

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee

held on Monday, 11th November, 2019 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor JP Findlow (Chairman)
Councillor S Brookfield (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors S Akers Smith, J Buckley, L Crane, T Dean, A Farrall, P Groves,
M Hunter, D Jefferay, C Leach and K Parkinson

In attendance

Councillor N Mannion-Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration
Councillor B Roberts-Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste
Councillor M Warren-Portfolio Holder for Communities
P Bayley-Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services
K Carsberg-Head of Housing
F Jordan-Executive Director-Place
R Kemp-Head of Environmental Services
J Owens-Development Planning Manager
P Skates-Director of Growth & Enterprise
P Traynor-Head of Highways
V Venn-Flood Risk Engineer
K Whitehead-Housing Standards & Adaptations Manager
J Wilcox-Financial Strategy & Reporting Manager

35 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

36 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to comment (i) under minute No.31 'A Local Industrial Strategy for Cheshire & Warrington' being amended as follows:-

'The report should also consider ways to help industry improve productivity and efficiency and not just focus on growth'.

37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

38 WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

No declarations of a party whip were received.

39 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present wishing to speak.

40 STRATEGIC OVERVIEW OF HOUSING

Members received a presentation in respect of extra controls in the Private Rented Sector with specific reference to Selected Licensing and Article 4 and homelessness including Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and rough sleeping interventions. A summary of the questions raised are outlined below and were answered by officers at the meeting.

In respect of the Selective Licensing element of the presentation the following questions/comments were raised:-

- What was the Council trying to achieve by carrying out Selective Licensing and would this would help with issues such as Anti Social Behaviour and fly tipping?
- What additional powers would Selective Licensing give the Council?
- It would have been useful for the documentation to include a glossary;
- Clarification was sought as to what was meant by an LSOA;
- Why were some areas excluded from the Selective Licensing proposed priority areas?
- What impact would Selective Licensing have on the private rented sector?
- Did Selective Licensing include every private rented property or just HMO's?
- Did children's homes count as HMO's?
- Could offices look at more than just living conditions when entering properties?

In respect of the Article 4 Direction element of the presentation the following questions were raised:-

- Why was the process for a making an Article 4 Direction non immediate?
- Were most HMO's related to university students?
- Had there been a rise in HMO applications?
- Because it took 12 months for an A4D notice to come into force could anyone who wanted to create a small HMO in that time?
- What kind of properties were HMO's?

In respect of the homeless element of the presentation the following questions/comments were raised:-

- Had obtaining permission from a homeless person led to difficulties for officers?
- Did the Council put in place measures to enable homeless people to obtain a fixed address?
- What preventative measures did the Council undertake in order to combat homelessness?

In addition to the questions raised it was felt important for the Council to write to the Government to secure long-term funding and a request was made for officers to undertake this task.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked all of the officers for their hard work in ensuring the number of homeless people within the Borough had been significantly reduced. Furthermore the Committee commended the work of officers in identifying over 650 HMO's currently in existence. This was a significant improvement compared to 2015 when only 45 had been identified.

RESOLVED

That the presentation be received.

(At 10.55am the meeting was adjourned in order for a two minutes silence to be observed in respect of Remembrance Day).

41 PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to the pre-budget consultation. The Financial Strategy and Reporting Manager provided an overview of the process with the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services and the Director of Growth & Enterprise present to answer any questions relating to the areas specific to the remit of the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members raised the following points/questions:-

- (i) Why was there no information within the document on the base budget and why was there no reference to what the impact on the budget would be under each item?
- (ii) In respect of Community Transport it was queried as to why the budget for this service was being reduced given the fact that it had been in operation less than 6 months and therefore there had been no opportunity to provide any feedback on the Flexi-Link service;
- (iii) In respect of highways maintenance for pathways and cycleways the budget for last year for the whole of the Borough had been £20,000. Could a breakdown be provided as to how the maintenance of pathways and cycleways would be delivered?

- (iii) Would the reduction in the highways budget relating to Highway Maintenance Contract Efficiencies affect the service?
- (iv) Concerns were raised about the performance of Ringway Jacobs;
- (v) What was the timeline for a Cheshire East Council review of car parking?
- (vi) If there was a better bus service then car parking wouldn't be an issue. It was felt there was nothing in the budget which transformed bus services;
- (vii) There should be liaison with other Councils regarding the provision of a more efficient bus service. This wasn't happening. If the bus service was improved and was cost efficient there would be more users and the need for car parks would decrease;
- (viii) Last year's budget saw 40% cuts to bus services;
- (ix) The Council needed to facilitate measures which would assist in reducing the carbon footprint, for example charging a set fee for users to then have unlimited access;
- (x) Contractors were unwilling to reduce the cost of fares until the demand increased but the demand would not increase unless there was a decrease in fares;
- (xi) In order to emphasise the Council's commitment to climate change was there any work being undertaken to provide electric charging points particularly in the Macclesfield area?
- (xii) In respect of Public Rights of Way (ProW) it was felt more resources were required because if routes were not on a map by 2026 then they would be lost forever. Concerns were raised that there were only two employees dealing with PRow and this was insufficient. It was queried which officers dealt with PRow.

