

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Stronger Futures:

**A Four Year Plan for Recovery and
Renewal Following COVID-19**

2020-24



Cheshire West
and Chester

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Foreword

COVID-19 has had a huge impact on all of our lives, with tragic consequences for some, and it remains ongoing. Communities across the borough continue to need our support, and our priority remains the protection of lives and livelihoods. At the time of writing we are seeing a high level of infections, along with new national restrictions, and we need to redouble our efforts as residents, businesses and public agencies to get the virus under control.

The best way to deal with a crisis is to have a strategy to manage the immediate challenges, whilst also looking beyond it by creating a confident and ambitious plan for the future. This plan sets out how we will move through and beyond this crisis to prepare our borough for a stronger future that addresses the vulnerabilities exposed during the pandemic and grasps new opportunities. We will look to provide a balanced and fair response that recognises the impact that this crisis has had on residents, businesses, families and communities.

Since March 2020, this country has faced what has arguably been its biggest challenge in generations. Local people, organisations, businesses, and front-line workers have come together to support each other. Links between them have been strengthened. New ways of working together have been introduced at record pace and shown to be effective. Over 2,000 local people have volunteered to help support our most vulnerable residents. We have seen the public sector break down organisational boundaries to work as one for the common good. Businesses have adapted and found new ways of operating, with the Council supporting them to do so. Technology has been vital to enable many of us to work from home, access vital services and stay connected to family and friends.

We need to acknowledge the extensive investment put in place by central and local government to support and stimulate the local economy, but more could always be done to maximise the opportunities to support local businesses and their employees. We're likely to face unprecedented social and economic challenges for some time to come, and we need to accept that there will be no going back to the way we lived and worked before. Established businesses have announced major redundancies, retailers and the hospitality sector have taken a further hit, and demand for services to support vulnerable people has increased. All of us will need to behave differently, work differently, and find new ways of making sure that our communities continue to receive the support they need. But there is also a real opportunity for us to come back stronger.

Our collective response to this pandemic has fostered a tremendous sense of empathy, compassion, unity and innovation, which we are absolutely determined to harness. It must provide a basis for us to build a fairer, greener and even more prosperous borough in the years to come.

In February this year, after considering your views, we agreed a new Council Plan - Play Your Part to Thrive - to guide us over the next four years. The plan set out a radical vision where our residents, businesses, and services work together to make our communities fairer, greener and more involved in the decisions that affect us all. This vision and its associated priorities are now even more important, but the pandemic has set a new context, with new challenges as well as new opportunities. This plan builds upon the Council Plan in light of this new context and sets out an action plan of how the Council will work with its communities and its partners to deliver a stronger future for everyone.

We have taken a two-pronged approach. Our initial starting point was the immediate challenge of re-establishing local services and facilities as social distancing measures eased, putting a local test, track and trace approach in place to manage outbreaks. We have classified this first phase as recovery. We have been careful to do this in a phased and safe way whilst making sure that we don't lose the innovation and new ways of working that have served us well. We've also looked to keep many public services operational even during the current phase of national restrictions.

But this is not just about restarting. This is an opportunity for a reset - a fundamental change and phase two will focus on a renewal of the way that society, the Council and our economy works.

Now is the time for delivery and I look forward to all of us playing a part in building a stronger future.



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Councillor Louise Gittins
 Leader of Cheshire West
 and Chester Council

Purpose

This document sets out how the Council will work with communities, businesses and partners to recover from COVID-19 and put in place fundamental reforms to build a stronger future from 2020 to 2024. It is divided into three main sections:

Section One - Context:

Background to the purpose of the plan and how it was developed.

Section Two - Renewal plans:

A description of the actions we will take to build a stronger borough, working alongside partners and communities.

Section Three - Action plan:

Detail on actions, accountable members and officers, and milestones to deliver this plan.

This document presents the full detail, but a more accessible summary will be made available.



Section One - Context

Unprecedented challenges and opportunities:

COVID-19 continues to present the country with its biggest challenge for generations. The Council is working very closely with other public bodies and communities to protect lives and control the virus. We have supported the distribution of financial support and advice to businesses, the shielding of people with medical conditions, the protection of residents in care homes, the coordination of community and voluntary action and continued to run vital services.

The economic, social and financial consequences are self-evident. As is the potential for a continued resurgence in infections.

The borough has experienced a doubling of unemployment, a surge in businesses approaching the Council for support, and we are expecting employers to announce a high number of redundancies. In October 2020, Cheshire West and Chester Council voted to declare a poverty emergency, reflecting the number of local people who are affected by long-term poverty and who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, but also the increasing numbers of people the pandemic has pushed into financial difficulties.

There has been a 57% increase in the number of people approaching the Council for help because they have become homeless. More specialist support has been requested to keep children safe and well. The impact on mental wellbeing has been a major concern. The Council has also had to remain within its budget and, despite government support, the cost of meeting the challenges has exceeded the financial support we have received.

That said, there are also major opportunities to do things more effectively for and with local communities. Communities have worked alongside the Council to support the most vulnerable and relationships with voluntary organisations have improved. This vision of an active community supporting each other, if it is maintained, will be vital to the success of the borough. Relationships across a range of public sector organisation have improved to support more joined up care and coordinated support to people with complex needs. Relationships with businesses have also grown and the Council has gained excellent insight into their needs and goals, particularly those where there has been no or limited



previous contact. The economy will need to be supported in its resurgence and this presents an opportunity to support higher paid, well skilled jobs as well as supporting an economic recovery that tackles the climate emergency. We have the opportunity to look again at all the services that support people in poverty and design something more joined up and in line with their needs.

The borough has also seen a huge uptake of digital technology as residents have interacted with each other, with local businesses and with local services on-line. It presents new, more efficient and more effective ways for the Council and the majority of residents and businesses to interact. However, frontline work with our most economically, clinically and socially vulnerable residents has revealed a greater extent of digital exclusion than previously understood and our experience prior to and during the pandemic continues to show that a mixture of digital and more traditional approaches are most effective. In terms of our staff, around 70 percent have worked from home, bringing major productivity and environmental benefits whilst service boundaries have been lessened as services collaborated across the organisation.

This plan attempts to grasp these opportunities in order to address the local economic, social and financial challenges. Not every aspiration will be affordable and feasible so a prioritised action plan has been developed to ensure that delivery can happen within the Council's powers and funding over a four year period.

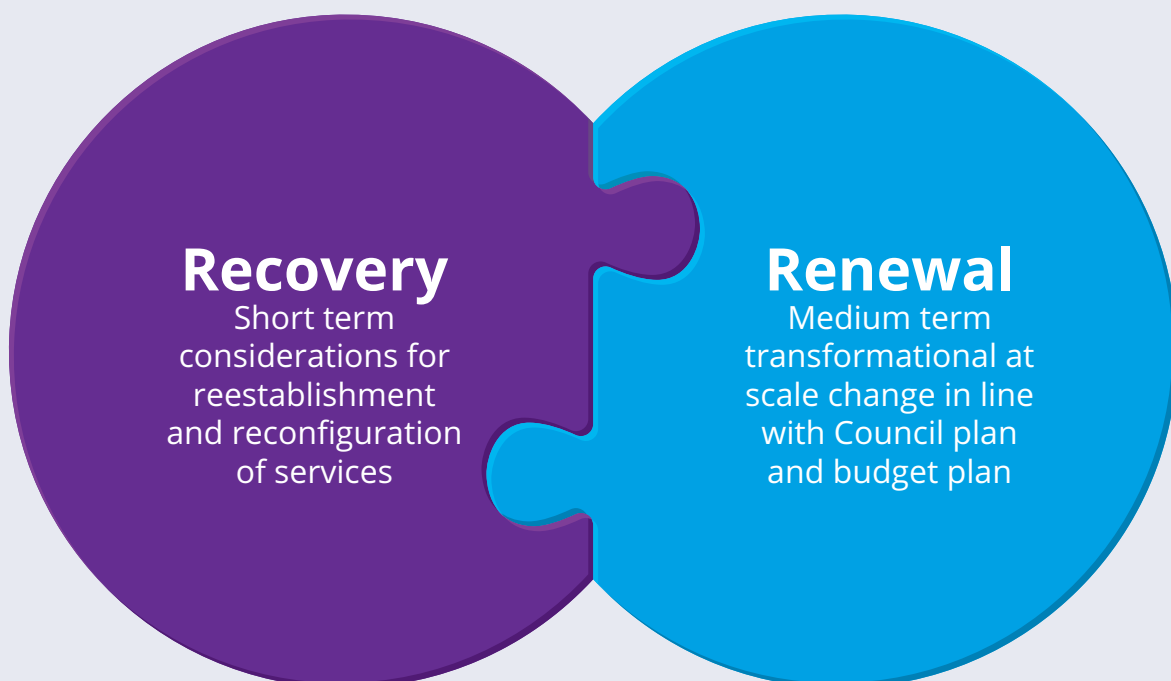
Recovery and renewal – an important distinction: A phased approach has been taken with this plan. Phase one began from May to September 2020 and was about initial **recovery**. This meant restoring local services, facilities, public spaces and town centres as lockdown eased. This was managed in a careful and gradual way to ensure that safe social distancing was in place and any changes were communicated effectively. Examples of this recovery process included:

- Reopening town centres for retail and hospitality and reopening the public realm, with monthly footfall in Northwich town centre increasing from around 115,000 in April to 322,000 in August and in Chester increasing from around 58,000 a week in April to 345,000 a week in August
- Restoring critical face to face services that support people with complex needs such as children and adults social care
- Supporting approximately 51,000 children back to school, addressing the challenge of safe learning environments and home to school transport
- Reopening public buildings such as sixteen libraries and seven leisure centres
- Restarting construction on key housing and regeneration projects such as the four Council sites, including Wharton Green in Winsford, which

will provide 138 new, mixed-tenure homes

- Restarting customer services
- Ensuring all our public buildings, schools and offices are COVID secure.

All the above is under constant review, particularly as infection rates have risen and new national restrictions have been introduced. There has however, been a commitment to try and maintain public services through this second wave and most council services remain operational with some exceptions. We are also working with colleagues in Public Health to promote and highlight the vital importance of immunisation against diseases such as influenza as a way for individuals to safeguard themselves and their families against multiple infections and to protect the NHS ahead of winter pressures.



In parallel, a local Outbreak Management Hub has been set up to manage local outbreaks and to support the work of NHS Test and Trace and the Cheshire and Merseyside Outbreak Management Hub led by Public Health England. In addition to outbreak and consequence management, the Council Hub has also been carrying out a substantial volume of preventative work to reduce the risk of transmission in high risk settings, including a wide range of workplaces. An outbreak management plan was developed to support this aim with a dedicated team to deliver. Cheshire West and Chester Council was selected by Government to be a beacon council and to pilot this approach which has been invaluable. There are still some operational issues to resolve, particularly with the quality and timeliness of information received from the NHS Test and Trace service, but since July this new service has:

- Engaged with key destination/tourist attractions to review their risk assessments, staff procedures, social distancing measures and their plans for a staged and graduated approach to reopening
- Undertaken 459 telephone surveys of vulnerable or high-risk settings such as early years, hospitality, supported living, children's homes, and factories. High risk cases identified are reviewed by public health staff and environmental health and followed up, if necessary (or on request), by a site visit by an Environmental Health Officer
- Identified high risk areas such as houses in multiple occupation to work with landlords to provide appropriate support and guidance. This has led to the production of an information pack for landlords and work with the University of Chester ahead of the return of students
- Established a new community testing service for housebound residents
- Delivered scenario planning for schools, colleges and universities to manage outbreaks and ensure continuity of education
- Provided regular communications and guidance to all 85 care homes in the borough
- Been selected (as one of just 12 Councils) to work in collaboration with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE); the HSE will contact a mutually agreed selection of Cheshire West businesses,

undertake a COVID-19 secure spot check, and refer any businesses requiring support to the Council

- Developed an enhanced approach for local contact tracing

Phase two is known as **renewal** and is the major focus of this plan. This is about more fundamental changes needed to make both the borough and Council more resilient. It involves transforming the way the Council works, nurturing community action, developing new policies to guide decisions and services, and investing significant public and private sector funding into interventions which support the local economy. Due to the scale of this agenda it is more medium term and this plan covers the period 2020-4. It is not about reinventing or replacing the previously approved Council Plan but focuses more on how we deliver the key objectives of the plan in a much-changed environment and landscape.

