

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet**
held on Tuesday, 21st April, 2015 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor M Jones (Chairman)
Councillor D Brown (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Rachel Bailey, J Clowes, J P Findlow, L Gilbert, B Moran,
P Raynes, D Stockton and D Topping

Members in Attendance

Councillors Rhoda Bailey, G Baxendale, D Bebbington, L Brown, R Cartlidge,
S Corcoran, K Edwards, I Faseyi, D Flude, M Grant, P Groves, S Hogben, J
Jackson, L Jeuda, W Livesley, D Marren, R Menlove, A Moran, D Newton, M
Simon, A Thwaite, J Weatherill and S Wilkinson

Officers in Attendance

Mike Suarez, Lorraine Butcher, P Bates, Anita Bradley, Caroline Simpson,
Tony Crane, Heather Grimbaldeston, Stephanie Cordon and Paul Mountford

160 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

161 **PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION**

Edward Timpson asked if the Council had any plans for improving the parking arrangements in Crewe town centre. The Leader replied that public consultation would be taking place around June with a view to introducing some free parking in Crewe town centre this year, time limited (number of hours) to encourage town centre footfall.

Sarah Pochin asked how confident the Council was that the new jobs it anticipated for Crewe would be delivered. The Leader replied that he was confident that the jobs could be delivered but he felt that this could depend on the outcome of the forthcoming general election.

Jonathan Sutton asked why the Council needed to support financially the delivery of a new town centre for Crewe, and what benefit this would have for Cheshire East. The Leader replied that a resurgent Crewe would benefit the whole of Cheshire East economically and financially.

162 **QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS**

Councillor Sam Corcoran asked if the Leader and Cabinet would join him in declaring the use of off-shore companies to avoid paying tax as morally

repugnant. The Leader agreed that investing offshore to avoid tax was morally wrong but that for people living offshore this was very different. Councillor Peter Raynes, Portfolio Holder for Finance, added that whilst he agreed with the sentiment of Councillor Corcoran's question and felt it was a cross-party issue, there were some legitimate reasons for having an offshore company and therefore it was important to be careful when discussing the issue.

Councillor Mo Grant asked where the funding would come from to build new social housing if existing housing association houses were sold off under a new right to buy scheme. The Leader replied that people living in housing association houses should have the right to buy them and that it was a matter of aspiration and choice. He hoped the income from such sales would enable housing associations to build more houses.

Councillor Laura Jeuda referred to an urgent report to Cabinet on Macclesfield town centre which had been copied to local members the evening before the Cabinet meeting. She asked why it was being considered by Cabinet just 16 days before the election of a Macclesfield town council. The Leader replied that the intention of the report was to start the process of consulting local people.

Councillor Steve Hogben referred to a requirement for Cheshire East to provide 1,400 affordable homes every year and asked how the Council was going to meet that target, particularly in light of the proposed right to buy scheme for housing association houses. In replying, Councillor Raynes reserved his position on the figure quoted for affordable housing but commented that the Council set a policy for what percentage of new housing should be affordable, and therefore the way to provide more affordable housing would be to increase the overall house building rate.

Councillor Ken Edwards sought clarification of where the Council had got to with its review of the Local Plan Strategy Submission. He asked if the work done to date would be published so that Members could consider it before a decision was taken on whether or not to go back into the submission process. The Leader replied that the Council was currently consulting neighbouring authorities and that discussions would not be concluded until after the pre-election period. He was confident that the right process would be delivered on time and would come forward to Members.

163 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 31st March 2015 be approved as a correct record.

164 **NOTICE OF MOTION - AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN CHESHIRE EAST**

Cabinet considered the following motion which had been moved by Councillor L Jeuda and seconded by Councillor M Grant at the Council meeting on 26th February 2015 and referred to Cabinet for consideration:

“Cheshire East will resist the Government’s recent policy of allowing property developers to ‘opt out’ of providing affordable homes when submitting planning applications.”

Cheshire East Council needed to consider applications in accordance with all appropriate policies, national guidance, and on their relative merits, in accordance with planning law.

RESOLVED

That

1. for the reasons set out in the report, the motion be rejected;
2. the Council consider applications in accordance with all appropriate policies and not ‘opt out’ of policy guidance but consider all applications on their relative merits; and
3. where a conflict exists between the Council’s Interim Statement on the Provision of Affordable Housing and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), the determination of applications should be in accordance with the NPPG and not require provision of affordable housing on sites of 10-units or less, which have a maximum combined gross floor space of no more than 1000sqm (gross internal area), unless the failure to provide affordable housing renders the scheme unsustainable in the overall planning balance.

