

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee**
held on Thursday, 7th July, 2011 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor H Murray (Chairman)
Councillor M Grant (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors A Barratt, L Brown, D Hough, J Jackson, W Livesley, M Parsons,
G Wait and J Wray

Apologies

Councillors G Barton and P Raynes

105 **ALSO PRESENT**

Councillor S Gardiner, substitute for Councillor P Raynes
Councillor Rachel Bailey, Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities
Councillor L Smetham, Cabinet Support Member
Councillor P Hoyland, visitor
Emily Lam, Representative of the Police Authority

106 **OFFICERS PRESENT**

J Blackburn, Partnerships and Performance Manager
D J French, Scrutiny Officer
M Grime, Lead Emergency Planning Officer,
T Potts, Community Safety Manager
Wayne Ashdown, Highways Officer, Emergency Planning Team
Alastair Davies, Jacobs

107 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 June be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

108 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/WHIPPING DECLARATIONS**

RESOLVED: that the following declaration of interest be noted:

- Councillor M Grant personal interest on the grounds that she was a member of the Citizens Advice Bureau.

109 **PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN**

There were no members of the public present who wished to address the Committee.

The Committee considered a report of the Lead Emergency Planning Officer on the preparation of a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PRFA). The Council was the Lead Local Flood authority (LLFA) under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and had a duty to prepare such an Assessment, which was a high level screening exercise in order to determine whether there was a significant local flood risk within the LLFA boundary based on historic and potential future flood risk data. The document had been approved by the Portfolio Holder and submitted to the Environment Agency; it was now submitted to the Scrutiny Committee for information and endorsement.

The Council had been given £124,700 by the Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for the purpose of delivering the new Act and £176,500 for future years. The four Councils in Cheshire along with St Helens Council had formed a strategic alliance to undertake common and collaborative working wherever possible, including match funding a grant for £30,000 from the Environment Agency to employ Jacobs Engineering for the purpose of delivering a PFRA for each Council.

The Environment Agency had produced a National Flood Map that identified ten national Indicative Flood Risk areas where clusters of population greater than 30,000 people were located within an area of flood risk above prescribed national thresholds. There were none such areas in Cheshire East but there were some locally significant Flood Risk Areas for which a Local Flood Management Strategy was required. Currently, officers were collating historic data about flood risk areas with a view to a Surface Water Management Plan being available around the end of the year. Officers were aware of flood risks arising from rivers but were now looking at risks associated with surface water run off, ground water flooding and canals.

During the discussion Members of the Committee were advised that the format of the report was prescriptive and much of the content was to set the scene rather than give detail. The next stage was to develop a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Surface Water Plan and both these documents would give more detail including causes of flooding and possible solutions. This would be reported to the Committee around September.

RESOLVED: that

- (a) the officers be thanked for the information;
- (b) the comments of the Councillors made at the meeting be noted; and
- (c) the Committee looks forward to a further report in September with a greater focus on risk and priorities in Cheshire East.

The Committee considered a report of the Performance and Partnerships Manager updating Members on the funding to the Community and Voluntary Sector.

The report outlined the background which was that a cross directorate working group had been set up in July 2010 to undertake the following tasks:

- Gather a list of all current funding support for community and voluntary sector organisations, both grants and commissioning;
- Agree how to consult with the sector as part of the business planning process for 2011/12 using existing mechanisms as much as possible;
- Agree the Council's approach to funding for the sector for 2011/14.

The group had prepared a comprehensive spreadsheet identifying all third sector organisations and their current funding arrangements; this was circulated to the Committee. This showed that the Council provided funding to approximately 160 community, voluntary and not for profit groups to a total level of around £6.3 million. Following this work a number of improvements were introduced:

- A number of funding arrangements were transferred from one service to another;
- Where joint funding arrangements existed, Directorates involved had agreed a joint approach to funding;
- Joint work with the Primary Care Trust had been undertaken to identify joint funding arrangements for a number of community and voluntary groups;
- Communication was coordinated and good practice shared.