How the plan was developed

Resident priorities: Residents were invited to share their ideas on the Council website as to how the borough could recover following COVID-19. There were 1500 visits to the site, 103 posts – and 505 interactions such as 'likes' - and 43 survey responses. In addition, a specific engagement exercise was carried out on active travel as an opportunity following the pandemic which has attracted over 1,000 submissions. Feedback has focused around building on community spirit, promoting active travel and public transport, tackling the climate emergency, investing in green spaces (particularly in urban areas), growing the local economy and educational and employment opportunities, formalising the volunteer system and creating a volunteer network, improve the road infrastructure to improve safety and reduce congestion, encouraging people to live healthy lifestyles and continue hygiene measures and investing in facilities and services for young people. This feedback and the formal responses we received to the stronger futures engagement exercise have been used to inform this plan, alongside the extensive public engagement prior to the pandemic including on the Council Plan and related policies.

Views of business: The Cheshire Business Group – a collaborative body made up of the key business organisations active in Cheshire and Warrington – hosted a ‘coronavirus and recovery’ focus group in late June with local authorities, the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Discussion focused on what businesses in Cheshire and Warrington need to survive and grow as the economy emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic. Engagement with businesses continues and will be vital to support the resurgence of a more resilient economy.

Data: Data relating to social and economic indicators alongside information on the demands on public service delivery have been used to identify areas of focus. A COVID-19 dashboard has been published on the Council website and is regularly updated, covering a range of data sets.

Councillor’s priorities: Briefings and discussions have taken place with elected councillors from all the political groups to inform the plan. In addition, the Pandemic Response and Recovery Scrutiny Committee invited the Cabinet to their 14 October 2020 meeting to consider and shape the plan.

National policy: The Council has been responsive to national policy throughout the pandemic and into recovery. In addition, the Government will complete its Comprehensive Spending Review in November 2020 setting the framework for allocating public finances in line with the stated goals of boosting economic performance across the country and improving the effectiveness of public services. The Government is also due to publish a White Paper on devolution and economic recovery in the near future which will influence this plan.

Financial position: Going into the pandemic the Council was in a relatively sound financial position but with uncertainty over managing demand pressures and future funding from central government. Funding from Government to manage the pandemic has been welcomed but the medium term position is uncertain. Budget proposals for the future are being developed to close the expected budget gap, the size of which is not yet known, and these fully align to the recovery and renewal plan.

Resources for delivery: The goals and aspirations of the Council and its residents are rightly high. This, however, needs to be balanced against the resources available for delivery. As a result, a prioritisation and planning exercise has taken place to provide the best chance of putting the plan into action.

Views of partners: The Council cannot deliver this plan alone and it is more effective to have a coordinated approach with other organisations that support residents, such as the Police, NHS, Fire Service, and voluntary sector. The emerging plan has been discussed with these organisations at the Health and Wellbeing Board on 15 July and discussed with partners at a Cheshire and Warrington level throughout the summer of 2020. The Council has also worked closely with LEP to shape and support their plans for economic recovery. The Cheshire and Warrington sub-region has also shared its thinking on recovery and transformation. This dialogue with partners and joint action will need to continue throughout the life of this plan to make the biggest difference.

Leading practice: All organisations in the public and private sectors are facing the challenges and opportunities of recovering from COVID-19. The Council has looked at leading practice to inform its approach from a range of organisation both within and outside local government. It has also invited an external challenge supported by the Local Government Association to further develop the plan.



Identifying actions

Building on the above each service of the Council has used the following tool, adapted from the Royal Society of Arts and Commerce, to identify specific actions. It presents services with six choices



The first three choices relate to new activities that started in response to the pandemic. The Council has the choice to stop these activities if they have served their purpose, to continue them if there is an ongoing need or to amplify them if they are in line with the Council's goals and are making a positive difference. The next three choices relate to activities that stopped during the pandemic due to restrictions and capacity. The Council has the choice not to re-establish and let go of these activities if they are no longer relevant to meeting local needs, to restart them if they are critical to the Council's goals or to reimagine how they are delivered to better meet the needs of resident both now and in the future.

The resulting actions from this process have then been categorised in line with the six Council Plan priorities:

- Tackling the climate emergency
- Grow the local economy and deliver good jobs with fair wages for our residents
- Support children and young people to have the best start in life and reach their full potential
- Enable more adults to live longer, happier, healthier lives
- Make our neighbourhoods even better places to call home
- An efficient and empowering Council

And the three cross-cutting themes:

- Tackling the climate emergency
- Tackling poverty
- Supporting good mental health

As a result of the Council declaring a poverty emergency in October 2020, the cross-cutting theme of poverty has been collated into a seventh priority of 'A Fairer Future: tackling the poverty emergency.'

As a compassionate council we will also ensure that supporting good mental health remains central to all these themes, along with a determination to work alongside communities so they can play their part rather than the Council working in isolation.

Supporting Good Mental Health

Across this plan are actions that relate to how the Council will work with Health and other partners to support local people and communities to remain in good mental health. Related actions in this plan include promoting access to nature and green spaces, tackling poverty and inequalities, supporting employers to improve the wellbeing of their workforce, and the Council implementing a People Plan that considers how the Council can support and improve the wellbeing of its own staff.

In October 2020, the Centre for Mental Health published research estimating that about 8.5 million adults and 1.5 million children in England will need support for depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorders and other mental health difficulties in the coming months and years. That is the equivalent of 20% of all adults and 15% of all children.

Even prior to the pandemic, within the borough there were an estimated 46,112 adults who experience a common mental health disorder. 63% of those local people experiencing common mental health disorders are female, with prevalence highest in females aged 16-24.

There are also two objectives which specifically focus on supporting good mental health. Objective 4.5 sets out specific activity to enhance emotional health and wellbeing support for children and young people and objective 5.5 sets out activity to enhance adult mental health support.

Different levels of geography: The recovery and renewal plan will require action at various levels of geography:

- **National** – The pandemic and recovery is a national challenge and the Council will continue to work with Government and national bodies accordingly
- **Cheshire and Warrington** – The Cheshire and Warrington Leaders Board, the Local Enterprise Partnership and associated officer bodies have steered a joint approach to recovery and renewal which has been particularly useful for economic growth and joint working with pan-Cheshire partners
- **Borough** – A significant element of planning and delivery exists at the Cheshire West and Chester level
- **Neighbourhood** – The Council will continue to work with communities, voluntary organisations, town and parish councils and other groups at a neighbourhood level. Elected Members will play a key role in mobilising community action.

An evolving picture: It is also recognised that this plan has been developed, and will be delivered, during a period of considerable instability. For example, the borough may face:

- Future waves of the virus – number and severity
- Further economic shocks

- Increasing levels of demand on services such as business support and social services
- Different impacts in different localities
- A very challenging financial position for public services
- Changes in national policy and priorities for recovery.

In this context, the plan must remain a living document and will need to be regularly reviewed. It may be that there is a need to revert to an emergency response in the event of further waves on infections. Nevertheless, the overall direction of this plan should endure even if the detail will need to be revised.

Making it happen: The progress of the plan will be monitored by Cabinet on a regular basis. The plan is aligned with both our performance management framework which is reported on four times a year, and with the annual 'State of the Borough' report that will monitor the wider issues which impact on the quality of life in the borough but that are not in the direct control of the Council. Programme management arrangements will be established to enable officers to manage the delivery of the plan.

Section two - Renewal Plans

Tackling the Climate Emergency

The challenge and the opportunity: It is the duty of all of us to recover from the pandemic in a way that will stand the test of time. Climate change is creating a crisis that is far lengthier and far more disruptive than we currently see with the coronavirus. The science is clear that climate change poses a significant and existential threat to local communities and businesses. Research commissioned by the Council has set out the urgency required to reduce the borough's CO2 emissions to net zero by 2045 or earlier in order to avoid irreversible damage to the environment, the economy and quality of life. Industrial emissions account for 64% of the total carbon footprint of west Cheshire and along with other emissions from transport, residential and other sources the area has the fifth highest total emissions and the fourteenth highest emissions per head in the country. To address this challenge requires action on an unprecedented scale, for example, local modelling suggests we would need to:

- Retrofit both loft insulation and superglazing to over 2,000 homes a year and solid wall insulation to over 1,000 homes a year for the next ten years, whilst newbuild homes are built to PassivHaus or similar standards
- Install new heating systems in 29% of homes by 2025 and 43% by 2030
- Achieve a 25% reduction in passenger miles travelled by car by 2025 alongside an 18% increase in the modal share of public transport
- Convert over 50% of private cars and public buses to be electric by 2025
- Reduce energy demand from local industry by 11% by 2025

There are, however, major opportunities as the borough emerges from the pandemic. Reduced emissions from transport, industry and power during the pandemic saw daily greenhouse gas emissions reduce globally by 17% at the peak of lockdown, and air quality improved in the range of 20-55% in some local communities. The increased trend in home working and active travel should help this be at least partially sustained, although there is a challenge in encouraging many people to return to public transport. There are also major economic opportunities in the near future to support a green resurgence leading to quality local employment. In addition to job creation, there

is growing acceptance that people and businesses will choose to locate in places where there is clear action relating to the climate emergency. We have a real opportunity to use this to support the borough to attract and retain more businesses and skilled people. Finally, greater levels of energy efficiency and reduced travel have major financial benefits to local services and businesses.

What success will look like:

- The Council will be on track to be carbon neutral by 2030
- The borough will be on track to be carbon neutral by 2045 or earlier
- Residents and businesses will produce less greenhouse gas
- Good progress will have been made towards the decarbonisation of industry
- Green industry and business will have grown, leading to good local jobs
- Access to by-default low or no carbon modes of transport such as buses, electric vehicles, cycling and walking will have improved
- More homes and buildings will be energy efficient
- There will be less waste and higher rates of recycling
- Land and resources will be being used more sustainably.

How the Council will play its part: A fully developed action plan, overseen by elected Members, is being developed and will be available in early 2021. Key proposals are likely to include the following:

- 1.1 **Reducing the carbon footprint of the Council as an organisation:** We are showing leadership by reducing our own carbon emissions. Through more flexible working, the organisation will use less office space and buildings and will set targets to reduce the emissions from both Council property and from staff travel. We will also seek funding to retrofit our remaining public buildings with energy efficient technology and renewable energy generating equipment where feasible. We will ensure that we offset the emissions from the electricity we purchase by ensuring it is certified 100% renewably generated and will support the schools included in the Council's utility contract to do the same. We will review our

fleet and put in place monitoring and reporting to ensure vehicle emissions are significantly reduced. We have around 330 vehicles in the scope of the review and our plan will be supported by an additional £300,000 per year of capital funding for the next four years to enable the purchase of low or no-carbon vehicles. We will launch an internal communications campaign to drive behaviours across the workforce that reduce our emissions, with all councillors and members of staff to receive carbon literacy training. We will review our working practices to drive down waste and to reuse, recycle or compost the waste we do produce. We will offset, with approved independently certified schemes, any reported emissions that have not been reduced by these actions. Finally, we will revise our policies to support greater procurement of goods and services from local suppliers, particularly those with good environmental credentials.

