

**.BOLLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL: GOLD STANDARD
CE Bollington Ward Councillors Report to BTC for their September Council
Meeting 2024.**

We present this Report for consideration and discussion as required.

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**[All change at Cheshire East Council](#)
[The developing strategy to avoid Government Control](#)**



**[Cheshire East Council Headquarters in Sandbach to be transformed.](#)
[The Plan: Develop an All through Special Needs School 4-19](#)**

[Apologies but this report needs to start with explaining some aspects of the way Chesire East works: you will know that from 2022 Cheshire East's Governance arrangements changed from the Cabinet System of Governance to a Committee System of Governance: This Committee System is described in A Constitution of 327 pages of dense bureaucratic prose.](#)

[Cheshire East's policies are driven by its Corporate Policy Committee: Its' major function according to the Constitution is to:](#)

Provide strategic direction to the operation of the Council by developing and recommending the Corporate Plan to full Council and making decisions on policies and practice where such decisions are not reserved to Full Council.

The CPC works in parallel with the Finance Sub-Committee.

This Committee's major function is to:

Co-ordinate the management and oversight of the Council's finances, performance, and corporate risk management arrangements.

The Sub-Committee will make recommendations to the Corporate Policy Committee regarding the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (essentially this is a detailed **BALANCED (legally required) budget setting out plans of expenditure for the next 4 years. The MTFS was set in February 2023 for 2023 -27 before the last election for Cheshire East in May 2023.)**

During its first year of operation 2023/24 this budget failed to be implemented fully due to:

- a) **planned cuts not taking place to time**
- b) **and relatively large increases in**
 - i) **Adult Social Care**
 - ii) **Children's Social Care**
- c) **General inflation including wage inflation.**

Budget flexibility is not possible: Low Reserve levels. Quote

• 'The Council holds extremely low levels of reserves as funding has been utilised in recent years to maintain services and repay the overspend from 2022/23. There is also the requirement to fund the predicted overspend for 2023/24 and the forecast to do the same for the shortfall in the 2024/25 budget, as inflation and demand outstrip the funding envelope available or the likelihood of service transformation not being fast enough to bring spending in-line with demand in time for 2024/25. Reserves are vital to enable the Council to invest in opportunities and to manage exposure to financial risk over time, so this places increased risk as overall reserves are depleted.'

Results so far:

1. Cheshire East Council is in danger of the Chief Finance Officer (Interim) Adele Taylor issuing a Section 114 Notice to the Council.
 - a) This notice states that the Council is in danger of proposing illegal expenditure i.e. in Cheshire East's case proposing expenditure that will create an unbalanced budget for 2024/25.
 - b) The effect of this is to stop Council authorising expenditure unless sanctioned by the CFO.
 - c) There are further consequences.
For detailed information consult the Institute of Government website: Local Government Section 114 notices.
2. Cheshire East has requested capitalisation support of £17.6million from government i.e. extra revenue finance from a capital budget.

3. **A Transformation Programme** of working practices and service delivery has been proposed and accepted by the Corporate Policy Committee and Full Council with the aim of rebalancing the Budget over 4 years and saving up to £91 million annually in the long term.
4. **Please see separate report:** <https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/council-and-democracy/transformation/cec-transformation-plan.pdf>
5. **Corporate Plan:**
https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/your_council/council_finance_and_governance/corporate-plan.aspx

Cheshire East Council:

Personnel changes:

Cllr. Nick Mannion has replaced **Cllr. San Corcoran** as **Leader of Cheshire East Council**.

David Brown: Senior Officer in charge of Standards and Compliance has resigned.

Janet Witkowsky: Head of CE Legal Department has become interim replacement.

Bollington Town Council

We warmly welcome three recently co-opted member to Bollington Town Council

Julia Marshall: East Ward

Richard House: West Ward

Lydia Davies: Central Ward

Updated from previous reports

1. Library hours

Your Borough Councillors welcome the opening of a dialogue with Cheshire East over additional hours to support the basic service now to be provided by Cheshire East of the equivalent of 1.5 days per week.