165 **NOTICE OF MOTION - PLANNING POLICY ON METHOD STATEMENTS**

Cabinet considered the following motion which had been moved by Councillor B Murphy and seconded by Councillor M Parsons at the Council meeting on 26th February 2015 and referred to Cabinet for consideration:

“The Council requests the production of a planning protocol to ensure Method Statements entailed in Planning Applications contain a “neighbourhood impact appraisal” and that the Statement should be submitted to affected ward members at pre-application discussion stage when applicable.”

Construction Method Statements were not available at pre-application stage and it would be unreasonable to require them be submitted before consent was given.

The Council's website had recently been further developed to make this and other information regarding planning applications more accessible for members. Further amendments to the system could be made to provide email alerts to ward members when applications for the discharge of conditions were received, thereby giving members the opportunity of commenting on the details.

RESOLVED

That for the reasons set out in the report, the motion be rejected but, in the interest of openness and transparency in decision-making, Cabinet agrees to the modification of the planning management system as soon as it practicably possible to provide for the automatic notification of ward members of the receipt of applications for the discharge of conditions.

166

NOTICE OF MOTION - NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

Cabinet considered the following motion which had been moved by Councillor J Jackson and seconded by Councillor S Hogben at the Council meeting on 26th February 2015 and referred to Cabinet for consideration:

"This Council fully supports the practical introduction of Neighbourhood Plans for identifiable communities in Cheshire East. Given the perceived weakness of current, extant Borough Plans and the lack of an established new Cheshire East Local Plan, Council recognises that fully endorsed and adopted Neighbourhood Plans offer some appropriate guidance and protection in relation to the development of local communities.

The Council will therefore:

*continue to support the current programme of supported Neighbourhood Planning;
invite further interest from local communities in pursuing Neighbourhood Plans on an annual basis;
set up, in accordance with available resources, a rolling programme of supported Neighbourhood Planning;
continue with this rolling programme after the Cheshire East Local Plan is adopted and in place."*

A full work programme supporting neighbourhood planning in Cheshire East was already underway, placing Cheshire East at the forefront of neighbourhood planning. Additional financial assistance to support the programme was already in place and the Council had established a grant scheme to offer financial support of up to £7,000 to communities preparing neighbourhood plans.

RESOLVED

That the motion be rejected for the reason that the Council already has a full programme of activity in place to support Neighbourhood Plans as set out in the report.

167 **CREWE TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION DELIVERY FRAMEWORK FOR GROWTH**

Cabinet considered a report on a draft Crewe Town Centre Regeneration Framework for Growth.

The Framework was attached as Appendix 1 to the report and set out a vision for the immediate future of Crewe town centre ahead of the opportunities that could emerge from HS2. As well as the physical development of key sites, the Framework recognised the need to ensure that the public realm was enhanced and that provision was made for improving the use of green spaces in the town.

The Framework identified three priority actions requiring consideration: the tightening of planning policy to strengthen the position of the town centre in competition with out-of-centre locations; the opportunity to acquire key town centre properties to help deliver the regeneration of the town centre; and taking forward options for the provision of a bus interchange to improve accessibility by public transport for local residents.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. supports the strengthening of Crewe town centre in terms of its boundary and the range of uses within it, to ensure it can be more competitive against out-of-centre developments, with consolidation of the town centre's retail and leisure core;
2. considers and endorses the draft *Crewe Town Centre Regeneration Framework for Growth* report (Appendix 1 to the report), including the vision, objectives and action plan;
3. agrees to further consultation with key stakeholders prior to formal approval of the Framework by Cabinet, including specific consultation on the planning policy approach as identified below;
4. endorses the policy approach identified in the Framework report (Appendix 1 Para 5.19 – 5.26 and Para 11.9 - 11.15 of the report) that:
 - (i) from a planning perspective, the primary objective must be to protect the Town Centre from uses, within it and in the wider

area, that will undermine its vitality and viability as a Town Centre;

- (ii) supports a limited extension to the indicative Crewe town centre boundary, which includes the Tesco supermarket. This will inform the identification of the town centre boundary in the Site Allocations and Development Policies element of the Local Plan; and
 - (iii) sees the focus within the defined Town Centre being clearly on uses which support the Town Centre including retail, leisure, business and residential uses with each application being considered on its merits in terms of how it can support the objectives for the Town Centre. This is supported by policy EG5 (Promoting a Town Centre First Approach to Retail and Commerce) and Strategic Location SL 1 Central Crewe in the emerging Local Plan Strategy; and
5. notes that the development of the draft *Regeneration Delivery Framework for Growth*, in promoting the economic prosperity of Crewe town centre, has a direct relationship with residents and businesses across the wider South Cheshire area, including communities in the town's rural hinterland.

168 **STRATEGIC ACQUISITION - CREWE**

The Council had agreed terms for the acquisition of Royal Arcade Crewe. The Council was required to complete the acquisition as a matter of urgency to safeguard its best and final offer, due to other potential interest in the market. The acquisition had therefore been approved under urgency provisions.

