

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

held on Tuesday, 6th July, 2010 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor G M Walton (Chairman)

Councillors S Davies, R Fletcher, L Gilbert, M Hollins, T Jackson, M Simon,
C Thorley and J Weatherill

Officers:

A Kent, K Carsberg and R House

Apologies

Councillors S Broadhurst, H Davenport and M Parsons

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

None

15 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/ OPEN SESSION

None

16 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

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

17 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Committee received a presentation on affordable housing. The presentation detailed the definition of affordable housing, why affordable housing is required and the supporting evidence, the current policies and details of the interim policy statement.

With regard to the rural housing needs, Members requested that the sites identified for housing be circulated to Members. Members also highlighted the importance of there being a need for the housing and that facilities such as public transport, schools and shops should be available near to the sites.

K Carsberg highlighted that the schemes need to be sympathetic and proportionate to the area and that there was now a Rural Housing Enabler Officer

in place, who is responsible for demonstrating the need and consulting with Parish Councils.

Following detailed consideration of the presentation the Committee agreed that it should carry out a tour of typical affordable housing schemes, prior to it giving consideration to the interim policy statement.

RESOLVED

1. That the presentation be noted.
2. That a tour of affordable housing schemes be arranged for September, prior to consideration being given to the interim policy statement.

18 WINTER LEARNING

Following the meeting held on 10 May 2010, A Kent, Liaison Manager (Schools, Settings and Services) attended the meeting to discuss the school closures due to adverse weather conditions. He felt that the situation was managed well and that the highways department was responsive. However, real time and accurate information relating to the weather forecast was required to enable the Head Teachers and Governors to make an accurate and informed decision with regard to closing schools.

RESOLVED

That the comments highlighted above be forwarded to the Portfolio Holder for consideration.

19 CORPORATE PLAN

The Committee considered a report enclosing for comment the draft Corporate Plan which was due to be considered by Cabinet on 19 July prior to making a recommendation to Council regarding its formal adoption on 22 July 2010. Members made the following comments and recommendations:

- That the document is poorly written. For example page six referred to 'looking after waste' Members felt it should read 'responsible for waste'
- That the Committee would like to see further information on the rural housing need and the sites identified for rural housing
- That the plan needed to say how the vision would be achieved.
- That the plan was aspirational and required more detail
- Member questioned the accuracy of household incomes
- That the departmental service plans be considered by the Committee
- That the decline in house prices in Cheshire East was a positive as they were too high
- That free swimming would be stopped in the near future.

- That the reference relating to scrutiny Committees meeting 10 times per year should be removed.
- That with regard to the second objective it was agreed that the visitor economy strategy should be included in the section relating to how we will achieve our ambition.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet be informed of the comments highlighted above.

20 FORWARD PLAN

Consideration was given to the extracts of the forward plan which fell within the remit of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the extracts be noted

21 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the Work programme. It was reported that the Department for Transport had recently announced that it had suspended the Major Schemes guidance and processing of new applications at least until the conclusion of the spending review in the autumn. This meant that all preliminary and design work on the SEMMMs A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road scheme had ceased for the foreseeable future. The SEMMMs scheme was due to submit the Major Scheme Business Case to DFT in the Autumn to secure approval for £290m. Following the announcement from DFT Cheshire East Council, Stockport MBC and Manchester City Council had all agreed that work should cease to develop the scheme further at this stage. The Committee therefore agreed to remove this issue from its work programme.

RESOLVED

That subject to the item 'SEMMMS update' being removed, the work programme be approved.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 12.15 pm

Councillor G M Walton (Chairman)