

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council

held on Thursday, 15th December, 2011 at Congleton Town Hall, High Street,
Congleton, CW12 1BN

PRESENT

Councillor R West (Chairman)
Councillor G M Walton (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors C Andrew, Rachel Bailey, Rhoda Bailey, A Barratt, G Baxendale, D Bebbington, G Boston, D Brickhill, D Brown, L Brown, B Burkhill, P Butterill, R Cartlidge, J Clowes, S Corcoran, H Davenport, W S Davies, R Domleo, D Druce, K Edwards, P Edwards, I Faseyi, J P Findlow, W Fitzgerald, R Fletcher, D Flude, H Gaddum, S Gardiner, M Grant, P Groves, J Hammond, M Hardy, P Hayes, S Hogben, D Hough, P Hoyland, J Jackson, L Jeuda, M Jones, S Jones, F Keegan, A Kolker, J Macrae, D Mahon, A Martin, M A Martin, P Mason, R Menlove, G Merry, B Moran, G Morris, B Murphy, H Murray, D Neilson, D Newton, P Nurse, M Parsons, P Raynes, L Roberts, J Saunders, M Sherratt, B Silvester, M J Simon, L Smetham, D Stockton, C G Thorley, A Thwaite, D Topping, M J Weatherill, P Whiteley, S Wilkinson and J Wray

66 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G Barton, L Gilbert, A Harewood, O Hunter, W Livesley, D Marren, S McGrory and A Moran.

67 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2011 AND THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2011

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meetings held on 13 October and 14 November 2011 be approved as correct record.

68 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor:-

- 1 Announced that, since the last Council Meeting, he and the Deputy Mayor had undertaken over 90 engagements representing Cheshire East Council, which had included a number of events associated with his nominated charity and had raised a total of £8,000 for the charity.
- 2 Announced that he had met with the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, at an event held at Manchester Town Hall where he

had the opportunity of extolling the virtues of Cheshire East as an investment location.

- 3 Announced that he had the pleasure of appearing live on South Cheshire Hospital radio, at Leighton Hospital where he was interviewed and had the opportunity of playing a selection of his favourite music. He was also interviewed on Canal Side Radio. These media appearances had given him an excellent opportunity to talk about the work of the Council.
- 4 Announced that he had attended the Macclesfield & Wilmslow Business Awards, Cheshire Silk FM's Local Hero Awards and a Princes Trust Presentation Evening and on Sunday 22nd November, he had the privilege of spending the day with some of those hoping to compete in the London 2012 Special Olympics.
- 5 Announced that, on Remembrance Sunday, he and the Deputy Mayor had attended five Services within the Borough of Cheshire East.
- 6 Reported that Christ the King Primary School in Macclesfield has been invited to a reception at No.10 Downing Street to represent the North West of England at the School Games Party, hosted by the Prime Minister.
- 7 Asked Members to support the Cheshire East Adult Safeguarding Board's 'Stay Warm, Stay Well, Stay Safe' campaign and encouraged them to be 'Good Winter Neighbours' by being vigilant and giving support, if needed, to elderly neighbours or those with a disability or chronic illness.
- 8 Announced that the Olympic Flame would blaze a trail through the Cheshire East borough on 31 May 2012. It had been announced that the torch relay would pass through Crewe, Congleton, Knutsford and Macclesfield. These four towns were amongst over 1,000 villages, towns and cities announced by the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games through which the Olympic Flame would be carried in the relay. The Organising Committee would be working closely with the Council to devise the route and street by street detail would be confirmed later in the year.
- 9 Announced the sad death of Honorary Alderman Les Cooper, who had Mayor of Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council in 1976-1977 and was made an Honorary Alderman in 1999.

69 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr S Hogben declared a personal interest in item 12 – Local Service Delivery Committee Membership, by virtue of being a Cheshire East Allotment holder.

Cllr R Domleo declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 7 – Notice of Motion relating to Feed in Tariffs, by virtue of being a shareholder in the main company in the country who supplied solar panels. He left the room during consideration of this matter.