1.2 Supporting the decarbonisation of energy, industry and business: We are working with a range of partners, to support private industry and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to develop proposals for a low-carbon industrial economy for Cheshire West and Chester and for the wider sub-region of Cheshire, Warrington and North Wales. We do not underestimate how challenging this will be for many businesses, or the support they will need, but neither do we underestimate the opportunity. A key example of this is the HyNet project which aspires to capture 10 million tonnes of CO₂ from the North West's industrial cluster, add £17bn gross value to the North West economy, alongside supporting 5979 jobs. The project is planned to be operational in 2025. Other examples include the Cheshire Energy Hub via the Energy Innovation District and the E-Port Smart Energy Masterplan. These projects aim to reduce emissions from the Ellesmere Port industrial cluster by 34% by 2030 and create over 33,700 new full-time jobs. Ongoing support will be provided to wider industry to access energy transformation funding from the LEP and the Government. We will also help local firms secure any opportunities from the Industrial Decarbonisation White Paper due in Spring 2021. Through business support services delivered locally and sub-regionally, advice and guidance will be available to businesses to help them to reduce their carbon footprint.

1.3 Improving sustainable transport and infrastructure: Transport contributes 780,000 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions - 19 per cent of West Cheshire's annual emissions. We will deliver active travel schemes to encourage greater levels of cycling and walking, building on the progress made during the pandemic with tranche 1 of an initial £161,000 of Government money made available to make change happen. We have applied to Government to be an e-scooter trial area and will ensure that any road improvement projects include improvements for walkers, cyclists and bus users. Our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan sets out our ten-year ambition and further schemes are being developed for each area of the borough. To enable the greater uptake of electric vehicles, we will work closely with the private sector to support the expansion of the electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Installation of charging points in Council carparks will begin in November 2020 with carparks in Chester, Ellesmere Port, Frodsham, Neston and Northwich. Plans to introduce rapid charging facilities at key locations are also underway with the aim of accelerating the conversion of local private, commercial and taxi fleets, the first site is expected to be complete and operational in February 2021. We have seen a reduction in the use of public transport during the pandemic. The Council will review Park and Ride and promote public transport usage to restore and increase patronage, providing advice and guidance on safe usage whilst social distancing. A taskforce led by councillors will explore how buses can be better supported to meet local needs. We will continue to lead campaigns to secure investment in local and sub-regional rail infrastructure, including Growth Track 360 and the Western Wales corridor. As more people work remotely from a range of locations, rather than a traditional workplace, digital infrastructure will have an even greater role to play, with improved mobile connectivity and full fibre broadband reducing the need for physical transport. We have secured further government funding to enable a three-year programme of activity to enhance access to digital technology for 4000 businesses and 1400 households across Cheshire and Warrington who occupy premises that do not meet the Superfast connectivity standard. By the end of the financial year we will have worked with partners across Cheshire and Warrington, and areas such as North Wales, to develop our medium-term plan and encompass gigabit connectivity across the borough.

1.4 Enabling low carbon buildings, homes and development: We are working with local social housing landlords, on our own social housing stock, with owner-occupiers, and with private landlords to secure local and national funding for the retrofit of homes. This will include interventions around insulation and heating and will also support local employment. For Housing recently gave an insight to the Climate Emergency Taskforce into the way that it plans to develop and manage existing Council Housing stock, subject to funding availability. This ambitious approach to improving energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions involves up to £17m of improvements to bring all stock up to an agreed minimum energy performance certificate and exploring options to use more innovative technologies to achieve higher levels of energy efficiency. The preparatory work to achieve this will involve a targeted review of the housing stock in order to ensure data is up-to-date and robust, prior to start of works. We will also promote retrofit schemes to a wider range of tenures across the borough. We will make representations to Government to consider changes to building control which promote lower emissions from properties and ensure all the Council's new development and regeneration projects meet the highest possible standards of carbon efficiency. A scrutiny review is currently reviewing the Local Plan which sets the framework for local development. Potential changes to the local plan and associated policies are being considered which promote more sustainable new developments. This is due to report in November 2020. We will continue to bid for government money to fund retrofitting, including bids to the Green Homes Fund.

1.5 Enhancing green spaces: Planting trees and enhancing green spaces is a key part of the emergency response and adaptation to climate change. The Council hosts the Mersey Forest team which support a growing network of woodlands and green spaces across Cheshire and Merseyside. Over the last 25 years the Mersey Forest have planted more than 9 million trees. The team has recently been invited by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to apply to be the accountable

body, programme managers, funding recipient and distributor for the Trees for Climate national programme. For Cheshire West and Chester, the ambition is to support, on average over the 5-year (2020-2025) programme, 150 hectares of new planting a year, a total of 750ha over the lifetime of the programme. This programme has the potential to lock up the equivalent of approximately 250,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide. We will also work closely with the LEP who are conducting a natural capital audit to determine opportunities for increasing the coverage of green spaces for economic, social and environmental benefit. Alongside this, the Council is reviewing its own land holdings to consider their utility as a carbon resource and encouraging and enabling sustainable use of agricultural land including the Council's own agricultural estate. We are also bidding for EU Horizon 2020 funding to deploy nature-based solutions to tackling climate change and local air quality. Finally, we will implement a new Environmental Management Strategy, which includes a review of the Play Strategy, a Greenspaces and Parks strategy which will focus on the future priorities for the Councils parks and greenspaces, identifying needs and deficiencies and identify which sites should be prioritised for improvement and development, and a Wildflower and Grasslands strategy which will provide a framework for improving biodiversity and pollinator plant species, identifying green corridors whilst at the same time aiming to review service operational practices and associated costs.



1.6 Reducing waste and increasing recycling:

Avoiding unsustainable consumption, reducing waste and increasing recycling are a key element of the climate emergency response, especially as the pandemic and associated lockdown have seen household waste increasing. We will finalise a strategic review of the borough's waste strategy to provide a ten-year plan for the management of household waste and recycling. The outcomes of the Council's waste strategy review will inform the future shape of our waste collection and recycling services and will be available in 2021 following extensive engagement with the public. This work will anticipate the Government's National Waste Strategy, work on which has been delayed by the pandemic, and which is expected to set out how Government will preserve material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy in England. Supporting this we will also work to reduce commercial waste. In addition, in April 2020, the Council brought the waste collection service back into local authority control which will provide further opportunities for waste reduction and recycling.

1.7 Nurturing a Greener and Fairer Economy:

We will build on the insights and new opportunities that the crisis has presented and, along with our sub-regional partners, we will work to inform and influence the sub-regional sustainable and inclusive growth commission.

How local people can play their part:

The behaviour of residents is crucial to the success of this agenda. Guidance will be provided through a range of communication campaigns. Actions that can make a major difference include:

- Shopping locally
- Using less energy and switching to green energy
- Travelling more sustainably if travel is needed
- Reducing, recycling and reusing waste
- Considering the environmental impact of your diet
- Ensuring that any home improvements you undertake are sustainable and consider the environmental impact.

How local businesses can play their part:

- Work with business support services to reduce organisational carbon footprints
- Access energy transformation funding to help you move to green and sustainable energy sources
- Investigate how you could travel, and transport goods, more sustainably
- Reducing, recycling and reusing waste
- Take up the training opportunities being offered by the Council.



A Fairer Future: tackling the poverty emergency

The challenge and the opportunity: In 2017, the Council launched the country's first Council-led Poverty Truth Commission. This provided a platform for local people with lived experience of poverty to work together with public sector, private sector and civic leads to bring about change. Its success led to a second Commission from 2019 to 2020 and in October 2020 the Council became one of the first in the UK to declare a Poverty Emergency. We recognise that the crisis has necessitated that we commit to going beyond immediate crisis-management and more localised policy responses. The declaration of a Poverty Emergency signals that we recognise the seriousness of the range of disproportionate impacts of the crisis on those on low incomes and that both local and national change is needed.

Poverty is one of the most significant social determinants of both physical and mental health and on average men living in the more deprived areas of west Cheshire live 10.4 years less than those in the more affluent areas and women 9.1 years less. Childhood poverty is associated with lower school achievement and is by far the most powerful predictor of homelessness in young adulthood. Data is also showing that increasing numbers of individuals and families are being pushed into financial hardship by the pandemic and the effect it has had on reducing employment, pay and hours. Within the borough:

- 52,600 local people had been furloughed by the end of July 2020
- 10,600 local people applied to the Self-employed Income Support Scheme
- The number of people claiming out of work benefits rose from around 5340 in March to 11,415 by September
- Between January and September 2020 the West and Mid-Cheshire foodbanks were visited 7859 times by local individuals and families
- Prior to the pandemic 7547 pupils in west Cheshire were in receipt of free school meals. More recent figures are not yet available.
- 16 neighbourhoods in the borough rank in the 10% most deprived in England

- Figures from the Department of Work and Pensions suggests that 68% of the children living in poverty in west Cheshire are from working households

The 'Levelling Up Communities' report commissioned by Government recognises that even before the pandemic hit the UK was the most spatially unequal society amongst developed nations and that some communities have been 'left behind.' The report calls for a commitment to levelling-up the country.

Supporting people to move out of poverty and hardship – whether their experience is long-term or a recent impact of the pandemic - is a significant challenge and one that needs to be considered in the way that we work towards all our priorities. Access to good jobs within an inclusive economy gives individuals and their families the best opportunity of a route out of poverty. Narrowing the attainment gap between disadvantaged and all pupils helps to give all young people the best start in life and the chance to take such opportunities. Good, energy-efficient homes will reduce fuel poverty and are fundamental to a family's health, security and stability. Achieving the other priorities set out in this plan will help to tackle poverty, just as tackling poverty will help to achieve the other priorities set out in this plan.

What success will look like:

- Consideration of poverty being mainstreamed across all our policies
- Fewer people living and growing up in poverty
- Fewer adults and children experiencing homelessness
- A reducing educational attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers
- Reducing food poverty and reliance on foodbanks
- Reducing health inequalities
- Reducing fuel poverty
- Maintained and widened access to support for people facing financial difficulties
- Continued involvement of residents with lived experience of poverty in the design of services
- A collective and collaborative response to poverty across the subregion

How the Council will play its part: The Council has established a Poverty Truth Advisory Board which will oversee the poverty agenda and act in an advisory and support capacity to services across the Council and with partner agencies. The Board are developing an anti-poverty strategy: 'A Fairer Future' which will be available in March 2021. Emerging areas of work that are being explored include:

2.1 Establish a clear understanding of poverty in the borough: We want to continue to learn from peoples lived experience of poverty and will be proactive with communities in co-producing this approach. We will also collate an annual 'State of the Borough' report that will sit alongside the Public Health Annual Report to bring together key socio-economic information about the borough and that will promote an evidence base for understanding and monitoring the prevalence and impact of poverty in the borough. This will include better understanding of the impact of digital poverty as people are encouraged to socially distance and access services online. Data will be considered alongside engagement with those with lived

experience of poverty to inform and challenge the development of new Council policies, strategies and activities. We will make poverty and inequalities awareness training available to all staff and members to support learning, de-stigmatizing and service improvement.

2.2 Take a whole borough approach to tackling poverty and homelessness: As part of our commitment to declaring a poverty emergency, services will be reviewed to ensure they are making the difference we need them to and everyone is supported in the best way possible. To reflect the cross-cutting nature of poverty, we think there is scope for greater joining up of services. An integrated front door into these services will be explored so that a more coherent package of support can be offered, helping people to navigate to and through the services they need. We will ensure that more coordinated action is taken to address digital poverty and consider greater co-location of support in buildings to provide hubs of support in all low-income communities.





2.3 Engage and support those furthest from the job market: Good jobs that pay fair wages remain the best way for individuals and families to escape from poverty. We will launch the Journey First programme designed to support 820 people with complex needs back into work across Cheshire, with a strong emphasis on decent wages and job security. This will complement other schemes in place to support employment including New Leaf, the Adult Education Programme, mental health related support for employment, and a supported internship programme. We will also ensure support is in place for people who have not previously experienced unemployment.

