmental impact? (Please select one option only)

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		35%	24
2	Agree		30%	20
3	Neither agree nor disagree		22%	15
4	Disagree		6%	4
5	Strongly disagree		7%	5

68 responses
(Strongly agree 35%; Agree 30%; Neither agree nor disagree 22%; Disagree 6%; Strongly disagree 7%)

The above chart shows that almost two thirds of respondents (65%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the reduce carbon emissions and environmental impact commitments.

Respondents were also invited to give further comments or suggestions about the reduce carbon emissions and environmental impact commitments. 10 comments were received and the key messages from those comments were:

- Some people felt that any reduction in carbon emissions had to produce long-term benefits for tenants for example, reducing the number of tenants in fuel poverty.
- A few people thought that meeting housing need and making sure homes were fit for purpose should be more of a priority.

Graph 9: Agreement with the financial control commitments.

Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the financial control commitments? (Please select one option only)				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		42%	29
2	Agree		28%	19
3	Neither agree nor disagree		25%	17
4	Disagree		2%	1
5	Strongly disagree		3%	2
68 responses (Strongly agree 42%; Agree 28%; Neither agree nor disagree 25%; Disagree 2%; Strongly disagree 3%)				

The above chart shows that over two thirds of respondents (70%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the financial control commitments.

Respondents were also invited to give further comments or suggestions about the financial control commitments. 1 comment was received and the key message were:

- A number of people said how it was very important to keep a control of costs and to have good budgetary control.

Tenant workshop feedback

In addition to the online survey, a tenant workshop was also delivered which provided an opportunity for tenants to give their feedback on the draft Council Housing Asset Management Strategy. 13 tenants attended the workshop and the key messages from their comments were:

- All attendees agreed with the aim of the Council Housing Asset Management Strategy however, some attendees felt the aim was too wordy. Several attendees felt that the aim needed to refer to being resilient and ready to adapt to the changing environment.
- All attendees agreed with the six objectives albeit one attendee felt that there should be a seventh objective around being resilient to changes however, all other attendees felt this would be better stated within the aim.
- Some attendees discussed a range of day-to-day policies and procedures that would be affected by the new Council Housing Asset Management Strategy such as the Lettable Standard.

- Some attendees wanted to understand how the council will report any progress being made against the action plan to tenants and leaseholders.

Action to be taken because of the survey

The feedback from the consultation will form part of a report to be presented to Cabinet in June 2024 which will help to inform Councillors decisions as they consider the strategy.

