

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Outside Organisations Sub-Committee**
held on Wednesday, 2nd March, 2011 at Delamere House, Delamere Street,
Crewe

PRESENT

Councillor S Jones

Councillors R Cartlidge, J P Findlow and P Whiteley

APOLOGIES

Councillors D Brickhill

OFFICER

Carol Jones Democratic Services Officer

6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

7 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

In accordance with Procedure Rules Nos. 11 and 35, a total period of 10 minutes was allocated for members of the public to address the Sub-Committee on any matter relevant to its work.

There were no members of the public present.

8 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 September 2010 be approved as a correct record.

9 OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - VARIOUS MATTERS

The Sub-Committee considered a report which covered various matters associated with appointments to outside organisations as follows:

- (a) the removal from the schedule of outside organisations three organisations which were currently listed and refer them to Annual Council for appointment on the basis that they were internal, or shared services committees/panels;
- (b) appointments to casual vacancies;

- (c) review of the Casual Vacancies Procedure which had been approved by the former Governance and Constitution Committee;
- (d) review of the appointments criteria and make any amendments necessary;
- (e) recommend to the Constitution Committee a procedure for adding new requests to the list of approved outside organisations;
- (f) consider two new requests;
- (g) note that the Guidance for Members Appointed to Outside Organisations had been finalised by Legal Services and issued to all Members;
- (h) note progress in respect of Officer representation on outside organisations;
- (j) note the update in respect of monitoring of effectiveness of representation on outside organisations; and
- (k) approve the procedure for making appointments for 2011-2012.

9.1 Adoption Panel, Cheshire Admissions Forum, Fostering Panel

An Officer review of the schedule of outside organisations had been undertaken. As a consequence of that review, three organisations had been identified as not falling within the category of “outside organisation” (the Adoption Panel, Cheshire Admissions Forum and the Fostering Panel). The Sub-committee agreed that it would be more appropriate for Council to make appointments to these as part of the annual Committee appointments process.

9.2 Appointments to Casual Vacancies

There was a vacancy on Crewe and Nantwich Twinning Association (CANTA) following the resignation of Councillor E Howell.

The Sub-Committee agreed that this vacancy should be dealt with as part of the appointments process for 2011/2012.

Councillor Keegan was one of the Council’s representatives on The Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), but had been unable to attend meetings for some time. Councillor S Wilkinson had been attending on his behalf and to regularise the situation, the Sub-Committee agreed to make a formal nomination of Councillor Wilkinson to replace Councillor Keegan.

Councillors D N Bebbington, D J Cannon and A Thwaite had been appointed to Dial-a-Ride and Community Transport in March 2009. At that time, it was understood that these two organisations were one organisation with two branches. However, following the appointments, information was received indicating that they were in fact two separately operated and funded organisations operating in Cheshire East. Dial-a-Ride covered Crewe, Nantwich and Congleton; and Community Transport covered Macclesfield.

The organisations advised that they would each prefer to have two elected Members appointed to them. This was accepted by the Governance and Constitution Committee on 30 September 2009, at which time, the Committee referred the matter to Cabinet recommending that both schemes be re-designated as Category 1 on the basis that they were top-level strategic organisations which informed the Local Transport Plan. Councillor J Macrae, as the Portfolio Holder, agreed to review the situation.

Councillor Bebbington had recently resigned from Dial-a-Ride, and this left Councillors D J Cannon and A Thwaite as the only two Councillors representing the Council on both Dial-a-Ride and Community Transport.

The Sub-Committee recommended that no action be taken to appoint other Members, pending the outcome of Councillor Macrae's review.

9.3 Casual Vacancies Procedure

On 9 March 2010, the former Governance and Constitution Committee approved a Procedure for Dealing with Casual Vacancies on outside organisations. This applied to all appointments not made by the Cabinet.

A suggested revision to the procedure was made and the Sub-Committee agreed to recommend it to the Constitution Committee for adoption for Category 2 organisations and also to commend it to Cabinet for adoption in respect of Category 1 organisations.

9.4 Review of Appointments Criteria

The Sub-Committee considered the criteria which had been adopted for deciding if an organisation should be considered for inclusion on the list of outside organisations.

No amendments were made to the criteria; however, Members considered that in respect of item 1 (e) (*"Where an approved organisation is ward-specific, the Member appointed should be from the appropriate Ward"*), the most practical means of agreeing representation would be for the Ward Councillors themselves to make the decision and this would take into account appropriate skills mix and experience. If no agreement could be reached, the Group Whips would make the decision.

The last paragraph of the section regarding potential conflict of interest required clarification and this would be provided at the next meeting.