2.4 Tackling food insecurity: We will build on strengthened relationships with local organisations, with the Welcome Network facilitating the multi-agency Feeding West Cheshire partnership as it comes together to develop a Food Strategy.

2.5 Contribute to national and regional policy development: We will continue to engage with Government and lobby for additional emphasis on tackling poverty and inequality.

How local people can play their part:

- Work with us and take part in consultations and co-production that relates to your experience of poverty – your experience matters and helps to inform the whole picture and our response

- Step up and speak out – there has traditionally been a lot of stigma and blame around the issue of poverty and we want to change this together. It's hard to talk openly about poverty but essential that we change this.
- Watch and share our Poverty Truth Commission's film – How We Live – written by local young people, filmed and produced in Winsford and based on a collection of local first-hand accounts of living in poverty
- Participate in the new online Poverty Emergency platform
- Get involved with your local community. Become a Community Champion and help keep your community safe, share important information and advice with residents and provide feedback to the Council,

How businesses can play their part:

- Sign up as a Local Living Wage employer if you haven't already done so
- Get involved with the Tackling Poverty Strategy
- Work with partners to break down barriers to employment
- Embody positive social values in the way you work

Growing the local economy and delivering good jobs with fair wages for our residents

The challenge and the opportunity: The borough went into the pandemic with a relatively strong and dynamic economy, although there were challenges around low pay, changes in international trade, and maintaining this positive performance. Inevitably the pandemic has had a major impact on local employment and the viability of some key businesses and, following an initial recovery, at the time of writing businesses are navigating through additional national measures. Many employers have been able to adapt and continued to operate in this challenging environment. Many, however, have down sized and unemployment has doubled. For many residents, the stress and anxiety of the pandemic is being increased by financial concerns; 52,600 local people had been furloughed by the end of July 2020 and as furloughing comes to an end unemployment is expected to further increase. The self-employed are being impacted too, with a further 10,600 local entrepreneurs having made claims to the Self-employed Income Support Scheme. Considerable uncertainty remains around the relationship that the UK will have with the European Union at the end of the transition period, and the implications that this could have for businesses. Given all these factors, several key sectors in the borough such as retail, hospitality, and elements of manufacturing are particularly vulnerable.

Within this challenging environment, there is the opportunity to steer the resurgence of the economy in a direction which further benefits local people and communities. The Council has the chance to create a greater partnership with businesses to support local employment, thriving town centres, greener commerce, digital transformation and tackle in-work poverty through a more inclusive economy. The Council can also use the power of its own spending to boost the performance of the local economy and whilst cognisant of state aid and procurement rules, there is an opportunity to leverage greater spend within borough. There is also the opportunity to utilise the capital programme by accelerating works and maximising social value to prime sustained economic growth.

What success will look like:

- Local employment rates will stabilise and recover more quickly than elsewhere
- More employers will sign up to the Local Living Wage
- Inward investment will increase
- More people will benefit from improved skills and higher earnings
- West Cheshire will be the best place in the UK for rural businesses
- Social mobility will improve
- There will be greater availability of supported employment for those with disabilities
- An increase in the number of young people in apprenticeships
- More communities and businesses will be digitally driven, with new ways of working fully supported by digital connectivity
- Local business growth and investment will stabilise and increase over time
- Productivity will increase
- Town centres will be vibrant with a mix of uses
- Green innovation will drive our thriving industry
- More of the money spent by local residents, organisations and businesses will be spent within the borough

How the Council will play its part

- 3.1 **Take action to address unemployment, underemployment and reskilling:** We are working with partners to increase support to tackle the immediate surge of unemployment, possible underemployment and the challenge of reskilling. We will work closely to join up support with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and our Workzones are gearing up to provide increased help. We will support job fairs and other events to bring jobseekers and employers together. We have promoted the offer of free online learning, delivered by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Up until

September 2020, this provided access to online reskilling courses for those that are on furlough, have recently been made redundant, or are facing redundancy. Rapid support is in place to support large employers facing significant redundancies.

Through our business support team, we will promote national employment schemes to local firms including the apprenticeships, traineeships, and kickstart programmes. As well as focusing on those from older age groups and those who were previously self-employed, who might never have faced unemployment before, we are also redoubling our efforts to support young people at risk of not being in education, employment and training, including those young adults with Learning Disabilities who are transitioning into the workforce.

The Employers Pledge partnership already supports hundreds of employers to work more closely with schools, colleges and up to 12,000 learners, building aspirations and providing young people with pathways into their chosen careers.

We are working in partnership with the LEP to deliver the Accelerate programme, this provides 40% funding to businesses to reskill and upskill employees with most employers expected to contribute 60%. We want to help businesses realise the potential of apprenticeship funding, including the apprenticeship levy that all large businesses need to pay and will provide advice to businesses on how to deploy the levy, including how to use their unspent levy within their supply chain. Finally, all our services that support skills will be reviewed to ensure they meet the latest needs. Cross border collaboration will be key given the location of key employers.

- 3.2 Enhance support to existing and new businesses:** We have stepped up our support and guidance to help existing and new businesses navigate through economic challenges. Our partners have done the same, with Cheshire and Warrington Growth Hub supporting over 300 businesses in the first week of lockdown alone. We will enhance our key account management for existing

businesses, recognising that traditionally around 60% of inward investment comes from businesses that have already invested here. More broadly, we will embed a dedicated advice service for businesses for funding opportunities; a monthly business start-up club for businesses less than two years old; a series of export/import webinars and 1-2-1 support to help prepare for Brexit and online marketing support. Our offer also includes the dissemination of advice and support to ensure businesses are COVID-secure, they are aware of the latest situation, and preventative action is taken to avoid outbreaks.

We will improve our digital advice, support and guidance. Working through the digital skills partnership we will work with businesses and training providers to develop the skills of the current and future workforces to enable them to take full advantage of new digital technologies. We will develop a package of support for employers to secure improved workforce wellbeing. This support will not all be delivered through the Council and we are supportive of mentoring and buddying schemes across businesses. We will strengthen social value procurement policy to support local employment and supply chains in line with our commitment to community wealth building. Finally, it is more important than ever that our support to businesses who want to invest in the borough is strengthened. We will review our approach to inward investment and how this links with support at a sub-regional level. We will also link our inward investment policies to our aspirations for a more inclusive economy to ensure that businesses that are attracted here pay at a reasonable level with more secure employment and progression opportunities.

- 3.3 Deliver regeneration and housing programmes to drive local growth:** We will review existing and proposed regeneration programmes to ensure that social and physical regeneration deliver solutions that are tailored to the place and the communities they serve. We will ensure that culture sits at the heart of an approach to regeneration that considers and benefits local people, considering community uses like libraries and markets to bring people

together. Further analysis will take place to ensure that we have clarity on the added value brought by programmes on jobs, investment, growth and environmental sustainability. We also recognise that we can do more to design schemes that attract private sector investment and that the Council alone cannot deliver against this ambition – the Council's capital programme for 2020-24 includes £180million of Council funding alongside £250million of external and other monies. Major areas of future growth will include the science corridor, links into North Wales, and the HS2 corridor. We are keen to explore any flexibilities that could arise following Brexit and will be alert to opportunities to benefit the borough.

One significant challenge will be the future of town centres. Commitment has been made to the Northgate Scheme in Chester during challenging conditions to sustain the economic recovery, with the scheme itself creating 322 new jobs. We are also moving forward with the Weaver Square development, Ellesmere Port Town Centre regeneration and Winsford Town centre whilst Chester's rows will benefit from being a High Street Heritage Action Zone. The outcome of the funding bid for Future High Streets will also be critical. We will invest in digital signage that will support town centre businesses to promote themselves, improve the Council's ability to provide public information and modernise the way we manage town centres. A Councillor led commission considering highstreets, town and city centres has called for a renewed focus on customer experience; the creation of places where people both need and want to be; and building new partnerships to create plans unique to the high street where they are to be delivered.

Support for the economy of our rural areas will be stepped up, linked to a new sub-regional partnership group. Key agendas will include business networks, the visitor economy, greater digital connectivity, rural poverty, more affordable housing, access to services and accessible transport.

Housing is a major enabler of growth and we have developed proposals for consideration by Homes England to help accelerate development in suitable sites. This could potentially unlock a

balanced mix of 17,000 additional homes in the borough linked to areas of economic development. Given the increase in homelessness, there will be a focus on providing more supported housing, affordable housing and small one-bedroom properties. We will also enable residents with an interest in developing Community Land Trusts or collaboration on eco self-build homes to work together.

- 3.4 Ensuring we improve the quality and marketing of the borough to drive local growth:** The quality of the borough is critical to decisions that lead to business and residents locating in west Cheshire. This covers the local environment, culture, tourism, and a range of other factors. We are working with the LEP and Marketing Cheshire to strengthen our marketing of the local area. Once information is released by Government, we will also look to develop a Tourism Action Zone, focused initially on Chester and working with neighbouring areas to further develop the local offer.
- 3.5 Provide support to key strategic sectors:** Prior to the pandemic, an Industrial Strategy for Cheshire and Warrington was submitted to government. This covered interventions that would support key sectors such as manufacturing, energy, logistics, finance, retail, hospitality, cultural and care. Interventions included skills support, infrastructure investment, innovation support, and supply chain development. The plan may need to be reviewed if changes are made to the nation strategy direction, but appropriate interventions will be taken forward and investment will be sought as part of the response to the Comprehensive Spending Review in November 2020.
- 3.6 Delivering an inclusive economy:** It is important that we use this opportunity to think about how the economic recovery is steered towards the type of economy that benefits local people. Community wealth building will be a key theme within the inclusive economy strategy, and we will consider using external expertise and academics to inform and progress this work. We will seek to coordinate and target public investment to support local jobs and businesses. We will also work with neighbouring authorities and the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise

Partnership to create a new Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Commission to deliver on a vision of developing a fairer, greener and healthy economy that will deliver lasting benefits for residents and businesses across the sub-region. We will also work with local partners, businesses and trade unions to develop an Inclusive Economy Programme for the borough by the Spring of 2021 which will include actions to ensure local people have the best opportunity to contribute to and benefit from the local economy. This will cover policy areas such as housing, mental health, education and skills, inward investment, procurement, digital inclusion, employment support and transport.

3.7 Secure appropriate governance and investment required to deliver:

To deliver this agenda we will need to have the appropriate governance and funding in place. We are developing a Cheshire and Warrington investment programme which sets out the total investment required, prioritisation of schemes and proposed funding sources. This will also be used to help manage the programme of delivery. We are also interested in proposals from Government to devolve more powers, funding and responsibilities to local areas. These proposals are reported to be due in 2021 and we will consider our response at a Cheshire and Warrington level at that point. We want to explore how we could take forward a cross-border growth deal with partners across North Wales, Welsh Government, and UK government. We also want to work closely with Government to help design the successor to European Union economic development funding.

3.8 Using Council expenditure to promote economic growth:

The Council spends £804million on goods and services and invests a further £100million in its capital programme. The capital programme has, where possible, been targeted to create a stimulus to the local economy. The decision to continue investment in the Northgate and Ellesmere Port Hub projects was in part prompted by the need to create an economic stimulus at a difficult time for the borough. The Capital Investment Board will continue to review the programme and where possible, accelerate works that are likely to have a direct benefit on the local economy.

As part of a community wealth building approach, across all Council contracts, the Council will promote local supply chains to best support local business and the local economy.

How residents can play their part

- **Support local businesses:** Choosing to spend more of your money with local businesses and in your local town centre helps sustain those businesses that you support, as well as encouraging new businesses.
- **Share your ideas:** A range of regeneration schemes are planned in various areas, in particular Chester, Northwich, Winsford and Ellesmere Port. We want residents to share their ideas and opinions on these schemes to make them as effective and successful as possible.
- **Take advantage of training opportunities:** A wide range of training and support is available to help you to develop new skills and potentially change career.

