

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Jobs, Regeneration and Assets Overview and Scrutiny Committee

held on Monday, 22nd September, 2014 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor P Groves (Chairman)
Councillor F Keegan (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors S Corcoran, S Hogben, M J Weatherill, J Wray and B Murphy

Apologies

Councillors G Barton

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor David Newton – visiting member
Councillor Don Stockton – Cabinet Members for Housing and Jobs
Caroline Simpson – Director of Economic Growth and Prosperity
Julian Cobley – Business Manager in Economic Growth and Prosperity
James Morley – Scrutiny Officer

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

2 DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of party whip

3 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present who wished to speak

4 HIGH GROWTH CITY PROJECT

Caroline Simpson, Director of Economic Growth and Prosperity, provided an oral briefing on the High Growth City Project which related to the regeneration of Crewe. She suggested that there may be potential opportunities arising from a possible decision by Government to include Crewe in plans for the new high speed railway line between London and the North West known as HS2. It was considered prudent to prepare a strategy for the regeneration of Crewe, to make the most of the potential opportunities, should a decision on HS2 involve Crewe in a significant way. Caroline suggested that to get input from Councillors into the shaping of the project a task and finish group of the Committee could be formed to contribute to the development of a strategy.

The task and finish group would first meet to discuss the remit and scope of the group's work; a date for the first meeting of the group would need to be arranged following this meeting. Caroline suggested that members could be provided with background documents to support their work prior to the first meeting. A request was made that all members of the Committee receive the background documents.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the briefing be noted.
- (b) That a task and finish group of four members be set up to assist in shaping a strategy for the High Growth City Project.
- (c) That the following committee members be appointed to the task and finish group:
 - Councillor P Groves to chair the group
 - Councillor F Keegan
 - Councillor J Weatherill
 - Councillor S Hogben
- (a) That a date for the first meeting of the task and finish group be arranged by the Scrutiny Officer following this meeting.
- (b) That background papers for the task and finish group be circulated to all members of the committee for information.

5 ASSET MANAGEMENT

Julian Cobley, Business Manager in Economic Growth and Prosperity, gave a presentation about the Asset Management Functions. Following the presentation the following points were made:

- The property information unit received approximately 1500 enquiries for information each year. These enquiries varied in complexity which had an impact on how quickly they were dealt with.
- The Local Authority Data Transparency Code 2014 required the Council to publish asset data by November 2014. The system the Council used to manage its data on assets was called Atrium.
- The Atrium system was one of the leading systems on the market and helped to ensure quality of data. It was suggested that the Committee receive a demonstration of the system at the next meeting to teach members how to access information about assets in their wards.
- One of the goals for the future of the Asset Management Function was to enable the public to access property data themselves for self service to reduce the demands on the Assets Team.
- During 2013/14 several major projects had been completed including three school refurbishments, replacement of cremators at

Crewe Crematorium and office refurbishments at Dean Row & Redesmere Day Centres.

- There had also been 8 feasibility studies on projects involving adaptations, refurbishments and extensions totalling a value of £14m.
- Properties were revalued on a regular basis to ensure valuations were up to date. Roughly 20% of property was valued each year meaning each property was revalued at least every five years.
- One of the goals of the Property Services Team was to manage customer and stakeholder expectations. This meant being clear about what information could be provided and when it would be made available when customers and stakeholders made enquiries.
- The Council's Strategic Asset Management Plan was currently being refreshed to reflect the Council's current objectives, policies and strategies.
- The Committee was interested in how assets had been transferred to the Council's Wholly Owned Companies (WOCs). The Council retained ownership of assets used by WOCs through long term leases however there were a variety of different arrangements.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the presentation be noted.
- (b) That the Committee requests Julian Cobley to present the draft Strategic Asset Management Plan at the Committee's next meeting.
- (c) That the Committee requests Julian Cobley provide information relating to feasibility studies carried out in the last twelve months.
- (d) That the Committee requests the Property Services Team provide a demonstration of the Atrium System for managing assets data to inform members about how to use the system.
- (e) That the Committee requests receipt of a list of assets associated with Wholly Owned Companies.

6 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its Work Programme and the latest Forward Plan.

RESOLVED – That the Work Programme be updated to reflect actions agreed in previous items of the meeting.

The meeting commenced at 2.05 pm and concluded at 3.45 pm

Councillor P Groves (Chairman)

