



# Cheshire East Election Manifesto 2023



**Cheshire East Conservatives**



## our plan

- 1** We will spend your Council Tax wisely
- 2** We will support vulnerable adults, children & families
- 3** We will keep Cheshire East moving
- 4** We will grow the Cheshire East economy
- 5** We will introduce a planning system that works for all
- 6** We will tackle climate change

 Cheshire East Conservatives

## Our Plan for Cheshire East

Four years ago, the Cheshire East “Independent” Group brokered a coalition, putting Labour in charge of our Council despite Labour coming second in the 2019 elections.

Since then, we have seen thousands of pounds of public money, spent on ‘vanity’ schemes, and cuts in front-line and early-help services for our vulnerable children and older people.

This Labour-led coalition has increased the number and cost of senior managers but failed to invest in highways. They have cut over 90km of winter gritting routes across the borough and highway maintenance has significantly deteriorated. In addition, since 2019, the coalition has approved the closure of the Congleton household waste and recycling centre, but has failed to address the rising scourge of fly-tipping.

Of course, the past three years have not been easy for any council as we emerge into a post-pandemic world, but the Council’s own chief finance officer confirmed in February 2022 that all Covid-associated costs have been met by central Government. This did not prevent the Labour-led coalition from raising council tax by the maximum amount during that period.

As if a pandemic were not enough, we have all been impacted by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, rising energy costs and a cost-of-living crisis – a scenario being replicated across the world. As the current administration raises your council tax again and plans further frontline service cuts, it’s all the more important that you choose a new Conservative Council that will spend your money wisely. The previous Conservative Administration delivered balanced budgets every year and for five of those ten years in control, did not raise Council Tax at all.





We delivered sound services and attracted significant investment for important infrastructure projects, (including the Congleton, Middlewich and Poynton by-passes). Many of the road improvements that have been delivered recently are the result of the innovation, vision and hard work of the previous Conservative administration. We have never stopped in our ambition to make our borough better and we have continued to hold this Labour-Independent Council to account over the past four years and press for changes to benefit residents across the whole of Cheshire East.

This manifesto sets out our renewed commitments to make Cheshire East a better place to live, work and do business. Our plan for Cheshire East includes six core pledges, each underpinned with specific proposals to improve the quality of public services we deliver, focusing on front-line services, innovation in a post-pandemic economy and new ways of working to keep Council Tax under control. We have a Team with the vision, ambition and commitment to deliver these pledges and ask that you entrust us with your vote and elect a new Conservative Team to run your Council for 2023 to 2027.

*Cllr Janet Clowes*

**Cllr Janet Clowes**  
**Leader - Cheshire East Conservatives**

## Cheshire East Conservatives. We Will:

### LOOK AFTER YOUR MONEY

- Keeping your Council Tax as low as possible.
- Investing in Cheshire East's Economy.
- Reinstating "Invest to Save" projects to improve services and reduce public spending.

### SUPPORT FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND ADULTS

- Working with health, voluntary (CVS) and community partners to improve social care for those in need.
- Promoting better telecare services so residents can live at home for longer.
- Providing more Early Help for Children & Young People.

### KEEP CHESHIRE EAST MOVING

- Reinstating the "invest to Save" Highways maintenance programme.
- Promoting public transport including rural locations.
- Investing in highways safety and appropriate speed zones.

### WE WILL GROW THE CHESHIRE EAST ECONOMY

- Increasing investment in new and starter businesses.
- Increasing deliverable Broadband services for rural and urban communities
- Developing a parking strategy that meets the needs of residents and businesses

### PROVIDE A PLANNING SYSTEM THAT WORKS FOR ALL

- Providing the right homes in the right place for local people.
- Ensuring your local voice is heard and decisions are timely.
- Making sure developers deliver on local infrastructure.
- Improving enforcement of planning decisions.

### TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

- Protecting and promoting our Natural Environment.
- Increasing recycling rates and promoting re-use.
- Supporting sustainable energy investment and infrastructure.