How businesses can play their part

We want to strike a new deal with businesses. Alongside the support we've outlined above we want to work with companies across west Cheshire so we can achieve an inclusive economy and build strong relationships with businesses in our borough so that we really understand their needs.

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

Supporting children and young people to have the best start in life and reach their full potential

The challenge and the opportunity: Children and young people have faced unprecedented challenges during the pandemic. Education has been disrupted, some early help services were suspended, and poor mental health has been a challenge. In addition, vulnerability has been more challenging to identify during the lockdown leading to a rise in requests for support as restrictions have eased. This situation is coupled with the challenging financial circumstances faced by many families.

Services however have responded with innovation and a real focus on doing the best for every child and young person. More services have been delivered digitally including education support, youth services, parenting, and social care. Partnerships with schools and other areas of the public sector have been strengthened to deliver more seamless support, and new approaches to designing services have been identified.

What will success look like

- more children and families will be helped at an earlier stage, reducing the need for more statutory services
- fewer children will be affected by complex issues such as domestic abuse, exploitation and family emotional health and wellbeing
- children whose education has been disrupted will have caught up
- levels of positive emotional health and wellbeing will be growing
- the rate of increase in child poverty will be slowing



How the Council can play its part

- 4.1 **Ensuring high quality and inclusive education is available to all children and young people:** We have worked hard with schools to ensure the safe return of approximately 51,000 children and young people in September. This has been a major undertaking focused on safety. We are now working with all schools to ensure that plans are in place to ensure any education disrupted during the lockdown is addressed. Schools are assessing the groups of children and young people that require additional support and national resources will also be utilised. In particular, we are working hard on transitions from primary to secondary schools. We have also increased our work with schools to ensure that children with special educational needs have their support updated as they return to school. Plans are in place to ensure virtual learning arrangements are in place if an outbreak takes place in school and children need to return home. We will be making the case for a share of funding that Government has made available to improve school buildings and learning environments. We are reviewing our arrangements to improve standards across all educational settings particularly to support the future economic agenda and we will encourage providers of further education and life-long learning skills to ensure that services are locally accessible across the whole of the borough. Finally, we will implement our High Needs Review and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy to ensure greater inclusive education is in place.
- 4.2 **Reinforce virtual working across a range of settings to complement face to face support:** Face to face contact with children and families continued across children's services, and particularly in children's social care, to manage risks. We have, however, benefited from greater use of digital technology, such as video conferencing and social media, to support families and offer virtual visits where appropriate. Given the positive feedback we've had from families on this we will look to extend this approach across a range of services to complement our face to face support. We believe there is scope to extend this approach across the contact service, youth services, children centre support, parenting, family visits, educational welfare, and educational support to children in care. This should improve the accessibility and productivity of our services.

- 4.3 Further develop early help and prevention services:** Prior to the pandemic, all local authorities faced a challenge of an increasing level of demand for children's social care within available budgets. It is likely that this demand will be exacerbated following the pandemic due to economic and social factors. We have previously put in place an intervention hub which provides rapid support to children and families to reduce the need to come into care. Given the context it is proposed that the intervention hub is expanded to help prevent placements breaking down. We will also embed our new support for domestic abuse which was identified as a priority before the pandemic. Our parenting offer will be improved. We will look to strengthen the links between different elements of children's services internally and links with partners. We will also put in place more joint approaches to tackling child and family poverty. This will be guided by a Poverty Truth Advisory Board and will deliver an action plan by March 2021.
- 4.4 Introduce new models of provision to meet the complex needs of children and young people:** As demand increases, we will also explore more effective and efficient ways of meeting children's needs. For children who need residential support, we will increase provision locally where possible. We will further improve the transition of children with special educational needs and disabilities from childhood to adulthood. We will look to incorporate digital technology into our requirements for future commissioned services that benefit children and families. We are also consulting young carers on their needs to inform the development of a new All Age Carers Strategy that will set out how we will support those who provide unpaid care for someone else.
- 4.5 Enhancing emotional health and wellbeing support:** We know that there is a risk that the mental health and wellbeing of many children and young people has been impacted by the pandemic. We have cascaded advice and guidance for schools and put in place a dedicated helpline to access support from educational psychologists and other practitioners. We will continue to work with health partners to ensure children have access to emotional health and wellbeing support. We will ensure there is greater awareness and training for the workforce, including specialist support for children who have had adverse experiences. We will also work with schools to provide mental health and wellbeing support in a more timely way.

How children, young people and families can play their part

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

How businesses can play their part:

- Consider what family-friendly policies you could introduce to support your staff
- Sign up to the Employers Pledge and work with local school, colleges and young people to help build aspirations and help young people to build pathways to their chosen careers

More adults live longer, healthier and happier lives

The challenge and the opportunity: The health and wellbeing of our residents is our main priority. During the pandemic, we have seen unprecedented pressures on services and existing health inequalities have been amplified. People in deprived areas, those with less active lifestyles, those from black and Asian minority ethnic backgrounds, and individuals with poorer diets have been disproportionately impacted by the virus. Action needs to be taken to reduce these vulnerabilities for the future. More people are presenting with mental health issues and those with existing mental health conditions may be seeking more support, with a survey of 16,000 people conducted by the charity MIND finding that 65% of adult respondents with a pre-existing mental health problem saying that it had worsened during the lockdown. Adult Social Care also continues to struggle with demand as budgets remain very tight and future reform has not been announced. We also expect poverty and homelessness to increase as economic conditions worsen.

The pandemic has also highlighted unprecedented opportunities to make a difference. Communities have mobilised to support people in need. Relationships with partners have been strengthened. The deployment of digital technology has also accelerated.

What success will look like

- More people will live a healthier, happier life for longer
- the widening of gaps in health and life expectancy between more and less deprived areas will slow
- more care resources will be focused in the community
- more residents will have a better experience of health and social care
- the rate of increase in poverty will slow
- fewer people will sleep rough
- adults at risk will be supported to live free from abuse, harm and exploitation, and where this does occur will be supported to reduce or remove the risk of abuse

How the Council will play its part

5.1 Reinforce interventions to tackle health inequalities: The data is clear that people with poorer health and longer-term conditions are more vulnerable to COVID-19. Whilst declaring a poverty emergency and working to tackle the underlying socio-economic causes of health inequalities, we will also review our health improvement plans, in line with the developing national strategy, to address the challenges of smoking and obesity. Our marketing and communications of key messages so that all local residents can play their part will be crucial. We will complete our leisure review in every locality to deliver tailored solutions to improving physical



activity. We will reinforce our plans for active travel. The Age Friendly Communities programme will continue. We will improve our help for carers to provide more tailored help and support. All of this will be delivered through Care Communities which bring together individuals and organisations which can make a difference to health and wellbeing of our residents at neighbourhood level.

5.2 Redesign models of adult social care to build on the strengths of local people and offer more tailored support: We will accelerate changes in adult social care so that support is built around peoples' strengths and aspirations rather than their challenges. This agenda will apply to all residents who require adult social care including individuals with physical disabilities, older adults, individuals with mental health challenges, local people with learning disabilities and young adults who have been supported by children's services. Our aim is to focus on what people can do for themselves and find creative and meaningful ways to support them and their families rather than commissioning traditional support. By doing this people can remain in control of their lives and we can avoid unnecessary admissions to hospital and long-term care. This will require a different approach to assessment; providing more personal support through personal assistants; less reliance on supporting people through traditional building based services; commissioning individual packages of care within or close to west Cheshire; utilising technology to assist people to stay in their homes; and enhancing information, advice and guidance. We will bring forward proposals for new models of housing to support adults to maintain their independence. We are also engaging with local carers to understand their needs and how they can best be supported as they provide unpaid care to others, this work will result in an All Age Carers Strategy.

5.3 Secure the sustainability of adult social care: We will also work with providers of social care to ensure they remain viable in an uncertain financial and economic landscape. A recovery team has been established to provide support, guidance and expertise to providers who may need to adjust their business model to reflect latest circumstances. We will also recommence a review of funding to care providers to ensure they have adequate resources to deliver. Attracting and retaining the social care

workforce will also be a major programme of work. Alongside this, we will continue to make the case for social care to be adequately funded and reformed and will utilise our regional and national networks to influence the Adult Social Care White Paper.

5.4 Further integrate adult social care, wider services and communities with local NHS services: By joining forces with the NHS and our communities we have the chance to deliver more seamless care closer to home. We plan to work with the NHS to develop a system approach to planning and commissioning all health and care services. This will support the development of new models of integrated care which will support people during the COVID crisis, particularly supporting people to avoid hospital admission. This approach will also ensure the all vulnerable people will receive the support they require when they need it. We will also build a multi-disciplinary team around care homes to maintain the independence of residents and reduce the need for hospital-based care. We intend to build on the joint arrangements for discharging residents from hospital established during the pandemic by providing more step-down care and more capacity for care at home. We will explore further joint use of buildings with NHS and wider partners and we will work to improve the integration of data and intelligence between the local authority and NHS so that we can better target our resources and understand the difference we are making.





5.5 A whole borough approach to tackling rough sleeping: The delivery of our new Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy will reflect the fact that rough sleeping is primarily a public health rather than a housing issue. We will ensure that everyone placed in temporary accommodation during the pandemic is supported into stable accommodation. We will make provision so that rough sleepers in hotels do not have to return to the streets, where possible by accelerating housing first units and intermediate accommodation. Accommodation and support will be available for everyone who is engaging with services and those who have lost hotel accommodation will have a second chance of support and a home (subject to funding). We will pilot a multi-agency response for a cohort of the most complex individuals.

5.6 Enhance Adult Mental Health support: We will work with a wide range of organisations and residents to develop a new mental health strategy and action plan. Key themes we will explore include getting help such as talking therapies to people at the earliest opportunity, treating mental and physical health equally, tackling stigma and promoting social inclusion among people recovering from mental health problems. We are interested in how mental health support can be integrated into everything we do across the public, private and voluntary sector – for example socially prescribing exercise and access to nature within the new woodlands created by Mersey Forest. We will also review our own mental health services to provide rapid help to people to avoid escalation to crisis and to consider greater links with local health services and other providers. Finally, we will enhance our suicide reduction initiatives as part of our partnership work with the Cheshire and Merseyside Suicide Prevention Network to deliver the NO MORE suicide strategy.

5.7 Safeguarding adults and tackling abuse: The Council will continue to work in partnership with care providers, police, health, advocates, and other partners to raise awareness of adult safeguarding and to tackle abuse, harm and exploitation where it occurs.

How residents can play their part

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

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

The other thing that you can do for yourself and for others is to:

- Be alert and raise any concerns you have about yourself or others who may be at risk with the Council, the Police, a GP or other health professional.

How businesses can play their part:

- Consider how you can encourage the good wellbeing of your staff and promote them to consider the activities above
- Sign up to be a dementia friendly business
- Make sure that any public premises are fully accessible and welcoming to all

Making our neighbourhoods even better places to call home

The challenge and the opportunity: The importance of communities and of neighbours has only been reinforced by the impact of the pandemic and the levels of volunteering and of community spirit that grew in response. Throughout this plan it is clear that there is a key role for partner agencies, businesses but also for communities and individuals in realising our priorities. To sustain momentum will require a rebalancing between the role of the Council and the community across all services.

The Council has begun to bring together a network of over 300 community champions who will play their part to keep communities safe, share important information and advice with residents and provide feedback. This network will help build on the coordinated community response in west Cheshire since the start of the pandemic. The Council will be working closely with partners, including Cheshire West Voluntary Action (CWVA) and the rest of the community and voluntary sector, to promote community champions.