70 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

Mrs Charlotte Peters Rock, representing Knutsford Area for Knutsford Action, used public speaking time to report that she had presented a three part petition, to the Mayor, in advance of the Council meeting, which represented the views of more than 6000 people who objected to “the current policy of removing local services for local people from local areas”. The first part of the petition consisted of more than 3000 signatures gathered in Knutsford, the second part consisted of a similar number of signatures from the towns and villages across Cheshire East and on its borders and the third part was a 275 signature petition on the single topic of “Save Stanley Centre”, which had been begun by family members of an adult who attended the Stanley Centre, Knutsford. She stated that, as the other relevant bodies were not represented at the meeting, namely East Cheshire Hospital Trust, Central and East Cheshire PCT, PCT Cluster Board for Cheshire, Wirral and Warrington GP Commissioning Consortium, Eastern Cheshire GP Commissioning Consortium - Vale Royal, and the GP Commissioning Consortium South Cheshire – Health, she expected the Council to act as disseminator.

Mrs Judy Collins used public speaking time to thank Knutsford Area for Knutsford Action group for their hard work in respect of the petition which had been handed to the Mayor. She quoted the Right Honourable John Denham MP with regard to the rights of citizens to defend local facilities and stated that she felt that this was not happening with the partnership between Cheshire East and Cheshire West Councils and the NHS and that she expected Cheshire East Council to take the lead on this matter.

Dr John Shaw used public speaking time to make comment about the cost of the Mayoralty. He had submitted a Freedom of Information Request to the Council, which had the cost of this. He questioned where the money was spent and whether all the Mayoral engagements were necessary. He suggested that many of the events should be attended by the Town Mayors and some did not require attendance at all. He also stated that the Mayoral car and chauffeurs were very expensive to run and caused carbon monoxide pollution to the environment. He suggested that requests for attendance by the Mayor should be prioritised; that the Mayor should be allowed to attend additional events to support his Charity, at no extra cost to Ratepayers; that an executive car company should be used for the

hire of a car and chauffeur; that to reflect the reduced workload, Mayoral allowances should be in line with those of Committee Chairmen and that there should be a total budget cap of £20,000 per year. He asked the Council to support the immediate implementation of these measures.

71 NOTICES OF MOTION

(a) Consideration was given to the following Notice of Motion, submitted by Cllr Brickhill and seconded by Cllr Murphy :-

“In view of the obvious and continued failure of the Cabinet system, as evidenced by their inability, for a second year running, to manage their budget, letting it overrun by a predicted £16,000,000, with the resultant reductions of reserves to a dangerously low level, this Council instructs its Constitution Committee to prepare the necessary amendments to bring about a proven successful system of governance, similar to the earlier committee systems of the successful predecessor Councils, to begin from the start of the 2012/13 financial year.”

RESOLVED

That the motion stands referred to the Constitution Committee for consideration.

(b) Consideration was given to the following Notice of Motion, submitted by Cllr Newton and seconded by Cllr Hogben:-

“This Council believes that elected Members are entitled to be provided with accurate and meaningful financial information, upon which they can form views and base judgments during the ongoing budget preparation and scrutiny process.”

RESOLVED

That the motion stands referred to Cabinet for consideration.

(Cllr R Domleo had declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the following Notice of Motion and left the room during consideration of this matter).

(c) Consideration was given to the following Notice of Motion, submitted by Cllr Fletcher and seconded by Cllr Hough :-

“FEED IN TARIFFS

This Council notes that increasing numbers of households are installing photo voltaic panels on their roofs, lowering the carbon usage and dependency on fossil fuels.

This has resulted in the creation of new jobs.

Social Landlords have installed, or are considering installing PV panels on some multiple tenanted properties, with tenants able to use the electricity generated to reduce fuel poverty.

This Council also notes the consultation on changes to the feed in tariff, which currently helps to fund these installations

Council is concerned that halving the tariff at short notice is causing problems for installers and users. Any reductions in the number of systems being installed will mean fewer jobs and will undermine the aim of increased low carbon energy supplies.

The proposal to apply a lower tariff to multi installation schemes could exclude social Landlords and their tenants from the scheme.

Council, therefore, agrees to write to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for energy and climate change asking that:

- 1 The tariff is reduced progressively to enable the industry and householders to adjust. NO reductions before April 2012.
- 2 A community Tariff for social housing providers is established, excluding them from the proposed multi-user lower rate.
- 3 That the Local Government Association be copied into any correspondence to help in their lobbying work with the Government."

The Mayor reported that, due to the time limits of the consultation period in respect of this matter, he had agreed that this motion should be dispensed with at the meeting, this being conducive to the despatch of business.