The next steps included:

- The funding list – this would be improved by the provision of a clear summary of the service/project provided through the funding; identifying where the funding came from, the geographical area covered by the service/project, and a lead officer for each individual funding stream;
- Contract and performance management – consistent practices would be established across all directorates;
- Improved understanding of the sector in Cheshire East and improved communication – “market testing” was being undertaken by services to better understand what services/projects could be provided by local organisations and how current service provision could be improved. This would enable the sector to develop its role as a partner in developing solutions rather than simply responding to commissioning requests from the Council.

During the debate on the report the following issues/questions were raised:

- The role and funding available from the Community Grants fund, which it was believed was £90,000;
- Why the Citizens Advice Bureau appeared on different pages on the funding list? In response the Committee was advised that some of the funding would relate to commissioned services and some would relate to infrastructure, however, all CAB services were now funded by the Adults, Community, Health and Wellbeing Directorate;
- Why Nantwich appeared to receive funding for various activities and events including the Jazz Festival and Nantwich in Bloom? In response,

the Committee was advised that some funding was due to legacy reasons;

- It was noted that on page 4 of the funding list, funding for Home Start and Making Space should read 0% as funding levels had not been reduced;
- It was suggested that where organisations had had their funding removed, an explanation should be offered;
- In relation to a query regarding funding for Women's Aid, Members were advised that Children and Families Directorate were reviewing their commissioned services and the provider was still to be confirmed.

RESOLVED: that

(a) the report be received; and

(b) a further report be made to the Committee in October 2011, updating on the following matters:

- the current position with funding for the community and voluntary sector;
- the Community Grants fund – including the decision making process for their allocation and officer responsibility.

112 REVIEW OF LAPS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee received a presentation from the Performance and Partnerships Manager on Local Area Partnerships (LAPs) and community support arrangements.

The Committee was advised that LAPs were about people working together in the local area with the focus on getting things done.

LAPs brought together a wide range of people from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. By working together, they focused collective effort on delivering improved outcomes for local people and places.

Their role was to:

1. improve services
2. ensure people influenced decision making
3. actively engage and empower communities.

There were 7 LAPs in Cheshire East and they varied in population size. Each LAP had an Area Plan focusing on specific issues within its locality; for example areas of focus in the Congleton LAP included anti-social behaviour and community safety and in Crewe the focus was on environmental projects.

RESOLVED: that the update be received.

113 CCTV RELOCATION

The Committee received a report of the Community Safety Manager on the current position with the relocation of the CCTV control room. Following Local Government Reorganisation, Cheshire East Council had inherited 3 independent CCTV systems which it was proposed to relocate and harmonise into one at Macclesfield in a new suite as part of the ICT/CCTV Capital Programme.

The control room at Crewe had now been relocated to Macclesfield following a requirement to vacate its former premises. The control room at Sandbach was relocated to Macclesfield on 30 June. There had been a short period of a few hours when CCTV coverage had not been maintained during both moves but the local Police had been aware of this. The CCTV service would move into a new control room at Macclesfield in November and full benefits and cost savings would be achieved.

RESOLVED: That

- (a) the update be received;
- (b) all members of the Committee be invited to visit the CCTV control room at Macclesfield; and
- (c) an update on the visit be made to the next meeting of the Committee.

114 **WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Committee reviewed its current Work Programme. Members asked for clarification on Council funding for the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).

RESOLVED: That

(a) the following items be added onto the Work Programme:

- Customer access/services – update on how the service is working, including targets and improvements and improvements to the phone directory, also possible future site visit to the customer service centre;
- Road safety provision – update to the meeting in October;
- Hidden Treasures – role of the faith sector – to be added as a “possible item” and

(b) information be circulated to the Committee and E Lam clarifying the funding issues for PCSOs raised at the meeting.

115 **FORWARD PLAN - EXTRACTS**

The Committee considered the current Forward Plan and Members asked for clarification on item CE10/11-62, Transfer and Devolution of Services and Functions to Town and Parish Councils.

RESOLVED: that an update on this matter be made to the next meeting following consideration by Cabinet on 1 August.

The meeting commenced at 11.00 am and concluded at 12.55 pm

Councillor H Murray (Chairman)