

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

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

held on Monday, 18th January, 2016 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor H Wells-Bradshaw (Chairman)
Councillor J Weston (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors S Brookfield and B Roberts

Apologies

Councillors D Bebbington, C Browne and L Durham

OFFICERS PRESENT

David Malcolm – Head of Planning
Sean Hannaby – Director of Planning and Sustainable Development
Andrew Round – Director of Growth and Regeneration
Phillip Riding – Regeneration Programme Manager (seconded to Cheshire East Engine of the North Ltd)
James Morley – Scrutiny Officer

30 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting on 23 November be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

32 DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of party whip

33 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

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

34 CIVICANCE LTD PROGRESS REPORT

Sean Hannaby and David Malcolm provided a progress report on the Council's arms length planning and development company Civicance Ltd. The alternative service delivery vehicle (ASDV) had been launched in April 2015 as part of the Council's move towards being a 'commissioning council'. The key services delivery areas for Civicance were:

- Building Control
- Local Land Charges
- Planning Support, liaison and customer interface
- Street Naming and Numbering

The Committee was informed that through planning support the ASDV provide administration for the planners at the Council who dealt with planning applications and reported to the Council's three planning committees. It was suggested that the new working relationships between the officers of the two bodies were mixed. Performance targets were being met and improvements had been made in the speed at which planning applications were turned around. However the quality was the same and this also needed to be improved in order to see a full benefit from the new way of working

It was suggested that there were some cultural issues with the separation between the client and the customer created by the new way of working however this was expected to be improved as the new relationship developed. Staff of the ASDV were due to receive additional training which was hoped would improve quality and they would be encouraged to be more flexible with requests from planning officers rather than strictly sticking to the contracted duties of the company.

The company had currently been in operation for approximately nine months. Officers suggested that by 18 months there should be noticeable changes in the culture and much improved outcomes from the previous arrangements. The Chairman requested that officers returned with a further report in Autumn to enable the Committee to continue monitoring the performance of Civance Ltd.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the progress report be noted
- (b) That the Head of Planning and the Director of Planning & Sustainable Development be requested to provide a report on Civance Ltd performance at the Committee's meeting on 19 September 2016.

35 ENGINE OF THE NORTH PROGRESS REPORT

Andrew Round (Commissioning Manager for the contract) and Philip Riding (seconded to EotN) provided an report on the performance of Cheshire East Engine of the North Ltd (EotN), the Council's arms length delivery company for property development. The company was the first alternative service delivery vehicle (ASDV) to be set up by the Council in 2013 tasked with maximising the value of development land for the Council whilst minimising the risk to the Council. The company charged services to the Council at cost therefore did not make any profit or loss.

The Committee requested the report to consider whether EotN was performing well. The Chairman suggested that it was difficult for the Committee to comment on performance without measurable performance targets and context which to benchmark them against.

Unlike some of the Council's other ASDVs, EotN did not have many Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in its contract with the Council except some

related to land values. Officers were currently revising the business plan and looking to set out new measurable KPIs for the company. It was suggested that the number of homes and jobs created on development involving EotN were soft indicators of performance.

EotN operated on a task and finish basis which enabled it to be flexible with staffing as it had no fully employed staff. There were three employees seconded from the Council and four or five consultants who were employed on a case by case basis. It was suggested that the model was working well and that EotN had enabled the sale of large sites which the Council had struggle to dispose of in the past. EotN was able to focus resources better on key sites among the 1000s of assets that the Council had. The Council's Assets Team was responsible for the smaller, less strategic assets. The sites dealt with by EotN were set out in the original contract by Cabinet; The Council needed to consider how and what new sites would be added in the future.

The Chairman requested that another report be brought to the Committee in Autumn, with the proposed new business plan, to enable further monitoring of EotN performance.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be noted
- (b) That the Director of Growth and Regeneration be requested to provide a report on the performance of Cheshire East Engine of the North Ltd with the new business plan at the Committee's meeting on 19 September 2016.

36 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee gave consideration to its work programme. It was agreed that that reports on Civacance Ltd and Cheshire East Engine of the North Ltd would be requested from the Commissioning Managers for the Committee's September meeting.

The Committee requested an update from Cheshire Neighbours Credit Union at it's next meeting. The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee had requested that the Committee consider adding an item on Private Housing, particularly Homes of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) to its work programme. The Committee agreed to request a briefing on the subject from the Housing Standards Manager at one of its informal meetings before deciding on adding anything formal to the work programme.

RESOLVED – That the work programme be updated as discussed

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.30 pm

Councillor H Wells-Bradshaw (Chairman)