

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

held on Tuesday, 14th September, 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 S Davies, H Davenport, R Fletcher, L Gilbert, M Hollins,
T Jackson, M Parsons, M Simon, C Thorley and J Weatherill

In Attendance

Councillor R Menlove

Officers

A Fisher, R Kidd, R Skipp, P Sherratt, C Simpson and G Mallin

Apologies

None

22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

None

23 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/ OPEN SESSION

A representative of Congleton Town Council attended the meeting to speak in respect of the Clear Way Forward Policy.

24 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

25 STRATEGIC HOUSING - AUDIT COMMISSION INSPECTION

The Committee received a presentation on Strategic Housing, which outlined the work undertaken for the Audit Commission inspection including a peer review and self assessment. It was noted that a Housing Strategy was being developed to take the vision and priorities for housing forward. Members agreed that the

Strategy would be considered by the Committee in November prior to it being submitted to Cabinet for approval.

The presentation also outlined the Interim Affordable Housing Planning Statement. There were currently three different planning policies for Cheshire East, which created inconsistencies relating to affordable housing requirements and rural exception sites. The interim statement would:

- Address the above issues
- Provide updated guidance on affordable housing provisions
- Provide consistent policy approach for planning applications
- Address issues surrounding development economics and viability of providing affordable housing

The key elements of the statement and adoption process were outlined to Members. It was agreed that the Committee would give consideration to the Statement at its meeting scheduled to be held on 23 November 2010.

RESOLVED

That the Committee give consideration to the Housing Strategy and Interim Affordable Housing Planning Statement at its meeting scheduled to be held on 23 November 2010.

26 WASTE COLLECTION METHODS

The Committee gave consideration to a report outlining the route optimisation and service harmonisation project that is part of the complete transformation of the waste and recycling services provided by Cheshire East. The report outlined various service options available; however option two would be taken forward by the authority. Members welcomed the report and noted that the next step in the project would be for the technical consultants to produce a tactical round design for all services.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted

27 PROCESS FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (LDF) AND AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Committee gave consideration to a report setting out the current arrangements for developing and finally approving the LDF documents, and described proposed amendments to the constitution to streamline the process.

RESOLVED-

- (a) That the current arrangements for approving the LDF be noted;

- (b) That the consultation process within the Council to take this matter forward, as described at Section 9.2 of the Cabinet report, be noted and commenced;
- (c) That it be noted that subject to the outcome of the consultation process, Cabinet be invited to make recommendations to full Council regarding the alternative arrangements described in the table at Appendix 2;
- (d) That it be noted that recommendations to full Council will need to address any authority required for the Borough Solicitor to make any necessary and consequential amendments to the Constitution including additions to the terms of reference of Strategic Planning Board.

28 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Committee considered a report relating to a number of reports that formed part of the Cheshire East Local Development Framework (LDF), these included:

- Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) – which set out the Council's consultation process and procedures that the Council intended to follow.
- Alsager Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – which complemented policies adopted within the Congleton Local Plan to provide additional guidance in connection with the planning of new development within Alsager Town Centre
- Smallwood Village Design Statement (SPD) - the purpose of which was to manage change in buildings and landscape in the parish of Smallwood.
- Cheshire East Local List of Historic Buildings and its supporting SPD, which had been prepared in response to guidance in Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5) and identified buildings considered to be of local historic or architectural interest. A number of changes had been made to the list following consultation.

The report had been considered by the Strategic Planning Board and the comments of that committee were set out in section 10 of the report.

RESOLVED –

That it be recommended to Cabinet that the Council adopt the Statement of Community Involvement, Alsager Town Centre SPD, the Smallwood Village Design Statement SPD, the Local List of Historic Buildings and its accompanying SPD.

29 TOTAL TRANSPORT TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

The Committee gave consideration to an update on the work undertaken on the Total Transport Transformation project, and the conclusions from the review of the Integrated Transport Unit transitional Shared Service.

Members received a short presentation outlining the background to the review, stakeholder consultation, findings, policy review, the options examined and the current status and next steps.

Following consideration of the options available, Members concluded that ending the shared service and taking direct management control would be the best way

to meet future needs. It was therefore agreed that the joint Committee, at its meeting scheduled to be held on 17 September 2010, should be recommended to re-integrate the transport function within Cheshire East, cease the current shared arrangements from April 2011 and conduct a further review of potential shared arrangements.

Members requested that the possibility of being able to use a bus pass system for taxis in rural areas should be investigated.