What success will look like

- People feeling better informed about Council decisions and services
- residents feeling more able to influence local decisions
- an even more successful voluntary and community sector
- higher public satisfaction with the local area.

How the Council will play its part

6.1 Develop new approaches to engaging local people in local decisions and local services: We will continue to find more effective ways to involve local people in the things that matter to them. We will further develop our new website – Participate Now – which provides a new and interactive approach for local people to have their say. We will also introduce a crowdfunding website to help communities to generate funding to sustain local projects that are priorities for them. We are interested in new approaches to residents getting involved in

complex issues, including using more deliberative techniques. We also want to create an online citizens panel which is a large representative sample of local people who are available to answer surveys and participate in focus groups on a regular basis. We will further develop our community engagement teams and wider services to ensure they can support all communities to play their part and we will work to improve the support and tools that elected representatives have to facilitate community action within the areas they represent. Alongside this we will further develop a network of community champions to help share information between communities and the Council. We believe there is greater scope for the Council to publish more data in accessible ways to improve transparency and support communities to use data for local projects. Alongside this we will continually review our data sharing approach with partners to ensure that data can be used as effectively as possible to plan and direct services while complying fully with current legislation.

6.2 Consider the assets communities have that enable local residents to come together to influence and affect local services: We will work with communities to review their assets – including local services, organisations, buildings and spaces – and how these could best support an engaged and active local community. The Council own and manage a number of buildings that sit at the heart of communities including children’s centres, libraries, and community centres. These buildings help us deliver services but many of them also provide a hub for community activity. Some facilities, however, are in a poor condition and are underused. There is scope to work with communities and understand whether there is potential to consolidate community buildings where there is duplication, improve their use by communities and deliver more services in a joined-up way. We also want to review how we can encourage more local people to volunteer to support the running of these facilities and whether there is more we can do to transfer the ownership of community buildings to the community, recognising that more support may be required in low income areas where need of these buildings can be greatest.

6.3 Develop a new deal with the voluntary and community sector to ensure they can play their full part in tackling shared challenges:

Our voluntary and community organisations are essential to our neighbourhoods. They have been critical during the pandemic and we want to further strengthen the relationship and agree how we can best support them. We will review the relationship we have with the sector and how we work together. We will also revisit the historic funding arrangements we have had with organisations in the sector and ensure funding is more joined up and in line with our shared priorities. We will work with communities and partners to support the improved coordination and enabling of volunteering across the borough. We will also encourage more of our staff to volunteer and 'give back' to our communities.

6.4 Improving the customer experience: We will engage with residents and communities to improve and shape our services, setting out our approach in a customer experience strategy.



We will make it easier to report issues like potholes, missed bin collections and fly tipping through the Council website and the new mobile app. This will allow residents to check the status of their report on-line and give confidence that we are doing what we can to address any issues. We will also explore how customers can be empowered to self-serve and resolve issues themselves. We will also consider our entire approach to communications, ensuring clear and consistent messaging and language across a range of communication channels that support people to engage with the Council in the way in which they feel most comfortable.

6.5 Improving digital democracy: During the pandemic many of our Council meetings were held virtually. This required changes to national legislation, and we want to explore what more we can do to use digital technology to allow members of the public to engage with the democratic process.

How local people and businesses can play their part

- **Have your say:** The Council is always trying to get feedback on our ideas and plans. If more people share their thoughts, we are more likely to deliver more effective services.
- **Get involved in your local community:** Giving to others has been shown to be good for your wellbeing. It's also good for your local community, whether you support a neighbour in need, join a litter pick or volunteer for a local group or sports club. You could also consider joining the Council's network of Community Champions.
- **Report issues in your neighbourhood:** We're looking to make it easier for people to report issues. The more that local people report things like potholes, the more information we will have on what and where the priority issues are.
- **Take pride in your community and help keep it tidy:** As a Council we spend significant resources on cleaning up after people, whether that is people littering and fly tipping or irresponsible dog ownership. The more people take pride in their community, the more beautiful our communities will be.

Delivering a more efficient and empowering Council

The challenge and opportunity: COVID-19 and its aftermath means that the Council is faced with its biggest ever challenge, placing unprecedented pressures on services, staff, and finances. Resources are incredibly stretched, and the Council faces a financial gap, the exact size of which is not yet known. Throughout this challenge, however, we have seen new ways of working emerge almost overnight including working from home, and a more collaborative culture. There has also been an acceleration in digital transformation, with 61% of Council services being accessed online during March to July. Building on these positives will be crucial and needs to form the basis of the future development of the organisation.

What success will look like

- Improved customer satisfaction
- Reduced administration costs
- High levels of satisfaction with internal support services
- More projects delivered on time and on budget
- Delivery of budget proposals
- Higher numbers of people who chose to engage with us digitally rather than telephone or face to face
- Delivery of a medium term financial plan
- Embedded agile working across the workforce
- Improved staff wellbeing and engagement



How the Council will play its part

- 7.1 **Deliver a financial recovery programme that addresses how services will be affordable with increased demand and constrained resources:** We have considered best practice and the expertise of services to identify a financial recovery programme which enables the organisation to set a balanced budget as well as helping us to deliver our recovery and renewal priorities. This programme includes a range of policy proposals and efficiencies which will be consulted on over the Autumn of 2020 and then considered by councillors when the budget is agreed in February 2021. Throughout this process, we have identified areas where the organisation can operate differently and more efficiently as a result of changes introduced during COVID-19.
- 7.2 **Bring forward plans to embed agile working across the organisation:** Nearly 70 percent of staff have worked at home and other locations rather than their traditional workplace. Enabled by the latest technology, the majority of managers and staff have felt this has had major benefits for their productivity and work-life balance. Where face to face interaction is needed between staff to help with collaboration or with customers this has been supported but overall this is less prevalent and is part of a more blended approach. The next stage is to embed this approach to agile working, further updating HR policies and providing training and support to managers and staff to best enable them to thrive in this flexible working environment. We will use technology to create a collaborative culture, support those staff and members who face connectivity issues and ensure that staff can be contacted appropriately. This will also present opportunities to rationalise the property we occupy and reimagine it to support these new ways of working, while reducing staff mileage and our overall costs.
- 7.3 **Implement a People Plan which develops our staff and enables the organisation to deliver:** Our staff have risen to the challenge of the pandemic with exceptional care, dedication, and resilience. Staff have been working flexibly and a whole council approach was taken to make the

biggest impact, with officers from different disciplines and with different expertise working together to tackle issues rapidly. Building on this we intend to enhance our support to staff so they are multiskilled, have greater confidence with technology and data, are always customer and community focused and are able to collaborate with other organisations. We will engage with our staff in the way we take forward the ambition and activity set out in this plan and will train them in managing change. We will also continue to offer opportunities to young people through apprenticeships and work experience. We are also mindful that many staff have been under unprecedented pressure and have faced very challenging circumstances. We will enhance our health and wellbeing support to staff, so they are able to operate in this context. We will also ensure that all staff are paid the Local Living Wage and that there are clear routes of support for any staff facing financial trauma because of the crisis.

7.4 Introduce a new digital first programme that is universal across all services: The pandemic showed how much potential there is for technology to be used to better serve local residents and to improve our efficiency and we will review our IT delivery model in light of this. Whilst we will continue to offer more traditional access to services to those who want them, we want to build on the digital offer and will work with Members to take forward a complete redesign of the Council website, providing a more intuitive and user-friendly experience. We will learn from best practice elsewhere and from our partners and will redesign and automate more processes to make it

easier for customers to interact with us. This will include a new customer portal to allow customers to have a single view of all transactions with us, an improved Council app, and use of artificial intelligence to support customer queries. We will explore opportunities to join up access points into the Council, particularly in relation to contact centres. We will also redesign and automate internal processes to enhance productivity across the organisation and within support services such as HR, finance, and legal. We will utilise new software which provides accessible data dashboards to help staff and residents visualise the issues we face and how we are performing. One issue we intend to address is that not all our residents have access to digital technology. There is a lot of support to help people get online, but this will be strengthened, better targeted and joined up.

How residents and businesses can play their part

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



Next Steps

The activities defined in this plan move the Council from its recovery phase - restarting those services which were closed during the lockdown in a safe and managed way - to a renewal phase while ensuring that we remain aligned with the budget. We will monitor the delivery and impact of the plan through our existing governance mechanisms, operational planning and decision-making protocols.

This plan will be aligned with both our performance management framework, which reports on the Council's performance to Cabinet and to the public four times a year, and with the annual 'State of the Borough' report which monitors wider issues which impact on the quality of life of residents but that are not in the direct control of the Council.



Section Three - Action Plan

Lead Director abbreviations are explained at the foot of the table).

Objective	Actions	Key timescales	Lead Cabinet Member	Lead Director	Use of Resources	Intelligence	Digital	Public engagement	Partnerships	Building resilience
1.1 Reducing the carbon footprint of the Council as an organisation	Complete review of council fleet to reduce emissions	September 2021- Review complete	Councillor Matt Bryan	DEC	█					
	Ensure all council energy is 100% renewable	Complete	Councillor Matt Bryan	DEH						
	Develop new policies to reduce mileage	March 2021 - implement new policies	Councillor Paul Donovan	DPSR						
	Launch internal communication campaign	December 2021 - full launch	Councillor Paul Donovan	DPSR				█		
	Actions around reducing Council emissions from buildings are included under objective 7.2									
1.2 Support the decarbonisation of energy, industry and business	Support development of Hydrogen Economy and HyNet programme	April 2025 - target operational date	Councillor Matt Bryan	DEH					█	
	Support local industry to improve energy efficiency through access to funding, business support for decarbonisation etc	Spring 2021 - White Paper published	Councillor Matt Bryan	DEH				█		
1.3 Improve sustainable transport and infrastructure	Deliver emergency active travel schemes	March 2021 - completion	Councillor Karen Shore	DEH				█		
	Deliver key schemes in the local cycling and walking infrastructure plan	Short term actions by 2023 Medium term by 2025 Long term by 2030	Councillor Karen Shore	DEH						█
	Expand electric vehicle infrastructure	April 2021 - Implementation of plan commences	Councillor Matt Bryan	DEH						█

Objective	Actions	Key timescales	Lead Cabinet Member	Lead Director	Use of Resources	Intelligence	Digital	Public engagement	Partnerships	Building resilience
	Complete review of bus transport through Member task group	January 2021 - Review recommendations agreed	Councillor Karen Shore	DEH						
	Review funding opportunities and CW&C strategy to support Digital Delivery investment	March 2021 - have borough strategy in place for digital delivery	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Work with the LEP on the development of the Cheshire and Warrington Digital Infrastructure Strategy and Investment Plan	March 2021 - Sub-regional strategy & investment plan completed	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Continue to lead campaigns to secure investment in local and sub-regional rail infrastructure, including Growthtrack 360, and the West and Wales corridor	Ongoing	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
1.4 Enable low carbon buildings, homes and development	Support delivery of retrofit on Ellesmere Port Housing Stock	March 2021 - Develop programme and funding model	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Promotion of retrofit schemes across a range of tenures	April 2021 subject to funding	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Make representations to govt on changes to the planning system	Complete	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Use the national consultation on the alteration of Building Regulations to push for increased energy efficiency requirements	On Government publication of the consultation	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Prioritise implementation of the current policies of the local plan	January 2021 - Scrutiny report considered by Cabinet	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						