The Environment Portfolio Holder suggested a number of additions to the motion, as set out below and the mover and seconder accepted these additions:-

RESOLVED

That the motion be approved, subject to the following additional requests to Government:-

1. That the Government be asked to consider that any further reduction in the feed in tariffs be linked to the costs of installation, rather than by the arbitrary application of a percentage reduction.
2. That the Government be asked to consider amending the proposal for a further 20% reduction in tariffs for aggregated FITs (multiple FIT ownership), to ensure that this does not apply to community schemes that are wholly to the benefit of communities and

vulnerable groups i.e those funded by local Councils, community groups and/or social enterprises.

3. That the Government be asked to consider an exemption of public buildings from any reduction in the tariff rate, to allow for income generation in the support of other energy efficiency initiatives required to meet Government renewable energy targets.

72 RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET - SHADOW HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consideration was given to the recommendation from Cabinet regarding the approval of the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board Terms of Reference.

RESOLVED

That the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board Terms of Reference be referred back to the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board and Cabinet for further consideration.

73 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE RESOURCES PORTFOLIO HOLDER - COUNCIL TAX BASE

Consideration was given to the recommendation from the Resources Portfolio Holder regarding the setting of the Council Tax Base.

RESOLVED

That, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the amount calculated by Cheshire East Council as its Council Tax Base for the year 2012/13 is:
for the whole area – 146,807.37
for each Parish area, as set out in Appendix A to the report.

74 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE STRATEGIC PLANNING BOARD - NOTICE OF MOTION RELATING TO THE PHOTOVOLTAIC ROOF PANEL SCHEME

Consideration was given to the recommendation from the Strategic Planning Board regarding a Notice of Motion submitted to the Council meeting on 13 October 2011, which suggested that the Council should notify any enquirers that planning permission was not required for the installation of Photovoltaic Roof Panels and to cease to require details, drawings or charges except for listed buildings or conservation areas for which permission is still required.

Part 40 of the Town & Country Planning (General Development Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) granted extensive permitted development rights to householders wishing to establish solar panels on their property. In most cases planning permission was,

therefore, not required. However planning consent may be required if the solar panels exceeded a certain size or occupied a certain position either on or within the grounds of a property. These parameters were clearly detailed within the specific legislation but were also simplified on the Council's website where residents could access links to an interactive 'virtual' house.

The Constitution Committee had recommended that the Council should continue to adopt the approach as advocated within the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order.

RESOLVED

That the Council continue to adopt the approach as advocated within the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order.

75 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE - NOTICE OF MOTION RELATING TO THE RESCISSION OF OFFICER DELEGATED POWERS RELATING TO CAR PARKING CHARGES

Consideration was given to the recommendation from the Constitution Committee regarding a Notice of Motion, which had been submitted to the Council meeting on 13 October 2011, relating to the proposed rescission of Officer Delegated Powers Relating to Car Parking Charges.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Constitution be amended to provide that decisions relating to the variation of off-street parking places charges be made by the relevant Cabinet Member at a Portfolio Holder meeting; and
- (2) That the Borough Solicitor be authorised to make such changes to the Constitution as she considers necessary.

76 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE - NOTICE OF MOTION RELATING TO LOCAL SERVICE DELIVERY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP (INCLUDING APPROVAL OF TERMS OF REFERENCE)

Consideration was given to the recommendation from the Constitution Committee regarding a Notice of Motion submitted to the Council meeting on 13 October 2011, relating to the Local Service Delivery Committee membership and also to the approval of Terms of Reference for the Local Service Delivery Committees.

An amendment to refer this matter back to the Constitution Committee for further consideration and to report back to the next meeting of the Council was moved and seconded and declared carried.

RESOLVED

That this matter be referred back to the Constitution Committee for further consideration, with a report back to the next meeting of the Council.

77 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE - CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2012/13

Consideration was given to the recommendation from the Constitution Committee regarding approval of the Calendar of Meetings 2012/13.

In considering the Calendar, Members made several suggestions, including a request that provision be made for the migration of Calendar dates into Members' electronic calendars, early publication of the Council diary, inclusion of Police and Fire Authority Meeting dates and a note to say that all planning site visits would be on the Friday before the relevant Committee meeting. Members also asked for consideration to be given to later start times for Portfolio Holder meetings, that some meetings take place in the evening to enable those members who worked and had young children to attend and that consideration be given to holding all Council meetings at Congleton Town Hall, it being a more central location for most Members.