# WE WILL **SPEND YOUR COUNCIL TAX WISELY**

- ✔ Investing in Cheshire East's Economy
- ✔ Keeping your Council Tax as low as possible
- ✔ Reinstating "Invest to Save" projects to improve services and reduce public spending

All Councils are facing extreme economic pressures, nonetheless, a Conservative Cheshire East Council will strive to keep Council Tax levels as low as possible and will support residents who are finding it difficult to pay.

We will review the Council's procurement processes to ensure cost-effective and streamlined purchasing, to cut waste and to make sure that our systems are compliant with new legislation coming forward in 2023.

We will streamline the Council's Senior Management Structure which has expanded under the Labour/Independent administration, reinvesting those savings into front-line staff recruitment and services.

We will review all services cut by the Labour-Independent coalition since 2019, including those services that have been 'passed on' to Town and Parish Councils creating systems of 'double taxation' where residents, through local precepts, are having to pay twice, for the same services.

We will ensure improved scrutiny and prudent use of Council Reserves, including the MTFS "smoothing fund" introduced by the Labour/Independent administration in 2019.



# WE WILL SUPPORT VULNERABLE ADULTS, CHILDREN & FAMILIES

- ✔ Working with health, voluntary (CVS) and community partners to improve social care for those in need
- ✔ Promoting better telecare services so residents can live at home for longer
- ✔ Providing more Early Help for Children & Young People

We will ensure that every child in the Borough has access to the computers and technology they need for successful learning.

Provide a Youth Activity Grants pot for local voluntary organisations and clubs, recognising their valuable role in supporting healthy lifestyles for young people and ensuring borough-wide initiatives.

Create additional new Apprenticeships and Work Experience Placements to give the young people of Cheshire East, a step on life's ladder.

We recognise the ongoing issue of young people's mental ill health and pledge to build on our successful 'Emotionally Healthy Schools' programme to develop preventative schemes in schools with our wider partners in health, the independent and voluntary sectors.

We will drive essential improvements in children's social care, as recognised by recent critical Ofsted reports, to keep the Borough's most vulnerable children safe.

We will reverse the Labour/Independent cuts to frontline "Early Help" children's services to ensure wherever possible, we keep children out of the care system and give them every opportunity to succeed.

In line with the fully budgeted Conservative proposals that were accepted by the Labour/Independent coalition in 2020, bring forward empty CEC sites for 'Invest to Save' Social Care provision, bringing vulnerable CE residents back home to Cheshire East, from expensive 'out of area' placements, where they can be cared for closer to their families and communities.

# WE WILL SUPPORT VULNERABLE ADULTS, CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Enhance telecare provision that enables adults to stay in their own homes, reviewing the impact of the loss of free telecare services for the extreme elderly, living alone, cut by the Labour/Independent coalition.

Ensure that at this time of economic crisis, we make best use of Cheshire East resources to meet the Council's statutory (legal) social care responsibilities.

Prioritise support and respite opportunities for our carers and young carers, maintaining appropriate community-based day-care opportunities for our most vulnerable adults.

Working with our health, care and voluntary sector partners, we will ensure government health and social care monies (the Better Care Fund) add value and provide good quality provision for residents in need.

Work closely with the NHS to successfully implement the Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care System (ICS), ensuring that the specific needs of the Cheshire East population are fully understood and met.





# WE WILL KEEP CHESHIRE EAST MOVING

- ✓ Reinstating our invest to Save Highways maintenance and Pothole Repair programme
- ✓ Promoting public transport including rural locations
- ✓ Investing in highways safety and appropriate speed zones

**The Labour/Independent controlled Council failed to invest in highway maintenance between 2019 and 2022, contributing to rising numbers of pothole and road surface damage, blocked gullies and localised floods.** Conservatives pushed through a 3-year 'Invest to Save' programme at the 2022 budget council and will continue to develop and monitor this vital work on those parts of the highway network most at risk.

**We will develop a sensible parking strategy that reflects the needs of the Council, residents, visitors and businesses across the Borough** and which is not used to subsidize unrelated areas of Council activity.

**We will continue to work with Highways England and the Government, to deliver the Middlewich By-pass, and the dualling of the A500 east of Crewe.** These are both Conservative-initiated projects, developed and approved prior to 2019 and that are essential to support local businesses, improve connectivity and mobilise the local economy in these areas.