Objective	Actions	Key timescales	Lead Cabinet Member	Lead Director	Use of Resources	Intelligence	Digital	Public engagement	Partnerships	Building resilience
1.5 Enhancing green spaces	secure funding for new tree planting as part of Climate Emergency Action Plan	Complete	Councillor Matt Bryan	DEH						
	Enhance green infrastructure into regeneration programmes	December 2020 - develop area-based programme	Councillor Matt Bryan	DCM						
	Complete natural capital audit	By April 2021	Councillor Karen Shore	DEH						
	Develop and implement new wildflowers, grasslands and parklands strategies	June 2021 - Strategy and action plan completed	Councillor Matt Bryan	DEC						
1.6 Reduce waste and increase recycling	Engage with the public on new waste strategy	Commence January 2021	Councillor Karen Shore	DEC						
	Waste strategy agreed	July 2021	Councillor Karen Shore	DEC						
	Waste strategy implemented	September 2022	Councillor Karen Shore	DEC						
1.7 Nurturing a greener and fairer economy	Develop an inclusive economy strategy encompassing all Council areas	May 2021 – strategy and action plan finalised	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
2.1 Establish a clear understanding of poverty in the borough	Declare a poverty emergency	Complete	Councillor Louise Gittins	DCEH						
	Develop a 'State of the Borough' report that sets out trends in socio-economic and health data at a borough level	June 2021	Councillor Louise Gittins	DPSR						
	Introduce a poverty and inequalities training module for staff and members	By March 2021	Councillor Louise Gittins	DCEH						

Objective	Actions	Key timescales	Lead Cabinet Member	Lead Director	Use of Resources	Intelligence	Digital	Public engagement	Partnerships	Building resilience
2.2 Take a whole borough approach to tackling poverty and homelessness	Develop a Council Anti-Poverty Strategy that supports the mainstreaming of the Poverty Truth approach across Council and partner agency services	By March 2021	Councillor Louise Gittins	DCEH						
	Implement a homelessness and roughsleeping strategy, in particular delivering supported housing and commission additional housing first support	January 2021 - Deliver further supported housing and finalise medium term plans for supported housing	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Actions to address broader issues such as promoting good jobs and strong employment (3.1), improving educational attainment (4.1), and boosting the availability of good quality and affordable housing (3.3) are featured in relevant sections of the plan.									
2.3 Engage and support those furthest from the job market	Launch journey first programme for complex worklessness	By December 2020	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
2.4 Tackling food insecurity	Work with the Feeding West Cheshire partnership as it develops a local food strategy	Ongoing	Councillor Richard Beacham	DCEH						
2.5 Contribute to national and regional policy development	Respond to Government consultations and policy announcements on Levelling up, poverty and inequalities	Ongoing	Councillor Richard Beacham	DCEH						
3.1 Take action to address unemployment, underemployment and reskilling	Gear up workzones and strengthen collaboration with Job Centre Plus	By March 2021	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						

Objective	Actions	Key timescales	Lead Cabinet Member	Lead Director	Use of Resources	Intelligence	Digital	Public engagement	Partnerships	Building resilience
	Support a programme of virtual job fairs, working with partners to deliver impact for CW&C	Ongoing	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Ensure an effective rapid redundancy support programme is in place	Ongoing	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Promote national and local employment and skills schemes to businesses (apprenticeships, kickstart, accelerate etc)	Commenced from July 2020	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Increase support for NEET, linking with the pledge scheme	Commenced from June 2020	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Complete review of local employment and skills services	By April 2021	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
3.2 Enhance support to existing and new businesses	Provide support on outbreak management to businesses and complex settings	Commenced from July 2020	Councillor Louise Gittins	DPH						
	Target key account management to support existing business	Commenced from June 2020	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Deliver and improve access to advice, start up support, import and export support, marketing support for businesses	Commenced from July 2020	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Review advice and support service for businesses and look at digital delivery models	By March 2021	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						

Objective	Actions	Key timescales	Lead Cabinet Member	Lead Director	Use of Resources	Intelligence	Digital	Public engagement	Partnerships	Building resilience
	Leverage outcomes from sub-regional programmes for CW&C businesses (e.g. start-up, mentoring, upskilling funding)	Ongoing	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Review inward investment policy and develop delivery model	By May 2021	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
3.3 Deliver regeneration and housing programmes to drive local growth	Review current and future regeneration programmes to ensure they meet latest economic needs and strategic priorities	By March 2021	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Ellesmere Port Town Centre Masterplan and funding plan agreed	By December 2021	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Subject to funding, take forward Future High Streets programme in Winsford	By January 2021	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Northwich Town centre and Weaver Square plan finalised	By June 2021	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Refresh and Launch of Chester One City Plan	By April 2021	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Further develop proposals around Growth Corridor (including HS2 and transport), science corridor, and Mersey Dee axis	Further plans by May 2021	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Develop the Industrial Area Proposition and Investment Prospectus	By May 2021	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						

Objective	Actions	Key timescales	Lead Cabinet Member	Lead Director	Use of Resources	Intelligence	Digital	Public engagement	Partnerships	Building resilience
	Complete the Member led High Street, Town and City Centre Commission	By December 2020	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Take forward Sub-regional Housing Strategy and Housing Pathfinders	March 2021 - develop more detailed plans with Homes England	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Launch new sub regional Rural Board	First meeting January 2021	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Develop next phase housing delivery programme to meet housing needs	By June 2021	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
3.4 Improve the quality and marketing of the place	Work with the LEP and Marketing Cheshire to develop the local brand and marketing to attract businesses and investors.	By July 2021	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Support Marketing Cheshire with the development of a Destination Management Plan and position CWAC as a strategic partner for a Chester focused Tourism Action Zone bid	Destination Management Plan for 2021 to be completed January 2021.	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Support Marketing Cheshire with the development of a Destination Management Plan and position CWAC as a strategic partner for a Chester focused Tourism Action Zone bid	Subject to call for bids, submit expression of interest by March 2021	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
3.5 Provide support to key sectors	Develop sector development plans for priority sectors, as part of the inward investment review	By June 2021	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						

Objective	Actions	Key timescales	Lead Cabinet Member	Lead Director	Use of Resources	Intelligence	Digital	Public engagement	Partnerships	Building resilience
3.6 Delivering an inclusive economy	Develop an inclusive economy strategy covering all council areas	May 2021 - strategy and action plan finalised	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Develop a community wealth building approach as part of the inclusive economy strategy	May 2021 - strategy and action plan finalised	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
	Support the development of a sub-regional investment plan as part of the submission to the comprehensive spending review	Complete	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
3.7 Secure appropriate governance and funding to deliver	Consider response to Devolution and Recovery White Paper	2021- White Paper reported to be published	Councillor Louise Gittins	DEH						
	Support the further development of a cross border growth deal	March 2021 - potential deal developed	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
3.8 Using Council expenditure to promote economic growth	Develop new social value procurement policy, in line with community wealth building, to support local supply chains and wider social goals	By March 2021	Councillor Carol Gahan	DF						
	The Capital and Investment Board will continue to review the programme and where possible, accelerate works that are likely to have a direct benefit on the local economy	Ongoing	Councillor Carol Gahan	DF						
4.1 Ensuring high quality and inclusive education is available to all children and young people	Work with schools to ensure support is in place for disrupted education	From September 2020	Councillor Robert Cernik	DEI						
	Provide support and guidance to schools to assist with the transition of pupils from primary to secondary education	From September 2020	Councillor Robert Cernik	DEI						

Objective	Actions	Key timescales	Lead Cabinet Member	Lead Director	Use of Resources	Intelligence	Digital	Public engagement	Partnerships	Building resilience
	Provide additional support to children with special educational needs and disabilities	December 2020 - All Education Health and Care Plans updated	Councillor Robert Cernik	DEI						
	Improve virtual learning arrangements and access to technology	Audit of arrangements and action plan developed	Councillor Robert Cernik	DEI						
	Make bids for further national funding to improve the school estate	From September 2020	Councillor Robert Cernik	DEI						
	Review support and challenge required to increase standards across schools	Complete	Councillor Robert Cernik	DEI						
	Implement High Needs Review and SEND strategy to improve inclusive education	December 2020 - Action plan developed	Councillor Robert Cernik	DEI						
	Contribute to the review of transitions for children with SEND into adult service	Complete	Councillor Robert Cernik	DEI						
	Review current youth service delivery based on experiences of COVID-19	By March 2021	Councillor Robert Cernik	DCEH						
4.2 Reinforce virtual working across a range of settings to complement face to face support	Gather requirements from all services not currently met by current technology	Complete	Councillor Carol Gahan	DPSR						
	Produce delivery plan	Complete	Councillor Carol Gahan	DPSR						

Objective	Actions	Key timescales	Lead Cabinet Member	Lead Director	Use of Resources	Intelligence	Digital	Public engagement	Partnerships	Building resilience
	Improve joint working on communications and data management	Ongoing	Councillor Val Armstrong	DPSR						
	Expand the intervention hub to reduce the need for care and to avoid placement breakdown	By April 2021 - Expanded model in place	Councillor Robert Cernik	DCS						
4.3 Further development of early help and prevention services	Short breaks commissioning strategy finalised	By March 2021 - Cabinet decision to implement new strategy	Councillor Robert Cernik	DCS						
	Deliver One Children Services Programme	By April 2021 - Recommendations finalised.	Councillor Robert Cernik	DCS						
	Deliver One Children Services Programme	Autumn 21 - new model live	Councillor Robert Cernik	DCS						
	Review and refine the medium risk model to ensure that it is more responsive to demand.	By March 2021	Councillor Robert Cernik	DCEH						
	Refresh the Domestic Abuse Strategy on behalf of the Domestic Abuse Partnership	By January 2021	Councillor Robert Cernik	DCEH						
	Develop abusive partner provision that complements the continuum of need and is applicable at each level of Domestic Violence and Abuse risk identified	By March 2021	Councillor Robert Cernik	DCEH						
	Build on and increase awareness of the current offer for male victims of Domestic Violence and Abuse	By March 2021	Councillor Robert Cernik	DCEH						
	Build capacity for people to 'play a part' in the delivery of parenting in communities; strengthening community involvement in	By March 2021	Councillor Robert Cernik	DCEH						

Objective	Actions	Key timescales	Lead Cabinet Member	Lead Director	Use of Resources	Intelligence	Digital	Public engagement	Partnerships	Building resilience
	enabling children and families the best start in life									
	Actions around poverty are included against priority 2									
	Consider how digital methods of service delivery can be incorporated into future commissioned services -	Summary of digital opportunities completed	Councillor Val Armstrong	DCEH						
4.4 Introduce new models of provision to meet the complex needs of children and young people	Develop options on feasibility of expanding residential care offer for children in the Borough	By January 2021 - options developed.	Councillor Robert Cernik	DCS						
	Develop options on feasibility of expanding residential care offer for children in the Borough	By March 2021 - Approval to mobilise preferred option	Councillor Robert Cernik	DCS						
	Actions around supporting carers are included under objective 4.2									
4.5 Enhance emotional health and wellbeing support	Establish dedicated helpline for schools and practitioners	Complete	Councillor Robert Cernik	DEI						
	Rollout mental health training to schools and children's services staff including PACE and Psychological First Aid	From September 2020	Councillor Robert Cernik	DEI						
5.1 Reinforce interventions to tackle health inequalities	Produce briefing paper on the national obesity strategy for Cabinet Member and Cheshire CCG Governing Body meeting. Agreement to work together on the agenda and through the existing partnership group Eat Well Be Active.	Complete	Councillor Louise Gittins	DPH						
	Respond to Government consultation on Front of Pack Labelling.	Complete	Councillor Louise Gittins	DPH						