Profile of respondents

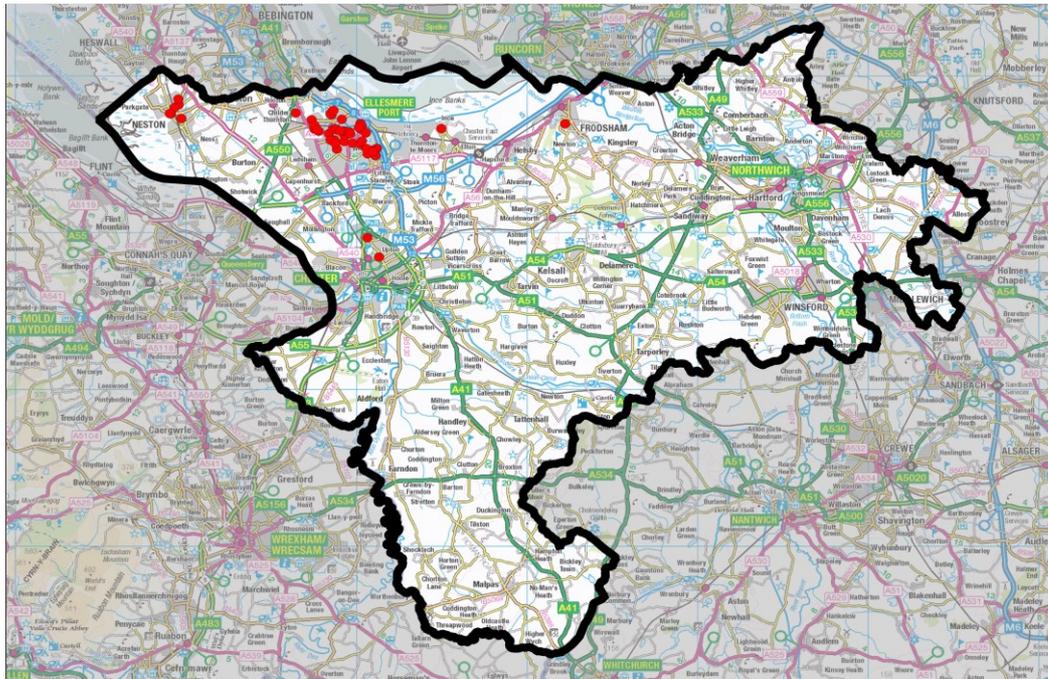
In what respect are you completing this questionnaire?		Response Percent	Response Total
1	I am a social housing tenant in Cheshire West and Chester and Chester	60%	44
2	I am a social housing landlord in Cheshire West and Chester Council	0%	0
3	I am a resident in Cheshire West and Chester	30%	24
4	I am an elected Member of Cheshire West and Chester Council	2%	1
5	I am a local Town or Parish Councillor	2%	1
6	I am an employee of Cheshire West and Chester Council	2%	2
7	I am a representative of a community or voluntary organisation	1%	1
8	I am a local business	2%	1
9	Other (please specify):	1%	1

Gender

Are you...?		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Male	33%	22
2	Female	60%	41
3	Prefer not to say	5%	3
4	Prefer to use own term	2%	1

Postcodes of respondents

The map below shows all of the postcodes given by respondents that could be mapped (55 postcodes). Most respondents were from the area in and around Ellesmere Port as well as a few from other areas of Cheshire West and Chester.



Age

Age	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Under 16 *	0%	0
2 16-24	0%	0
3 25-34	8%	5
4 35-44	12%	8
5 45-54	12%	8
6 55-64	33%	22
7 65 or older	31%	21
8 Prefer not to say	4%	3

Disabilities

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	47.76%	32
2	No	41.79%	28
3	Prefer not to say	10.45%	7

Ethnic origin

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	92%	62
2	White - Irish	0%	0
3	White - Any other White background (please type in box below)	1%	1
4	Black or Black British - Caribbean	0%	0
5	Black or Black British - African	0%	0
6	Black or Black British - Any other Black background (please type in the box below)	0%	0
7	Asian or Asian British - Indian	0%	0
8	Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0%	0
9	Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0%	0
10	Asian or Asian British - Chinese	0%	0
11	Asian or Asian British - Any other Asian background (please type in the box below)	0%	0
12	Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	0%	0
13	Mixed - White and Black African	0%	0
14	Mixed - White and Asian	0%	0
15	Mixed - Any other Mixed background (please type in the box below)	0%	0
16	Other ethnic group - Arab	0%	0
17	Other ethnic group - Other ethnic group (please type in the box below)	0%	0
18	Travelling community - Gypsy/Roma	0%	0
19	Travelling community - Traveller of Irish descent	2%	1

20	Travelling community - Other member of the Travelling community (please type in the box below)	0%	0
21	Prefer not to say	5%	3
22	Other (please specify):	0%	0

Religion

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Buddhist	0%	0
2	Christian	58%	38
3	Hindu	0%	0
4	Jewish	0%	0
5	Muslim	0%	0
6	Sikh	0%	0
7	None	20%	13
8	Prefer not to say	17%	11
9	Other (please specify):	5%	3

Sexual orientation

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Heterosexual/Straight	88%	58
2	Bisexual	0%	0
3	Gay/Lesbian	0%	0
4	Prefer not to say	10%	7
5	Prefer to use own term: (please specify):	2%	1