

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Scrutiny Committee**
held on Monday, 19th April, 2010 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor J Narraway (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors A Arnold, Rachel Bailey, G Barton, G Baxendale, S Conquest,
J Crockatt and S Wilkinson

Apologies

Councillors A Thwaite, D Bebbington, M Davies, P Edwards and D Topping

1 OFFICERS PRESENT

Lisa Quinn	Borough Treasurer
Zandra Neeld	Strategic Partnerships Manager
Rob Barnett	Senior Performance Officer
Mark Nedderman	Senior Scrutiny Officer

2 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no statements from members of the public.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on the 15 March 2010 be approved as a record.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5 DATA QUALITY

The Committee considered a report of the head of Policy and Performance on the Council's Data Quality Strategy.

The Council's Data Quality Strategy had been put in place to ensure that the Council carried out its responsibilities in respect of producing and using quality data in an effective and co-ordinated manner. It played a vital role in the management and improvement of Council services. The Strategy acknowledged that quality data were an integral part of the Council's operational, performance management and governance arrangements.

The Strategy set guidelines for putting into place systems, policies, and procedures to enable the highest possible data quality, including information shared between the Council and partners. The Strategy would also set guidelines

to ensure that all staff, Members, partners and other stakeholders understood their roles and responsibilities.

It was intended that a detailed action plan would be submitted to a future meeting of the committee for the Committee to undertake a programme of work to challenge data quality across the Council to include :

- An examination of roles and responsibilities for data quality and tests to determine whether role requirements are being met
- An evaluation of data quality assurance arrangements across key systems
- An assessment of officers' awareness of data requirements in their areas
- An examination of the presentation of information to identify best practice in the Council and standardise on it
- An assessment of the risk associated with poor data quality and actions across the Council to identify and address the risks.

RSOLBVED –

- (a) That the Data Quality Strategy and the actions being carried out to evaluate performance against the actions and standards it sets be noted.
- (b) That data quality improvement through a programme of reviews and assessments be supported.
- (c) That the Committee take responsibility for ongoing review of the Data Quality Strategy and that quarterly reports be submitted to the committee in future.

6 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Policy and Performance on the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The Sustainable Community Strategy would set the overall strategic direction and long term economic vision for the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area in a way that would contribute to sustainable development.

The Strategy would contain the following elements:

- the long term vision based firmly on local needs – this will be underpinned by a shared evidence base informed by community aspirations
- key priorities for the local area, based upon this vision which may realistically be achieved in the medium term.

Preparation of the Strategy began at the first LSP Assembly in October 2009 and had been subject to a number of consultation events during 2010. The draft strategy was expected to be published for further consultation in May and to be approved by Council in July 2010.

It was anticipated that this Committee would formally comment on the draft strategy at its next meeting on 15 June 2010.

- RESOLVED – (a) That the approach for the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy outlined in the report be supported.
- (b) That the Committee be formally consulted on the final draft strategy at its meeting to be held on 15 June 2010.

7 BUDGET CONSULTATION GROUP

At its meeting held on 15 March 2010, the Committee had approved the continuation of the Budget Consultation group to oversee the budget setting and consultation processes for the 2010/2011 budget and beyond. The Committee was asked to confirm the Membership of the Consultation Group for the new civic year.

- RESOLVED – (a) That the budget consultation group be approved as follows:

Chairman of each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees (Con)
(5)
Vice Chairman of Corporate Scrutiny – Councillor J Narraway (LD)
Councillor S Conquest (lab)
Councillor P Edwards (Ind)

- (b) That in the event of any of the above Members being unavailable for meetings, nominated substitutes from the respective groups be allowed.

8 STATUTORY SCRUTINY OFFICER

The Committee considered a report of the Democratic Services Manager relating to the appointment of a designated Scrutiny Officer in accordance with section 31 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Section 31 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 required that all authorities in England with the exception of district councils in two tier areas to designate a Scrutiny Officer. The functions of this role were to:

- Promote the role of the authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Committees.
- Support the authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Committees and the Members of those committees'
- Provide support and guidance to:
 - Members of the authority
 - Members of the executive of the authority, and officers of the authority.

11.3 A local authority could not designate any of the following under this section:

- The head of the authority's paid service designated under section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989;
- The authority's Monitoring Officer designated under section 5 of that Act;
- The authority's Chief Finance Officer, within the meaning of that section.

The appointment would be made by Council following a recommendation from Governance and Constitution Committee.

RESOLVED – That Governance and Constitution Committee be informed that this Committee supports the appointment of the Democratic Services Manager as the Council's Statutory Scrutiny Officer.

9 STRENGTHENING THE SCRUTINY FUNCTION

The Committee considered a report of the Borough Solicitor concerning a process to involve Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Cabinet in the work planning process for 2010/2011.

The proposal within the report suggested involving CMT and Cabinet in a two way process to formulate the majority of the work programme through informal meetings, leading to Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committees determining final work programmes in May/June 2010. This would ensure that resources were made available to O&S Committees from Service Heads to complete reviews.

In turn, this would enable the committees to focus on Corporate priorities and to ensure that links to LAA targets, and BVPI's could be made at the outset.

The report had been considered briefly by the committee at its meeting held on 15 March 2010. The committee had referred the matter to the Scrutiny Chairs group. The Scrutiny Chairs group considered the report again on 16 April and had recommended that this Committee should endorse the approach suggested in the paper.

RESOLVED – That subject to the dates contained within the suggested timetable of key activities being amended, the approach to involve Cabinet and CMT to compile the Overview and Scrutiny Work programmes in 2010/2011 be approved.

10 FORWARD PLAN - EXTRACTS

The Committee considered the items currently on the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan be noted.

11 CHESHIRE EAST AWARENESS TRAINING

The Committee considered the possibility of providing training for all Members on the Council on the organisational structure of the Council, to keep Members up to date with a number of recent changes to the Structure. However, Members felt that they would benefit more from having an Officer directory containing contact members of key staff and for the document to be regularly updated.

RESOLVED – That the Senior Scrutiny Officer be requested to make enquiries about the possibility of an officer/departmental directory being produced

containing telephone numbers and email addresses of key members of staff on a departmental/function basis.

12 GENERAL ELECTION PREPARATIONS 2010

The Senior Scrutiny Officer informed Members that due to the heavy workload of the Democratic Services section in preparation for the election on 6 May, there was a possibility that Scrutiny staff would be seconded to other duties, during the run –up to polling day.

13 CONSULTATIONS FROM CABINET

There were no consultations from Cabinet.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.00 pm

Councillor John Narraway (vice Chairman in the Chair)