9.5 Procedure for Adding Organisations to the Approved List

The decision as to whether an outside organisation should be included on either of the approved schedules (Category 1 or 2) was made in accordance with the appointments criteria. However, there was no formal process for **adding** organisations to either of the schedules. This had

previously been carried out informally by the Task Group and there was a need to formalise the process.

A suggested procedure was considered by the Sub-Committee which agreed to recommend it to the Constitution Committee for adoption.

9.6 Sandbach Town Plan Steering Group

The Chairman of the Sandbach Plan Steering Group had written to the Chief Executive of Cheshire East Council requesting that a councillor be appointed to the Steering Group which had been established to produce a town plan for Sandbach.

Councillor Barry Moran had played an active role in the process to date and the Group had requested that he be appointed as the Council's representative.

The Sub-Committee agreed that further information was required and that the Steering Group should be asked why Council representation was a requirement. This matter would be considered again at the next meeting.

9.7 Holmes Chapel Partnership

Holmes Chapel Partnership had been established to enable the Holmes Chapel community to create an improved environment for those who lived and worked in the area. The Partnership had requested that one representative of Cheshire East Council be appointed; the appointee would become a member of the Executive Committee.

The Partnership had provided a copy of its constitution which was currently being inspected by Legal Services.

The Sub-Committee agreed to recommend the inclusion of the Partnership on the Category 2 list of outside organisations and to recommend the appointment of one Member.

9.8 Guidance for Members Appointed to Outside Organisations

The Sub-Committee (and the former Task Group) had recognised the need for a guidance document for Members appointed to outside organisations. Members had previously considered a number of drafts, the last one of which had been edited by Legal Services and presented to Members at a training session. Legal Services had now reviewed the document and was satisfied that it represented an appropriate guidance for Members. The document had been issued to all Members.

9.9 Officer Representation on Outside Bodies

Members of the former Task Group had requested a list of Officers who had been appointed to outside organisations. This had been provided for Members at which time further information was requested to confirm that the named Officers attended meetings of those organisations. The work had not yet been completed.

The Sub-Committee expressed the view that as the nomination of Officers to support Members was a commitment in the Guidance for Members, viz *"[Democratic Services will] ensure that a robust support system is in place for Members appointed to outside bodies. Wherever possible, a Cheshire East Council support officer will be allocated to each outside body; the role of the Officer will be that of a specialist to offer advice on the topic area of the outside body to which individual Members have been appointed."* it was imperative that the list be finalised before the appointments for 2011-2012 were made.

The Corporate Management Team would be asked to assist in the identification of named Officers for each organisation. An update would be provided at the April meeting.

9.10 Monitoring Effectiveness/Appropriateness of Representation

As part of the review to inform the appointments for 2011-2012, monitoring forms had been issued to all Members appointed to outside organisations. A low response rate had been achieved and additional forms had been sent to non-responders.

An update would be provided at the April meeting.

9.11 Appointments Process – 2011-2012

Appointments for 2011-2012 were expected to be made by the Constitution Committee at its meeting to be held on 2 June 2011.

Following the establishment of the political proportionality of the Council after the elections on 5 May, and the appointment of Committees and Sub-Committees at Annual Council on 18 May 2011, a meeting of the Sub-Committee would be held at the earliest opportunity to enable recommendations to be made to the Constitution Committee.

9.12 April Meeting

At its April meeting, the Sub-Committee would review the current list of outside bodies, taking into account the feedback from Councillors.

RESOLVED

(A) That the Constitution Committee be recommended

- (a) to refer to Annual Council, the appointment of representatives to the Adoption Panel, Cheshire Admissions Forum and the Fostering Panel;
- (b) to decline to appoint to the Crewe and Nantwich Twinning Association until appointments for 2011-2012 are made;
- (c) to appoint Councillor S Wilkinson to the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) to serve for the remainder of the Municipal Year;
- (d) to decline to appoint to Dial-a-Ride and Community Transport at the present time, pending the outcome of the Portfolio Holder's review of the arrangements for appointments to these organisations;
- (e) to adopt the revised Casual Vacancies Procedure and commend it to Cabinet for application to all Category 1 organisations;
- (f) to recommend the adoption of the procedure for dealing with new requests for representation on outside organisations;
- (g) to recommend the inclusion of the Holmes Chapel Partnership as a Category 2 outside organisation and the appointment of one Member to it;
- (h) to note that the Guide for Members Appointed to Outside Organisations has been finalised and issued to all Members; and
- (i) to note the arrangements for the appointments process for 2011-2012.

(B) That enquiries be made of Sandbach Town Plan Steering Group about the need for Council representation.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED

That the next meeting of the Sub-Committee be held on 20 April 2011 at 10.00 am.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 11.10 am

Councillor (none)