**We commit to working with residents and partners to improve road safety throughout Cheshire East.**

**We will introduce the "Lane Rental Scheme" on our most used roads** to ensure Utility and Communications Companies pay an appropriate levy for road closures and associated disruption to our road network.

**We will introduce speed reduction schemes in our towns and villages,** including 20mph zones, where they are legally compliant and where local people support them.

**We will review the Labour/Independent administration's divisive Winter Gritting strategy** that has seen significant areas of the Borough removed from the gritting schedule, placing residents at risk.







# WE WILL GROW THE CHESHIRE EAST ECONOMY

- ✓ Increasing investment in new and starter businesses
- ✓ Increasing deliverable Broadband services for rural and urban communities
- ✓ Developing a parking strategy that meets the needs of residents and businesses

**We will increase investment and support for new and starter businesses** across the borough, including rural start-up and diversification initiatives.

**We will support and promote the expansion of high-speed broadband provision** across Cheshire East in those areas (urban and rural) where there is currently no service or where speeds are slow.

**We will work in partnership with our Chambers of Commerce, employers and other partners** to maximise inward investment and the creation of local jobs for local people.

**We will work with employers, our schools, colleges, Further Education and Higher Education partners** to develop the right skills and training opportunities to develop, re-train, retain and attract a vibrant workforce in Cheshire East.

**As a major employer, we will support the development of apprenticeship and post-graduate opportunities across the Council**, effectively 'growing our own' workforce in otherwise hard to recruit areas; including children's and adult's social workers and planning officers.

**We will explore Levelling-Up Opportunities** that best reflect the needs of Cheshire East's diverse communities, (rural and urban), that reduce inequalities and improve everyone's life chances.



# WE WILL INTRODUCE A PLANNING SYSTEM THAT WORKS FOR ALL

- ✔ Providing the right homes in the right place for local people
- ✔ Ensuring your local voice is heard and decisions are timely
- ✔ Making sure developers deliver on local infrastructure
- ✔ Improving enforcement of planning decisions

In conjunction with the Local Plan Review;

It is important that local voices are heard and that planning decisions are determined on clear planning policy grounds in a timely way.

We will work with businesses, communities and landowners to understand their needs and deliver on place-based solutions.

We will support communities to develop and when needed, review existing Neighbourhood Plans to ensure that Community aspirations are given full weight in the planning process.

We will work proactively to resolve delays in processing applications and address the longer term need to recruit and retain Planning Officers.

We will review Developer Contributions policies to ensure that we hold developers to account in their delivery of community infrastructure, in line with local need and planning policy.

We will increase capacity in planning enforcement to ensure robust compliance with planning policies.

We will engage directly with Natural England, Cheshire Wildlife Trust and relevant landowners to build a 'bank' of biodiversity net gain (BNG) projects across the borough. This will ensure that developers meet their BNG obligations in areas close to the developments where biodiversity is being lost.

We will increase capacity in planning enforcement to ensure robust compliance with planning policies.





# WE WILL TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

- ✓ Protecting and promoting our Natural Environment
- ✓ Increasing recycling rates and promoting re-use.
- ✓ Supporting sustainable energy investment and infrastructure.

**We will focus on the goal of Carbon Zero status for Cheshire East Council** and bring the Council's faltering Green Strategy back on track.

**We will invest in renewable energy technologies** to speed up the reduction of the carbon footprint of the Cheshire East estate and reduce our longer-term energy costs.

