

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

held on Tuesday, 26th October, 2010 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor G M Walton (Chairman)
Councillor A Martin (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors G Barton, W S Davies, H Davenport, R Fletcher, L Gilbert,
M Hollins, T Jackson, M Parsons, M J Simon, C G Thorley and M J Weatherill

In attendance:

Councillors R Menlove, L Smetham, D Stockton and D Thompson

Officers:

A Fisher, B Flannagan, R House and P Sherratt.

Apologies

None

35 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

None declared at this point.

36 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/ OPEN SESSION

None

37 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record and signed by
the Chairman

38 VERGE MAINTENANCE

Consideration was given to a presentation on verge maintenance. The
presentation outlined:

- The current arrangements – Bam Nuttall had won the contract for the former Macclesfield and Crewe and Nantwich Authorities and the Borough Council had won the contract for the former Congleton Authority
- The timetable for rural and urban grass cutting

- A detailed plan of the highway network
- The budget – total annual cost of £820,000

In summary, it was reported that BAM Nuttall and Cheshire East Council (CEC) were working to agreed contractual obligations. However CEC cut fortnightly throughout the growing season which was a higher frequency than BAM Nuttall. Member agreed that if this was achievable in the former Congleton area then it should also be achievable in the rest of the borough and therefore the possibility of providing the service in house should be investigated.

Members raised concern regarding the frequency of gully emptying. It was reported that due to the previous harsh winter, priorities had been revised to deal with the highways and that unless there was another harsh winter the programme would return to normal.

Members also raised concerns regarding hedge cutting, it was agreed that for visibility and safety reasons, this should be included in the verge maintenance programme.

RESOLVED

1. That the presentation be noted.
2. That the possibility of providing the service in house and hedge cutting being included as part of the maintenance programme be investigated.

39 REVIEW OF TOWNS AND VILLAGES

Consideration was given to a draft report of the Task and Finish Group on its review of Towns and Villages. The Committee approved the report subject to the recommendations being amended to reflect the fact that any future decisions made by the Portfolio Holder should be in line with the Cheshire East Council Parking Strategy.

Councillor Menlove thanked the Task and Finish Group for its hard work and final report which had proved to be a valuable exercise. He informed the Committee that he was currently reviewing the on/off street parking provisions within Cheshire East and that the charging regimes would be reviewed at some time in the future.

RESOLVED

That subject to the amendment highlighted above, the final report be submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment for approval.

40 VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY FOR CHESHIRE EAST

The Committee gave consideration to a report informing Members that since the Committee meeting held on 8 June 2010, a consultation period on the Visitor Economy Strategy for Cheshire East had been completed. The report updated the Committee on progress made in drafting and adopting the strategy as well as delivery to date. At the Chairman's request it was agreed that further details of what was already happening in visitor economy work to deliver the strategic priorities would be circulated to the Committee.

At this point Councillors Fletcher, Jackson and Thorley declared a personal interest in the item due to being members of the National Trust.

RESOLVED

1. That Cabinet be recommended to approve the Visitor Economy Strategy as a framework to deliver services and agree policy relating to the visitor economy.
2. That a visitor economy delivery update be circulated to all Members of the Committee.

41 INTERIM PLANNING STATEMENT ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Committee gave consideration to a report outlining the proposal for the introduction of an Interim Planning Statement to be used in considering planning applications for housing development pending the adoption of a policy for Cheshire East in the LDF Core Strategy.

It was noted that the SHMAA identified that, based on CLG modelling; there was a net shortfall of 1,243 affordable homes each year across the district for the five year period 2009/10 to 2013/14. Members agreed that this target was unrealistic however the proposal that 30% of new housing schemes should be affordable was important this figure should be maintained.

It was agreed that, following the consultation period, the Statement and comments be brought back to the Committee prior to being considered by Cabinet.

RESOLVED

1. That subject to the comments highlighted above, Cabinet be recommended to approve the draft Interim Planning Statement on Affordable Housing for consultation purposes, and its agreement that it be treated as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications pending the adoption of the finalised document in such a format as may be appropriate following the consultation process.
2. That following the consultation period the statement and comments be brought back to the Committee for final consideration.

42 FUTURE HOUSING PROVISION IN CHESHIRE EAST

The Committee gave consideration to a report which:

- considered the requirement for the Council to maintain a five year supply of deliverable housing land and the position at 1 April 2010 in Cheshire East;
- considered the appropriate figure for the housing requirement for Cheshire East following the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy, in the interim pending the adoption of the Local Development Framework;
- proposed the introduction of an Interim Planning Policy to manage the release of land for housing development pending the allocation

of land within the Local Development Framework and that consultation should be carried out on the draft policy.

With regard to paragraph 2 of the justification for the release of housing land, Councillor Thorley strongly objected to Shavington being excluded from the settlement boundary of Crewe.

Members questioned how many planning permissions had been granted but were still to be built. It was agreed that this information would be circulated to the Committee.

Members discussed the use of 'brownfield' sites and agreed that these should be utilised as a priority before any further 'greenfield' land being released for housing.

RESOLVED

That Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee endorses the Cabinet recommendation to:

1. Approve the housing requirement figure for a minimum of 1150 net additional dwellings to be delivered annually, to be used pending the adoption of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy;
2. Note the Council's five year land supply at 1 April 2010;
3. Approve the Interim Planning Policy on the Release of Housing Land for consultation purposes and agree that it be used in the determination of planning applications pending its adoption subject to the addition of suitable previously developed sites in paragraph 3 of the policy.

Councillor Barton left the meeting following consideration of the above item

43 FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED

That the extracts of the forward plan which fall within the remit of the Committee be noted

44 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the work programme. Due to the fact that the following issues would be dealt with through Member briefings, it was agreed that they be removed from the work programme:

- Future development of employment land at Parkgate, Knutsford
- Sustainable Towns Strategy (Snowhill)

RESOLVED

That the work programme be approved subject to the amendments highlighted above.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 12.20 pm

Councillor G M Walton (Chairman)