

.BOLLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL: GOLD STANDARD
CE Bollington Ward Councillors Report to BTC for May Council Meeting 2024.
We present this Report for consideration and discussion as required.

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We congratulate Bollington Mayor , Helen Ellwood on her year in Office and Welcome the Deputy Mayor who will take over the onerous responsibility for the ceremonial leadership of Bollington for 2024/25 ,

We were pleased to be invited to a celebration of Bollington Town Council's 50th Anniversary celebrations where it was a great pleasure to meet former Mayors of Bollington who in their turn served the community.

This is a short report and deliberately so:

URGENT ATTENTION

Your Borough Councillors will not pretend this has been an easy time for Cheshire East. We have had a Peer Review by Senior Local Government officials looking into every aspect of the Council's operations and we await their written report which we will share with you.

Our new Chief Executive, Mr. Rob Polkinghorne, has now reviewed the situation we are facing and has come to the conclusion our financial position is paramount and we must restructure our services in a totally different manner and reestablish ourselves on a different financial footing which matches the resources we have, concentrating on the most efficient and effective methods of providing our statutory services.

This process is being labelled **Transformational**.

Cheshire East's Senior Officers are already being restructured to work in a more collaborative manner with financially responsible input being added early to administrative processes translating policy into practical action.

Cheshire East members as yet have not been involved fully in these processes although we are aware of them through individual service briefings like the one we experienced from Laura Crane and highways officers at our recent Town Assembly. The result for our communities will be proposals of further cuts to our services presented as 'different ways of doing things' and no doubt accompanied in some cases by consultations. We need to be clear about this.

Your and our Community will need to be fully aware of the situations as it develops. We will then need to take appropriate action as we see fit.

One example of the new approach relates to a policy being developed in relation to **Library Services:**

1. The Governments guidelines on such services are scrutinised carefully as they were over waste disposal.
2. Those guidelines are applied to Cheshire East's position and service offer.
3. Where we have 'over' provision as we do with waste disposal facilities we plan to readjust (cut) our offer of the service. We do this in a 'rational' manner allowing no ifs or buts for local circumstances. We have the example of Pool Bank Car to note. There is genuinely no other situation in the borough like our spaceless terraced houses and the need for local parking facilities. Literally none.
3. An officer policy for Library provision has emerged following these principles.
 - a) Government policy: Yes a library provision is required by law but there are no specific requirements. According to a Senior Library officer at a recent meeting of the Civic Society a large van travelling from Community to Community serving registered library users with one central library would probably fit the Bill.
 - b) What does Cheshire East do? We review our library provision and find it more generous than Governments legal requirements state are necessary. Hence there is the opportunity for '**Transformation**'.

c) Rational policy: Look at current provision in terms of the settlement hierarchy (see Local Plan) and no doubt geography. Use a familiar hierarchical concept similar to a commercial chain store:

Tier One: Library Extra: Macclesfield, Crewe and Congleton, Nantwich and Wilmslow.

Tier Two: Library Local: Alsager, Holmes Chapel, Knutsford, Middlewich, Poynton , Sandbach.

Tier Three: Library Express: Alderley Edge, Bollington, Disley and Handforth.

Tier Four: Library Direct: A van travelling around the rural areas of Cheshire East.

Library Express: Bollington falls into this category so what will it mean?

It will mean that if we want a Library, we will have to fund it ourselves from donations and provide a voluntary workforce, through a charge per visit and or through a rise in our Local Precept.

This is likely to prove impossible and therefore in reality our Library will close with devastating effects for many local users and Cheshire East's reputation in Bollington further diminish.

A further report will follow dealing with other matters.

Your Borough Councillors are totally opposed to this proposal regarding it as deeply unjust as well as culturally damaging particularly to our young people in our local primary schools. We expect and will support the views of the community which we hope to be expressed as strongly as possible

Thank you

Cllr. Ken Edwards and Cllr. John Place

29/04/2024