Royal Arcade provided the most viable prospect of delivering a transformative leisure-led regeneration scheme within Crewe town centre. DTZ, an independent consultancy firm, had advised that there was potential leisure and retail operator demand, if a proposition could be developed with a measure of certainty with regards to delivery. The Council was best placed as a key stakeholder to lead in facilitating the regeneration of the site and the revival of the town centre.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet notes the following decision, taken under Cabinet Procedure Rule No 53 of the Council's Constitution:

1. to acquire the freehold of the 'Royal Arcade' property in Crewe town centre for £6.0m, and enter into all necessary legal documents;

2. to approve expenditure on all costs associated with the acquisition, including VAT (which will be recoverable) stamp duty, surveys, professional fees, etc.;
3. to authorise officers to develop a business case to support redevelopment plans for this property as part of the wider regeneration of Crewe town centre; and
4. to authorise officers and/or the Council's agents to communicate with current lessees following acquisition and to engage with them as well other Crewe businesses and residents in any consultations in relation to the future use of the site.

169

CREWE BUS INTERCHANGE FACILITY

Cabinet considered a report on a feasibility study and site option appraisal in relation to a proposed bus interchange facility for Crewe.

The current operator and lessee of Crewe bus station, Arriva, had given notice of its intention to cease operations from 1st May 2016 when the current lease arrangement expired. In the short term there was a need to identify an interim replacement bus interchange facility in the town centre.

The report focused on addressing the town's bus infrastructure needs both now and in the immediate future. The feasibility study work completed to date had identified and sifted the potential options as outlined in the report. A plan illustrating the on-street option was circulated at the meeting.

RESOLVED

That

1. the progress to date on the feasibility study and emerging options be noted;
2. the officers be authorised to widen the scope of the feasibility study to consider the potential to retain the operation of the bus station at the existing site for a short period from 1 May 2016;
3. the officers be authorised to widen the scope of the site option appraisal in light of the potential acquisition of the 'Royal Arcade' site to establish whether additional options for a new bus interchange facility exist; and
4. the officers be authorised to undertake stakeholder engagement and public consultation co-ordinated with the planned consultation on the Town Centre Regeneration Delivery Framework.

170 **CREWE HIGH GROWTH CITY - LONDON AND CONTINENTAL
RAILWAYS AGREEMENT**

Cabinet considered a report on developing an HS2 regeneration plan for Crewe and Middlewich in collaboration with London and Continental Railways, a key regeneration agency. Proposed Heads of Terms for any Collaboration Agreement were set out in Annex A to the report. It was considered that having the insight and experience of LCR was extremely attractive and would bring direct access to key Government Departments and Agencies.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. approves the commencement of work on developing an HS2 regeneration plan for Crewe and Middlewich;
2. based on the Heads of Terms and Memorandum of Understanding for Collaborative Working, as set out in Annex A to the report, agrees to enter into a collaborative working arrangement with LCR to support development and delivery of a HS2 regeneration plan for Crewe and Middlewich;
3. endorses the release of £200,000 from the Council's budget allocation for Crewe HS2 High Growth City to commence the development of the HS2 regeneration plan for Crewe and Middlewich; and
4. notes that if Government formally commits to HS2 to Crewe, further funding support for this work is anticipated.

171 **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL AND STOKE-ON-TRENT CITY
COUNCIL HIGH GROWTH STRATEGY CONCORDAT**

The item was withdrawn.

172 **INVESTMENT TO SECURE THE SQUARE KILOMETRE ARRAY
PROJECT**

Cabinet considered a report on an investment and support package in connection with the Square Kilometre Array project at Jodrell Bank. Jodrell Bank was currently competing internationally to retain the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) project and headquarter status for a further 50 years. Retaining the headquarters of the SKA project was estimated to be worth £1 billion of private sector investment and would help to secure a further 200 on site high value jobs, along with giving additional benefit to the visitor economy in Cheshire. The Council was committed to supporting the growth and success of the Jodrell Bank site as a unique asset in the Cheshire Science Corridor and had facilitated discussions with the University of Manchester, Jodrell Bank and the Science and Technology

Facilities Council to develop a strong vision and action plan for the future of the site. This would include the investment of £1million by the Council via the capital programme into a package of activity and support. Further details were set out in the report.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. approves the investment of £1million by the Council via the capital programme into a package of activity and support, focusing on connectivity and asset enhancement as part of the SKA project and headquarter retention;
2. delegates the final investment decision to the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Prosperity in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Jobs and Housing, and the Portfolio Holder for Resources and S151 Officer; and
3. requests that officers undertake all necessary due diligence including the development of a full business case, subject to the retention of the SKA project at Jodrell Bank.

173 UPDATE ON CONGLETON LEISURE CENTRE

Cabinet considered a report on the development of a business case for the enhancement of the Congleton Leisure Centre.

