CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
held on Thursday, 17th March, 2016 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor G Baxendale (Chairman)

Councillors M Beanland, E Brooks, M Grant, S Pochin, J Rhodes and
M Warren

In Attendance

S Angus-Crawshaw - Strategic Partnership Manager
K Hercules - Principal Manager - Local Area Working
L Woodrow-Hurst - Anti-Social Behaviour Team Leader

43 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor C Andrew

44 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2016.

RESOLVED

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

45 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

46 WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

There were no whipping declarations

47 PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no members of the public present wishing to speak

48 GYPSY AND TRAVELLER LIAISON

The committee received a presentation which covered:

- The core duties of the Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer
- The process of removal, including welfare assessments as the local
  authority had a duty of care for each individual. Each family would be

assessed at the time of first arrival and this would form part of the removal process.
- Court Orders, including the eviction process
- Police involvement
- Clean up process
- Sub regional working
- Key issues facing Cheshire East
- Transit provision

It was reported that in 2014, there were 80 encampments within Cheshire East and 53 in 2015. Peak times tended to be in summer as Gypsy and Travellers would return home during winter.

It was noted that Cheshire East did not currently have a transit site. Planning permission for a site had been granted in 2015 and tenders for the works were submitted in January 2016. Due to funding and policy changes, which may now allow sub regional arrangements, a report would be submitted to Cabinet for a decision in April/May 2016, seeking a steer on the preferred way forward. Members considered the size of the proposed site to be too small and considering the issues highlighted above, requested that an update report be received in due course.

Officers agreed to report back to Members on the number of permanent sites in Cheshire East, however it was noted that as these were privately owned, they could not be freely used by all Gypsy and Travellers. The need for a transit site was therefore still required and experience showed a significant reduction in unauthorised encampments if a site was provided.

RESOLVED

That an update on the transit site be received by the Committee

49 COMMUNITY RIGHTS UPDATE

Consideration was given to an update on Community Rights to bid, the aim of which was to empower communities wishing to protect valuable local assets (land and buildings) by requiring the Council to maintain a list of assets in its area which are of community value. If the asset then came up for sale, the community group would be given time to buy it on the open market.

The Committee raised concerns regarding the actual benefit of the legislation as it was complicated and would only delay the sale of the asset, however it was noted that this was a statutory duty.

Members considered the current list of nominations for Community Right to Bid and noted that there was currently one application that would be going to an independent tribunal.

RESOLVED

That the report be received.

50 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the work programme. It was agreed that the following issues would be added:

- Preventing Extremism Strategy
- Community Cohesion Plan
- Scams and Mass Marketing
- SCEP Plan and Performance – Deferred to June 2016
- Delivering Differently in Neighbourhoods – April 2016

RESOLVED

That the work programme be amended to reflect the issues highlighted above.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 11.30 am

Councillor G Baxendale (Chairman)