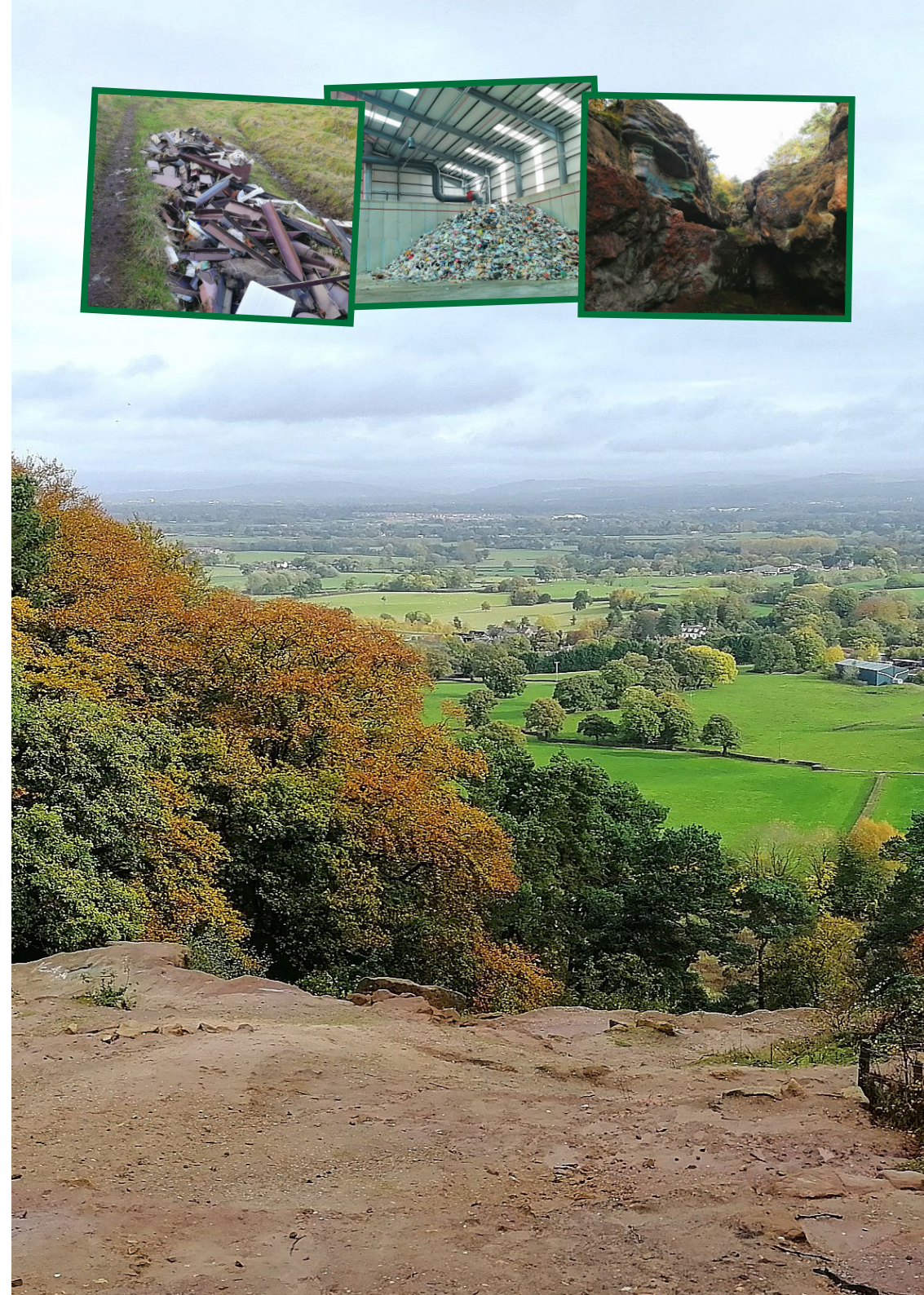
**We will invest in electric vehicle charging points in Cheshire East's car parks;** an investment that will be reflected in our revised parking strategy.

**We will expedite tree planting across the borough,** cutting red tape to support communities that want to be active participants in this endeavour.

**We will review the Local Plan and all supplementary planning policies to ensure they support the retention and maintenance,** in perpetuity, of the meres, mosses and peat deposits that exist on Cheshire East land holdings or land for which this council has land management responsibilities.

**Cheshire East Council has received significant Government funding for investment in active travel and sustainable transport offers across the borough.** We will review these plans to ensure that walking and cycling proposals offer value for money together with realistic and sustainable transport solutions for access to work and school.

**We will promote household recycling, re-use and upcycling** and will investigate suitable sites to provide replacement facilities for Congleton.





[cheshireeastconservatives.co.uk](http://cheshireeastconservatives.co.uk)



**Cheshire East Conservatives**

Printed and promoted by Janet Clowes on behalf of Cheshire East Conservatives both at  
Crewe & Nantwich Conservatives, Churchyardside, Nantwich CW5 5DE