The Chairman of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, Cllr Findlow, reported a change to the date of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee from 10 July to 20 July 2012.

RESOLVED

That, subject to consideration of the above matters and the change in date of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee from 10th to 20th July 2012, the Calendar of Meetings for 2012-2013 be approved.

78 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE - APPOINTMENT TO FILL THE VACANCY FOR A PARISH REPRESENTATIVE ON THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to the recommendation from the Standards Committee regarding an appointment to fill the Vacancy for a Parish Representative on the Committee.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Barbara Lawton, of Odd Rode Parish Council, be appointed to Cheshire East Council Standards Committee, as a Parish Member for the same term of office as existing Parish Members.

79 MEMBER MILEAGE RATES

Consideration was given to a report which recommended changes to mileage rates which may be claimed by Members of the Council. This followed the recent collective agreement which had resulted in a reduction of the mileage rates which may be claimed by officers of this Council from those set out in the NJC Agreement. The majority of Group Leaders supported a reduction in the mileage rate which may be claimed by Members, notwithstanding that the current scheme which linked the rates payable to the NJC scheme.

RESOLVED

That the current Scheme of Members' Allowances be amended to reflect the following mileage rates which may be claimed by Members of the Council:

Miles per annum	451-999 cc	1000+ cc
Per mile, first 8,500	46.9p	52.2p
Per mile, after 8,500	13.7p	14.4p

That the above rates shall apply to all claims for reimbursement of the cost of travel, with effect from 1st December 2011.

That the Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer be authorised to make consequential changes to the Scheme of Members' Allowances, which forms part of the Constitution.

80 SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES - MID YEAR REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report, which brought forward Cabinet recommendations for Supplementary Estimates, contained within the Mid Year Review of Performance report for Council approval.

RESOLVED

- 1 That a Supplementary Revenue Estimate of up to £860,000 to be met from general reserves to meet one-off costs of the Pay Harmonisation package in 2011-12, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report be approved.
- 2 That a Supplementary Capital Estimate/Virement of over £1,000,000 for Church Lawton School, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report, be approved.

81 QUESTIONS

The Following questions had been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 11:-

Question 1 from Cllr B Murphy to the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services

Refuse Collection on 30 November 2011

Whilst we are grateful to our employees who ensured the delivery of services on 30th November and, at the same time, we acknowledge and respect the right of those who took industrial action on a matter of legitimate concern, why did the Council not have a contingency plan to avoid inconvenience and anxiety to taxpayers by ensuring the continuation of vital public health services to them, in particular the collection of putrescent refuse material in the Tytherington and Bollinbrook and other places in Cheshire East?

Response

The industrial action affected a significant number of households across the Borough and that meant it was impossible to catch up on the missed collections without disrupting many other residents within the Borough whose collections were scheduled for the subsequent days. In transforming our waste collection services over the past few months we have moved to a completely new system and the collection rounds have been designed to optimise collection efficiency, based on a fortnightly collection. To introduce additional collections over and above the fortnightly cycle would increase operational costs and this is an area that the Council has tried very hard to reduce.

To provide additional collections to catch up, the added work would need to be done either after the normal working day or at weekends. This work would then be classed as overtime and this is paid at a higher rate than normal working time. This means that there would be additional revenue pressure on Council budgets to provide additional collections and any savings in salary costs resulting from the day of industrial action would be more than offset by the cost of paying overtime.

Furthermore, there would have been practical barriers to managing and disposing of the waste if it were collected during the week after a normal day's work or at weekends eg the opening times of the landfill sites and garden waste deposition sites.

Although we were unable to catch up on the normal waste collection services, if we were made aware of any residents who had specific needs, e.g people who were extremely ill and had no way of disposing of extra waste themselves – and were in severe difficulty, we did our very best to assist them.

The plan for this week is collect all waste materials placed out for collection on 14 December 2011 as this coincides with the fortnightly

collection schedule for those properties affected by the industrial action. A memo has been issued to all front line staff to this effect.

Supplementary Question

Cllr Murphy asked, in view of the likelihood of further industrial action, whether this matter could be referred to the Staffing Committee for further discussion.

