

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Economy and Growth Committee**
held on Tuesday, 10th September, 2024 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor M Gorman (Chair)
Councillor F Wilson (Vice-Chair)

Councillors D Brown, L Buchanan, A Burton, J Clowes, P Coan, B Drake,
K Hague, G Marshall, P Redstone, J Saunders and R Vernon

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Peter Skates, Acting Executive Director Place
Karen Carsberg, Head of Housing
Joanne Jones, Property Services Manager
Julie Gregory, Legal Services
Steve Reading, Finance Officer
Rachel Graves, Democratic Services Officer

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor A Heler and C O'Leary.
Councillors K Hague and J Saunders attended as substitutes.

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

13 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

14 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no public speakers.

15 ADDRESSING THE NEED FOR PERMANENT GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITES

The Committee considered the report on addressing the need for permanent gypsy and traveller sites in Cheshire East.

The need for adequate pitches to meet the housing need of both the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople had been established

through the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, which was most recently updated in 2018. The updated Assessment informed policies in the SADPD, adopted in 2022, which identified the following level of need up to 2030 (policies HOU 5 and 6):

- (a) 5 to 10 transit pitches for Gypsies and Travellers
- (b) 32 permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travellers
- (c) 5 plots for Travelling Showpeople.

One of the sites allocated in the SADPD to provide permanent residential Gypsy and Traveller pitches was located at Coppenhall Moss, Crewe and was within the ownership of Cheshire East. A number of options had been considered to bring the site forward to provide seven residential pitches and these were outlined in Appendix 2 to the report.

The report recommended that option 2 – Conditional Sale, be taken forward as this would not place financial pressure on the Council and had the potential to bring forward a capital receipt, therefore resulting in a positive impact on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

RESOLVED: That the Committee

- 1 note the options to bring forward the development of the Coppenhall Moss site in Crewe.
- 2 approve the progression of option two which is to proceed with a conditional sale of the land for the provision of a permanent residential Gypsy and Traveller site.

16 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered the work programme for 2024/25.

It was reported that there was a need for an additional meeting of the Committee to consider an urgent matter relating to the Town Fund Projects in Crewe, which would be seeking approval for reallocation of funds. The meeting was proposed to be held on Wed 25 September 2024.

It was noted that the First Financial Report had not been brought to the meeting as it was being held before the meeting of the Finance Sub Committee on 12 September. It was therefore proposed that the First Financial Report be brought to the additional meeting on 25 September.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be noted.

17 **AFFORDABLE HOUSING UPDATE**

The Committee considered the update report on Affordable Housing.

The Committee had previously at its meeting in November 2022 agreed a set of priorities for the allocation of financial contributions from developers in lieu of provision of affordable housing on development sites. In order to help with the provision of affordable housing in Cheshire East, it was proposed that a Housing Fund be established under priority 4. This would pool a number of contributions to create a fund in the region of £1.5m, subject to the terms of the S106 agreements allowing this and available contributions. The fund would be used to enable Registered Housing Providers to purchase properties on the open market and let them at social rent levels.

The Committee in July 2021 had agreed to include the former Vernon Infant School site in Poynton into the Housing Development Framework to bring forward affordable homes. The Section 77 process to seek approval to dispose of the land had commenced, but not yet been concluded. Since this decision, a review of Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision has been undertaken and the former school had now been identified as a suitable site for a SEN school. The report therefore sought approval to remove the site from the Housing Development Framework and, subject to an approved business case, approve the allocation of the site for SEN provision.

RESOLVED (unanimously): That the Committee

- 1 note the contents of the report.
- 2 approve the establishment of a Housing Fund to enable open market properties to be purchased and converted to socially rented accommodation by Registered Housing Providers and delegate authority to the Director of Enterprise and Growth to approve the final scheme and the process for the allocation of funds.
- 3 approve the removal of the former Vernon Infant School site in Poynton from the Housing Development Framework and delegate authority to the Director of Growth and Enterprise to reassign the site for the provision of a SEN school, subject to an approved business case.

18 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

19 **AFFORDABLE HOUSING UPDATE**

The Committee considered the exempt appendix on the Housing Development Framework.

RESOLVED:

That Committee note the update report on the Housing Development Framework sites.

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm and concluded at 5.10 pm

Councillor M Gorman (Chair)