It was noted that there would be a full Member briefing on the Integrated Transport Unit on 29 September 2010 and that with regard to the Local Transport Plan, due to budget cuts, Members would need to consider priorities for the future.

RESOLVED

1. That the joint Committee, at its meeting scheduled to be held on 17 September 2010, be recommended to re-integrate the transport function within Cheshire East, cease the current shared arrangements from April 2011 and conduct a further review of potential shared arrangements.
2. That the possibilities of being able to use a bus pass system for taxis in rural areas should be investigated.

30 HIGHWAY POLICY OVERVIEW

The Committee received a report highlighting that the Highways Service had a number of policies, inherited from Cheshire County Council as predecessor Highway Authority, which governed the provision of highway maintenance activities within the Authority. It would be necessary to review these policies to take account of legislative changes, best practice and technological advances to ensure all policies were robust and workable and deliver best value on behalf of the Authority, whilst embracing the requirement to provide a safe, accessible highway network. The Committee gave consideration to the proposed timetable for the review of the existing policies and agreed that it would give consideration to the following policies prior to them being submitted to the Portfolio Holder/Cabinet for approval:

Grass Cutting	Highway Lighting
Hedge and Tree maintenance	Obstructions on the Highway
Highway Weed Control	Highway Sponsorship
Highway Drainage/Gully Emptying	Traffic Sign Management
Winter Service	Repair to Private Streets
Speed Management Strategy	Memorials on the Highway
Highway Defects – S58	Pedestrian Crossings
Highway Structural Maintenance	Highway Sweeping
Maintenance of Road Markings, Studs, Guardrails and Barriers	

RESOLVED

That, when appropriate, the above policies be considered at special meetings of the Committee.

31 TRAFFIC CALMING POLICY

Consideration was given to the draft Traffic Calming Policy prior to it being submitted to Cabinet for approval. It was highlighted to Members that the Borough Council did not currently have a policy on the installation, maintenance or removal of traffic calming schemes within the highway.

In summary road humps speed cushions and other features had been installed on the Boroughs road network for both accident reduction and environmental reasons. Due to a variety of concerns, including those expressed by the public and emergency services, coupled with network condition and budget issues, the continuing need for a particular scheme should be reviewed when highway maintenance works are programmed. The review would determine whether the traffic calming features are retained or removed.

Members made the following comments on the draft policy:

- When deciding whether or not to remove road humps, local knowledge should be taken into consideration.
- SID's appeared to work well and should be taken into consideration.
- Equally effective alternative methods to humps should be pursued.
- If road humps are to be removed a suitable alternative should be considered.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet be recommended to approve the policy subject to consideration being given to comments highlighted above.

32 CLEAR WAY FORWARD POLICY

Consideration was given to the Clear Way Forward Policy prior to it being submitted to Cabinet for approval. It was noted that the use of A-Boards throughout the Borough had steadily increased over the past few years. A-Boards were therefore now causing problems to pedestrians, the visually impaired and wheelchair users. A-Boards were also having adverse effect on the Borough's streets and shops.

Following detailed consideration of the Policy, Members made the following comments:

- The fourth bullet point in paragraph 8.2 should be reworded as there may be some instances when it would be acceptable to have the display of goods in Conservation Areas.
- Paragraph 8.3 should be amended to include Town/Parish Councils.
- The Borough Council should be encouraging businesses and therefore take a pragmatic approach to this Policy.

- That queries relating to A-Boards should be dealt with by the Town Centre Manager and not the Planning Department.

RESOLVED

That subject to the comments highlighted above the Committee:

1. Endorse the current practice of the removal by the Council of fly posters and signs attached to street furniture without reference to the party who placed them.
2. Recommend that charges be introduced to licence the displays of goods on the highway that are remote from the business in respect of the initial application, a renewal fee and where the Council is the owner of the subsoil, a fee per square metre used, as detailed in the report.
3. Recommend that the Portfolio Holder for Environment be given delegated authority to make minor amendments to the Guidelines that are considered necessary in the light of experience as the Guidelines are implemented.

33 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the work programme. It was agreed that the work programme should be amended to include the highways policies outlined in minute 30 - Highway Policy Overview.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be amended to include the items highlighted in minute 30.

34 FORWARD PLAN EXTRACTS

Consideration was given to the extracts of the forward plan which fall within the remit of the committee.

RESOLVED

That the extracts be noted.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 1.25 pm

Councillor G M Walton (Chairman)