We understand the Friends of Bollington Library have encouraged over 400 additional members through their support campaign.

We particularly welcome the opportunity of offering a service on Saturday mornings, one of the most popular times of activity for children and parents.

2. Bollington HWRC

The temporary closure of Bollington and Poynton HWRC's have now started from August 5th.

One sensible action by Cheshire East has been to move the monthly (totally inadequate) booked mobile service from BTC's Civic Hall car park to the Bollington HWRC site.

Already the pressure on the one Macclesfield site is causing difficulties on the main Congleton Road.

What happens now? (Quote)

'A recommendation for the longer-term provision of HWRC services will be presented back to the environment and communities committee in autumn this year.

This will consider the feedback received through a public consultation held in May/June 2024, the affordability of the options presented, and up-to-date site user data. This data

includes visitor numbers for each HWRC , and information about where people are travelling from to the different sites.

A key aspect of the recommendation will be a focus on delivering a service that promotes waste prevention and reduction so that ultimately, less waste needs to be taken to our HWRCs and the impact on the environment is reduced.'

The Bollington Save the Tip Group have produced detailed information on tip use and range of users.

The key proposals from Cheshire East included a variety of options. If any serious savings are to be realised the closure of at least 2 centres are necessary. Assuming Middlewich is closed then the choice will be between Poynton and Bollington. Both are needed to provide an adequate service.

Your Borough Councillors welcome the positive efforts of BTC to work with Poynton and cheshire East to find a joint solution.

3. Charging at Pool Bank Car Park

This policy is most likely to directly damage businesses and the welfare of residents in Bollington and the proposed extension of charging to 10p.m at night will impact strongly on the nighttime economy provided by pubs and restaurants as well as the welfare of residents in the Conservation area who have no opportunity for off street parking. This policy has been strongly opposed whenever possible by your Borough councillors.

Residents and councillors feel badly let down by the recent proposed extension of charging at nighttime and to Sundays because we understood specific promises were made to ameliorate the impact of charges by a free after three policy and a half hour free parking tariff.

Representations are being made to officers with regard to these promises.

We welcome the willingness of BTC to consider working with Cheshire East to support CE's budgetary necessity to try to establish the continuance of free parking which has been a long term support to local businesses and to residents.

Peaks and Plains and Crossfield Road/Kent Avenue dwellings.

Peaks and Plains officers led by their CEO Mark Howden recommended to their Board of Directors that the whole of the area should be redeveloped. To do this it would need the relocation of tenants from the 50 dwellings causing great distress and possibly hsrdrship.

The tenants wanted:

The untenanted bungalows to be repaired and those that had problems elsewhere to be repaired so all bungalows could be returned to their specialist provision of housing for vulnerable and elderly people.

What has happened?

A Local Committee led by Mark Nolan has been formed to pressure Peaks and plains on this issue. Your Cheshire East Councillor Ken Edwards and Town Mayor Judy Snowball are in contact with Peaks and Plains to question their decision.

Peaks and Plains are relying on survey reports on individual houses and an underlying detailed survey on soil and foundation conditions.

The quality of the background survey has not been questioned but the decisions based upon its evidence as far as costs are concerned appear exaggerated possibly wildly.

Also residents have questioned the validity and accuracy of the individual surveys as they witnessed the quality of inspection and the stated faults cannot be confirmed by straightforward scrutiny.

Borough Councillors/sand Mayor are meeting P&P officers as soon as possible to share these concerns.

Bollington Tennis Courts

The work scheduled to begin on the Tennis Courts has been postponed to the 9th.
September 2024

The Draft Community Sports Needs Assessment Report still needs to be discussed and a final programme of work agreed. A meeting between BTC, Borough Councillor/s and ANSA with perhaps Neil Allen needs to be organised as soon as possible. Thgere has been an effective delay of at least 2 years in positively commissioning work based on the S106 funds available form the Lowerhouse Developments.

Cllr. Ken Edwards

Cllr. John Place