Objective	Actions	Key timescales	Lead Cabinet Member	Lead Director	Use of Resources	Intelligence	Digital	Public engagement	Partnerships	Building resilience
	Respond to clarification on national direction and next steps for the obesity strategy	Government clarification expected shortly	Councillor Louise Gittins	DPH						
	Further develop and finalise the child weight management pathway with partners	By December 2020	Councillor Louise Gittins	DPH						
	Develop an adult weight management pathway with partners in response to the National Obesity Strategy	By June 2021	Councillor Louise Gittins	DPH						
	Continue to work with partners and residents to promote Healthy Eating and Being More Active	Ongoing	Councillor Louise Gittins	DPH						
	Work closely with initiatives promoting and encouraging active travel to school, work and for leisure through <i>Walk.Ride.Thrive</i> and to work with partner organisations, schools and businesses on the active travel agenda.	Ongoing	Councillor Louise Gittins	DPH						
	Complete review of leisure services following engagement with the public to enhance health and wellbeing outcomes	By March 2021	Councillor Louise Gittins	DPH						
	Sustain and reinforce the Age Friendly Communities programme.	By March 2021 - Produce action plan based on Age Friendly baseline assessment	Councillor Louise Gittins	DPH						
	Embed strengths-based practice in social care building on the Pathway to Independence approach	By December 2020 - Approach agreed including exploring strategic partner option	Councillor Val Armstrong	DASC						

Objective	Actions	Key timescales	Lead Cabinet Member	Lead Director	Use of Resources	Intelligence	Digital	Public engagement	Partnerships	Building resilience
5.2 Redesign models of adult social care to build on the strengths of local people and offer more tailored support	Increase number of residents sourcing their care through a direct payment and utilising personal assistants	March 2021 - Relaunch personal assistant offer and support for Direct Payments	Councillor Val Armstrong	DASC						
	Review building based services to provide care closer to home	April 2021 - Recommendations approved by Cabinet	Councillor Val Armstrong	DASC						
	Transform services for learning disabilities to ensure services are integrated, make use of assistive technology and are sustainable and affordable with a particular focus on young people coming through transitions into adult services	April 2021 - Recommendations finalised for transitions review	Councillor Val Armstrong	DASC						
	Increase promotion of adult social care careers	local campaign launched	Councillor Val Armstrong	DASC						
	Develop a Vulnerable and Older Persons Housing Strategy	From April 2021	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
5.3 Secure the sustainability of adult social care	Establish a provider recovery team - recruitment process started Aug 20. Team in place by Oct 2020.	Completed	Councillor Val Armstrong	DCEH						
	Complete fair cost of care review phase 2	Complete for Learning Disability	Councillor Val Armstrong	DCEH						

Objective	Actions	Key timescales	Lead Cabinet Member	Lead Director	Use of Resources	Intelligence	Digital	Public engagement	Partnerships	Building resilience
		provision by April 2021								
	Complete fair cost of care review phase 2	Complete for Care homes by October 2021	Councillor Val Armstrong	DCEH						
5.4 Further integrate adult social care, wider services and communities with local NHS services	Enhance joint commissioning governance and explore joint commissioning pilots	By April 2021	Councillor Val Armstrong	DJC						
	Develop and trial enhanced community care offer and homefirst hospital discharge model	Internal council pilot restructure of Hospital Teams into Home First Service in place	Councillor Val Armstrong	DASC						
	Develop and trial enhanced community care offer and homefirst hospital discharge model	Integration with REACT Service for community go live December 2020	Councillor Val Armstrong	DASC						
	Review the trial of the enhanced community care offer and homefirst hospital discharge model	February 2021 - review trial and decision on whether to embed	Councillor Val Armstrong	DASC						
	Further develop care communities with support from the communities team and develop and implement a team around the care home model working with the Integrated Care Partnership	March 21 - New ways of working implemented	Councillor Val Armstrong	DASC						
	Review internal mental health services	By March 2021 - Recommendations finalised	Councillor Val Armstrong	DASC						

Objective	Actions	Key timescales	Lead Cabinet Member	Lead Director	Use of Resources	Intelligence	Digital	Public engagement	Partnerships	Building resilience
5.5A whole borough approach to tackling rough sleeping	Implement a homelessness and roughsleeping strategy	2020 – 2025 First annual review – March 2021	Councillor Richard Beacham	DEH						
5.6 Enhance Adult Mental Health support	Produce an interim mental health action plan with partners in response to COVID-19	By December 2020	Councillor Louise Gittins	DPH						
	Finalise Mental Health Strategy	By June 2021	Councillor Louise Gittins	DPH						
5.7 Safeguarding adults and tackling abuse	Support measures to empower and protect adults at risk of abuse, harm and exploitation	Ongoing	Councillor Val Armstrong	DASC						
6.1 Develop new approaches to engaging local people in local decisions and local services	Develop a local crowdfunding offer, supported by a crowdfunding web tool	By December 2020	Councillor Paul Donovan	DEC						
	Further develop community engagement team	By February 2021	Councillor Paul Donovan	DEC						
	Further develop Participate Now Website	Complete	Councillor Paul Donovan	DPS						
	Develop action plan for Open Data	By December 2021	Councillor Paul Donovan	DPS						
6.2 Consider the assets communities have that enable	Complete data analysis to identify options	By December 2020	Councillor Carol Gahan	DCMD						

Objective	Actions	Key timescales	Lead Cabinet Member	Lead Director	Use of Resources	Intelligence	Digital	Public engagement	Partnerships	Building resilience
local residents to come together to influence and affect local services	Public engagement on future options	By March 2021	Councillor Carol Gahan	DCMD						
	Implementation	By March 2022	Councillor Carol Gahan	DCMD						
6.3 Develop a new deal with the voluntary and community sector to ensure they can play their full part in tackling shared challenges	review our third sector funding arrangements	From April 2021	Councillor Carol Gahan	DCEH						
	Review and refresh Compact with VCS taking learning from COVID-19	Jan 21 - Cabinet permission to consult on refreshed Compact	Councillor Carol Gahan	DCEH						
6.4 Improving the customer experience	Improve website design and experience to report and track neighbourhood issues	November 2021 - Complete	Councillor Carol Gahan	DPS						
	Further promote council app	From September 2020	Councillor Carol Gahan	DPS						
	Agree and deliver customer experience strategy	draft plan complete	Councillor Carol Gahan	DPS						
6.5 Improving digital democracy	Review current approach	Completed	Councillor Paul Donovan	DG						

Objective	Actions	Key timescales	Lead Cabinet Member	Lead Director	Use of Resources	Intelligence	Digital	Public engagement	Partnerships	Building resilience
	Consider response if legislation is changed	Spring 2021	Councillor Paul Donovan	DG						
7.1 Deliver a financial recovery programme that addresses how services will be affordable with increased demand and constrained resources	Consider best practice	Completed	Councillor Carol Gahan	DF						
	Develop proposals	Completed	Councillor Carol Gahan	DF						
	Public consultation	Completed	Councillor Carol Gahan	DF						
	Scrutiny of budget proposals	By January 2021	Councillor Carol Gahan	DF						
	Cabinet consider proposals	By February 2021	Councillor Carol Gahan	DF						
	Council agree budget package	By February 2021	Councillor Carol Gahan	DF						
	7.2 Bring forward plans to embed agile working across the workforce	Develop detailed plans with services	Complete	Councillor Carol Gahan	DPS					
Develop package of support for staff and managers		Complete	Councillor Carol Gahan	DPS						
Develop business case for accommodation transformation		By December 2020	Councillor Carol Gahan	DPS						
Implementation		2021-23	Councillor Carol Gahan	DPS						
7.3 Implement a People Plan which develops our staff	Develop Draft Plan	By March 2021	Councillor Paul Donovan	DPS						

Objective	Actions	Key timescales	Lead Cabinet Member	Lead Director	Use of Resources	Intelligence	Digital	Public engagement	Partnerships	Building resilience
and enables the organisation to deliver	Finalise plan	By May 2021	Councillor Paul Donovan	DPS						
	Develop enhanced wellbeing support	By November 2020	Councillor Paul Donovan	DPS						
7.4 Introduce a new digital first programme that is universal across all services	Redesign website	By November 2021	Councillor Carol Gahan	DPS						
	Complete costed plans to enable further digitisation of services	Complete subject to 21-22 budget setting in Feb 21	Councillor Carol Gahan	DPS						
	Implementation of plans	2021-2023	Councillor Carol Gahan	DPS						
	Develop new digital inclusion plan	By April 2021	Councillor Carol Gahan	DPS						

Lead Director Key:

DPSR Director of Public Service Reform	DCEH Director of Commissioning and Early Help	DF Director of Finance	DPH Director of Public Health
DG Director of Governance	DEH Director of Economy and Housing	DCS Director of Children's Services	DCMD Director of Commercial Management and Delivery
DASC Director of Adult Social Care	DEC Director of Environment and Communities	DEI Director of Education and Inclusion	

Glossary

Active / sustainable travel:	Travelling by foot, bicycle or bus
Adverse experiences:	Potentially traumatising events that can have a lasting effect on health and Wellbeing
Age friendly communities:	Age-friendly communities are places where people of all ages can live healthy and active lives. These places make it possible for people to continue to stay in their homes, participate in the activities that they value, and contribute to their communities, for as long as possible.
Assets:	Buildings, land and technology owned by the Council
Apprenticeship levy:	A tax on businesses with a payroll of over £3 million that is used to fund apprenticeships
Capital programme:	Planned spending on assets such as vehicles, buildings and IT equipment
Care Communities:	Care communities are areas where health care and a range of other professionals and organisations come together with community representatives to arrange care and provide innovative health solutions in partnership with the local community that suit the needs of a whole population
Carers:	People who provide help or support to children, family members, friends, or neighbours who have physical or mental ill-health, disability, or issues related to old age
Circular economy:	An economic system which aims to continually reuse resources and not create waste
Commissioning:	The process of arranging and purchasing services that meet the needs of residents
DEFRA:	Government Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Devolution:	Negotiated deal by which Central Government agrees to transfer (devolve) some national powers and resources to a region/county
Domestic abuse:	Incidents or patterns of behaviour that include controlling, coercive or threatening actions between those aged 16 or over, who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality
Digital connectivity:	The ability, and ease, with which people and organisations can access electronic communications, broadband and the world wide web

Economic shock:	An event occurring outside an economy which results in a significant impact within the economy
Employers Pledge:	A programme which support employers to work more closely with schools and education providers to help young people to identify pathways into their chosen careers whilst also helping businesses to build close relationships with their future workforce
Growthtrack 360:	A campaign launched to secure £1 billion of rail improvements to transform the North Wales and Cheshire regional economy
Inclusive economy:	An economy that all people have the maximum opportunity to contribute to and benefit from
Kickstart:	A Government scheme where youngsters on Universal Credit aged between 16-24 will be offered six-month work placements – with wages paid by the government
LEP:	Local Enterprise Partnerships are voluntary partnerships between local authorities and businesses to help determine local economic priorities and lead economic growth and job creation within the local area. The local LEP covers Cheshire and Warrington.
Partner:	An organisation that works closely with the Council
Personal Assistant:	Individuals employed directly by the person receiving assistance, and provide support to help them remain independent, whether that be personal care, help with domestic chores or support enjoy social activities.
Productivity:	A measure of the efficiency of a person completing a task, or of a workforce in creating value.
SEND:	Special Educational Need and Disability
Sub-region:	The area covered by Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East and Warrington Councils. Often this is where issues such as economic growth are coordinated
Supported employment:	Supported employment refers to service provisions wherein people with disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, mental health, and traumatic brain injury, among others, are assisted with obtaining and maintaining employment.
Transition:	In education, transition refers to the movement of pupils from primary to secondary schooling. Within social services it refers to the move of a client from children's to adult social care.
Work Zones:	Local areas where additional services are available to support local people to develop their employability skills and move into employment

Accessing Cheshire West and Chester Council information and services

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

equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

إذا أردت المعلومات بلغة أخرى أو بطريقة أخرى، نرجو أن تطلب ذلك منا.

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে বলুন।

Pokud byste požadovali informace v jiném jazyce nebo formátu, kontaktujte nás

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, prosimy dać nam znać.

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ, ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਮੰਗ ਲਓ।

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

Türkçe bilgi almak istiyorsanız, bize başvurabilirsiniz.

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔

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