The key messages from a pre-consultation survey in Congleton were that residents would like most to see modernisation/replacement of the existing leisure centre. Additionally, there was no strong public desire to re-locate the leisure centre, nor to re-locate a wider range of services for vulnerable adults or children onto the site.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. authorises the development of a detailed business case for the enhancement of the existing leisure centre facility, thereby allowing the Project Board to progress the modernisation of the existing leisure facilities, through a consideration of refurbishment, enhancement and new build options, including the possible provision of a new swimming pool; and
2. authorises the Project Board to review the financial structure for the scheme including the exploration of alternative financial delivery models to explore and determine the best overall solution for local residents in Congleton and the surrounding rural communities.

EXPANSION OPTIONS - SNOW HILL CAR PARK, NANTWICH

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval to authorise further investigation, preliminary design, and financial appraisal for the expansion of Snow Hill Car Park in Nantwich.

Appendix A to the report set out the available options to expand the existing car park within land owned by the Council. It was proposed to investigate the options further with a view to ensuring that the final design took into account the potential growth aspirations for Nantwich, together with ensuring that the facilities were fully utilised.

RESOLVED

That further investigation, preliminary design and financial appraisal be undertaken for the expansion of Snow Hill Car Park, Nantwich.

PROCUREMENT OF FRESH MEAT AND FRESH MEAT PRODUCTS INCLUDING POULTRY

Cabinet considered a report on the procurement of fresh meat and fresh meat products including poultry.

The Corporate Procurement Unit had researched the procurement options available to manage establishing a new contract in the timescales available, which could supply the range of products required at competitive prices. The most appropriate route was a full procurement in line with EU regulations, exploring variable 'lots' or sizes of contracts to support local / Small and Medium sized Enterprise (SME) suppliers who may wish to engage with the Council. The new contract term was proposed to run from 1st October 2015 initially for a two year period until 30th September 2017, with options to extend the contract for two separate periods of one year each until 30th September 2019.

Councillor Rachel Bailey, Portfolio Holder for Safeguarding Children and Adults, commented that the procurement was key to the rural economy of Cheshire East.

RESOLVED

That

1. new contract(s) be procured for a period of two years with two possible extension periods each of 12 months, with contracts being awarded to the highest scoring tenderers; and
2. it be noted that new contract(s) need to be in place by 1st October 2015.

176 **CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE INNOVATION PROGRAMME:
PROJECT CREWE**

Cabinet considered a report confirming receipt of DfE Innovation Fund monies for the Children's Social Care Innovation Programme: Project Crewe, and seeking authority for the Council to act as accountable body.

The report outlined the proposed investment, why it was innovative and the outcomes it was expected to deliver. In addition, the report sought the necessary financial approvals for the programme.

RESOLVED

That

1. the Council be authorised to act as accountable body for the DfE Section 31 Grant funded Innovation Programme;
2. a supplementary revenue estimate for 2015/16 of £998k be approved; and
3. it be noted that a further revenue estimate of £899k will be required as part of budget setting for the 2016/17 budget.

At the conclusion of this item, the Leader, on behalf of the Cabinet, thanked Tony Crane, the outgoing Director of Children's Services, for his service to the Council and wished him well for the future.

177 **UPDATE ON MACCLESFIELD TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION**

The Leader was of the opinion that this matter was urgent and could not wait until the next meeting because of the need to ensure that regeneration for Macclesfield should not be delayed further by the recent news that Debenhams, the key anchor of the Silk Street Scheme, had withdrawn.

Cabinet considered an update on the Macclesfield town centre regeneration, including a proposal that the Macclesfield Town Centre Vision Design Board be empowered to investigate options for accelerating the delivery of a leisure scheme for the town centre, and to capture the views of the local community regarding the ambitions and aspirations for the town centre.

Councillor J P Findlow, Portfolio Holder for Governance, reported comments received from Councillor H Gaddum.

RESOLVED

That

1. the Macclesfield Town Centre Vision Design Board, working with local Ward Members and the newly-formed Town Council, be empowered to advise the Council regarding:
 - i. An appropriate town centre boundary to help determine the focus of regeneration activity in the town centre;
 - ii. Accelerating the delivery of a leisure scheme in Macclesfield town centre;
 - iii. How a leisure scheme will align with the Vision for the town centre, and with the aspirations and ambitions of the Council, local residents and businesses;
 - iv. Assessment and recommendations on the development of a wider regeneration strategy for the town centre.
 - v. An appropriate strategy for car parking charges within the town centre boundary to contribute fully to the future regeneration of the town centre.
2. the Design Board be asked to submit a report to the Council outlining the potential options to take forward a leisure scheme, and how this will fit within a wider package of regeneration initiatives in the town centre.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 5.15 pm

Councillor M Jones (Chairman)