Question 2 from Cllr D Brickhill to the Cabinet Member for Procurement and Shared Services

Places Payroll

Please account for the massive 66% increase in the Places payroll from £33M pa to £55M pa following this year's reorganisation when several non statutory functions were taken in to the Directorate.

Response

The pay budget for Places and Organisational Capacity has increased due to the Council's restructure of services across the Council's Corporate Management Team. Following consultation a number of services have been transferred to the Places and Organisational Capacity Directorate and this has more than doubled the headcount within the Directorate.

All of these services previously existed elsewhere within the Council's structures':-

- Performance and Capacity
 - Communications
 - Partnerships & Performance
 - Customer Services
 - Libraries
- Leisure, Culture, Libraries and Greenspaces
 - Leisure Services
 - Public Rights of Way & Countryside Management
 - Greenspaces
 - Cultural Facilities and Arts
- Assets
 - CE Cleaning
 - Facilities Management
 - Property
 - Projects
- Organisational Improvement

Supplementary Question

Cllr Brickhill asked whether it could be assumed that virtually all the increase was for non-statutory services and Councillor Mason, in response, stated that he did not think so, but there would be significant savings and that fourteen senior management posts have already been taken out of the structure.

Question 3 from Cllr P Nurse to the Cabinet Member for Adult Services

Deaths from Cold Weather and Fuel Poverty

What estimate does the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services have of the number of elderly persons who died in the winter of 2010-2011 in Cheshire East from conditions of cold weather and inability to heat their homes?

What action is the Portfolio Holder taking to identify vulnerable elderly persons, who suffer from fuel poverty, so that they can receive help to stay warm and alive?

Response

Every year, Cheshire East sees a 20% rise in the number of deaths between December and March compared to the remainder of the year. This equates to about 55 additional deaths in each of these four months.

About a third of these deaths are due to cardiovascular disease. Cold weather causes the blood to thicken, which increases the risk of death from heart attack or stroke in people who have pre-existing cardiovascular disease. Cold weather also lowers people's resistance to influenza infection, which is an important contributor to excess winter mortality. Flu is dangerous for people of all ages who have chronic medical conditions, as they are eleven times more likely than healthy people to die if they catch the infection.

In order to reduce the number of winter deaths, many more people need to have their annual influenza jab (as at the end of November 2011, over 45% of people with chronic medical conditions and 23% of people aged 65 and over had still not attended for their flu jab). Protective measures against cold should initially be targeted to those who are clinically most at risk, some of whom will be in younger age groups. These protective measures include maintaining indoor warmth, and also actions to minimise the risk of becoming cold when outdoors.

The Authority is currently working with partners to finalise its cold weather plan (in response to the Government's Cold Weather Plan for England

2011/12, the first co-ordinated plan supported by the Met Office Cold Weather Alert Service). The aims of the plan are to reduce winter mortality in vulnerable people through appropriate preparation and alerts.

The plan encourages local areas to mobilise civil society so that neighbours, friends, relatives and individuals themselves seek to protect against avoidable harm to health in the winter. Additionally it aims to reduce the pressure on the health and social care system during the busiest months of the year through better co-ordinated preparation, and anticipatory actions when routinely interacting with vulnerable people. Partners are sharing information on vulnerable people to ensure that those most at risk are clearly identified

We have a Stay Warm, Stay Well, Stay Safe campaign and regular media alerts to raise the profile of local services and what local communities can do to identify and support those who are vulnerable. This information is available today and will be in Members Brief as well.

Supplementary Question

Cllr Nurse asked whether the Portfolio Holder considered that the reduction of £50 in the winter fuel allowance per household would result in an increase in the number of deaths. Cllr Domleo responded that, unfortunately, he did not have this information.

Question 4 from Cllr D Flude to the Cabinet Member for Safer and Stronger Communities

The Proposed Gypsy / Traveller Site, Parkers Road, Crewe

The residents of Crewe East have petitioned the Council [1500 names] and held a public meeting with their MP Edward Timpson opposing the Council's proposed Gypsy /Traveller site at Parkers Road.

When is the planning application for this site going to be considered by the Strategic Board?

Response

The planning application for the proposed Gypsy and Travellers Site has not yet been submitted. It is being finalised at present and we expect it to be submitted shortly after we have had the opportunity to circulate more information on the proposal to the local community.

Once the application has been received, we anticipate it will be determined at a meeting of the Strategic Planning Board approximately eight weeks after the date of submission.

Question 5 from Cllr D Flude to the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services

Wardens Queens Park Crewe

The Friends of Queens Park Crewe recently presented to this Council a petition in regard to their concerns about the safety of visitors to the park relating to the reduction of park wardens.

Concerns were also raised by local primary school pupils attending a Democracy Day at the Municipal Buildings in Crewe who stated that they did not feel safe in the Park now that the Park Wardens are not patrolling.

Recently members of the public have been locked in the park at closing time!

The questions listed below are raised after consultation with the Friends:

What is the cost to this Council for the Private Security Company who are contracted to open and close the Park?

Who does the secondary cleaning of the public toilets?

Who is patrolling the area of the park and adjacent Tipkinder area?

Who is providing the safety checks and litter clearance at the adjacent BMX track?

Who is doing the daily inspection of the playground equipment in the Park?

Who is monitoring the 4.5 acres of the park lake, and who is providing safety cover?

Who is combating any antisocial behaviour?

Other concerns are drug and alcohol abusers and inappropriate sexual behaviour in toilets, who is doing regular visits to combat these behaviours?

Cllr Flude indicated that she was content to receive a written response to her question, which would be circulated to all Members of the Council.

Question 6 from Cllr S Jones to the Cabinet Member for Adult Services

Care Quality Commission

The Care Quality Commission has admitted in the press that they have only completed half of inspections planned for the past twelve months. The reports about the variable standards of quality in both residential and domiciliary care for the elderly are a matter of serious concern. At Full Council in July 2011, Cllr Rod Fletcher proposed a Notice of Motion on my behalf which asked the Chief Executive of Cheshire East to write to the Care Quality Commission expressing our concerns about their lack of capacity to fulfil their inspection role and the impact this was having on the

quality of residential and domiciliary care being provided for our elderly residents in Cheshire East. Copies of this letter were to be sent to all Cheshire East MPs. Has this letter been sent and have any replies been received?

The Notice of Motion asked for a Task/Finish group to be set up to scrutinise the inspection of care services in Cheshire East to ensure that our contracts were being honoured and that the Authority is receiving value for money as well as for those people purchasing their own care packages.

The Government is very concerned about the number of complaints being received about poor quality services being provided to the elderly. They are planning to introduce a points system based on comments received by both clients and their families to grade care homes. Surely we should be very wary of residential and nursing homes being treated like restaurants. Why is the Notice of Motion proposed in July not receiving the urgent attention it merits as the good quality of domiciliary care is central to our policy of aiming to help the elderly stay in their own homes as long as possible thus reducing the need for residential care.

Response

The Notice of Motion requested a task and finish group be set up to investigate this concern. This was remitted to the Local Safeguarding Adults Board who received this request at its November meeting. The independent chair of the Board with officer support will convene a multi agency group to prepare a response from the Board to this Notice of Motion. This will be convened early in the New Year. The Chief Executive would wish to review the outcome of this work before writing to Care Quality Commission and Cheshire East MP's. At a recent compliance meeting with Care Quality Commission, we were informed that Care Quality Commission were reporting an increase in inspections in our region and were on target to achieve 62.5%.

A task and finish group has also been established to scrutinise residential and nursing care home arrangements within the Borough. This will be considering both the quality and cost of such services. In addition to this our Supporting People and Contracting team are visiting all provision in a planned way to carry out mini checks on basic elements such as registration, staffing. To date they have visited 47 homes out of 93 as well as 17 domiciliary care providers out of 78 this is additional to registration inspections. Where we have safeguarding concerns with homes we work in partnership with Care Quality Commission and other specialists such as infection control, fire, environmental health. LINKs also have an Enter and View role and work with Care Quality Commission. This approach provides local monitoring as well as regulatory inspection both of which are important.

I have great sympathy with Cllr Jones's complaint about the delay in getting some action following the Motion being moved in July 2011. It would appear to be a common problem with all Notices of Motion, and I will raise the matter formally to see what can be done to speed up the handling of Notices of Motion

Supplementary Question

Cllr Jones requested to be kept informed of the outcomes in respect of this Notice of Motion.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 5.15 pm

Councillor R West (Chairman)
CHAIRMAN