RESOLVED

That the comments be noted and reported to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 9 January 2019.

42 CHESHIRE EAST 2019 AIR QUALITY ANNUAL STATUS REPORT

Consideration was given to a report updating the Committee on the review of the Council's 2019 Annual Status Report (ASR). The purpose of the report was to ensure Members were aware of the report and the current status of air quality across the Borough.

Members raised the following matters:-

- In respect of NANT2 concerns were raised that Ward Councillors had not been consulted and it was requested that a meeting with officers be arranged to look at this in further detail;
- In respect of SAND2 and the proposals to introduce vehicle weight restrictions on Middlewich Road further discussion with officers and Members were needed. Would these take place?
- How was the A50 study in Knutsford progressing?
- In respect of particulate monitoring did it take into account the brake and tyre wear of vehicles?

- With regard to nitrogen dioxide was there a requirement to monitor?
- Concerns were raised at the number of ongoing entries in the action plan.
- In respect of the trend for annual mean NO2 concentration measured at AQMAs using diffusion tubes why had there been a spike in 2016?
- How were monitoring points identified? Why were two monitoring points located close together in Wilmslow?
- In respect of vehicle fleet efficiency was the Council looking at using electric vehicles within its fleet?
- Why was Alsager not referred to in figure 3.1 of the document?
- People should be encouraged to walk/cycle more especially if the route was under a mile. If policies were in place which created an infrastructure whereby cycleways and pathways were better connected then more people might be willing to use more sustainable methods of transport. Highways and Planning needed to be involved in order for significant change to take place;
- What was the Cheshire East Local Sustainable Transport Team and what budget did it have?

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted and the comments raised above be reported to the Portfolio Holder for consideration.

(The meeting was adjourned from 12.20pm until 12.40pm for lunch).

43 FLOOD RECOVERY UPDATE

Members received a presentation which provided a summary of the progress so far regarding the flood recovery.

Within the presentation information was provided on the following:-

- An overview of the recovery works;
- Construction;
- Major works at Wards End retaining wall and Ingersley Road
- The formal flood investigation
- Further flooding event on 31 October 2019

Members asked the following questions:-

- (i)What details were there on the proposed works to the A34 and A48?
- (ii)At the moment focus needed to be on cleaning gullies rather than fixing pot holes. What pressure could the Council place on landowners and farmers who hadn't maintained their ditches or gullies?
- (iii)Was there an annual budget for this type of emergency and how was it accounted for?

- (iv) Had sufficient resources been allocated to the department given the additional work being undertaken on top of delivering a normal service?
- (v) Did dredging of rivers take place and if not would dredging have helped alleviate the problems?
- (vi) Would the cleaning of gullies in Mobberley be brought forward due to recent flooding issues in that area within the Borough?
- (vii) The issues with Ingersley Road were also being experienced in Macclesfield. Had there been any issues when undertaking repairs?
- (viii) Ensure more officers were trained so there were additional people to call upon should something similar occur again.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked all those officers involved in dealing with the flooding incidents and the commitment shown during what was a challenging and unprecedented turn of events had not gone unnoticed.

RESOLVED

That the presentation and comments be noted.

(Prior to consideration of the following item, Councillor K Parkinson left the meeting and did not return).

44 WASTE STRATEGY BRIEFING

Consideration was given to the waste strategy.

Highlighted within the presentation was information on what work the Council had undertaken during the first five years, what the Council was currently doing, who it was engaging with and the timeline for consultation with Cabinet. The Committee was asked to give particular attention to the following questions:-

- (1) What did the Committee think of the objectives likely to remain?
- (2) Did the Committee agree with the proposed two objectives?
- (3) What did the Committee think of the changes proposed in DEFRA's consultation?

Members made the following comments:-

- In respect of 3.1 the word retain should be replaced with the word improved;
- Educational visits to the Cledford site might be one way of encouraging adults to recycle more if children were made aware of how the recycling process worked;
- Information relating to numerical targets should be referred to within the document.
- In respect of 3.3 the sentence should be amended to say maximise public participation through communication and accessibility;
- The document should make reference to the recycling of plastics;

- Composting should be treated as a priority;
- Where could subsidised hot composting bins be purchased from?
- The Waste Reduction Team was a fantastic asset;
- One Member felt the waste strategy wasn't working and that the Cledford site was the wrong site for such a facility;
- Bin obstruction on pavements was a real issue;
- There should be a message to promote methods of cutting back on using certain products for example bin liners could be referred to;
- If dog waste/used nappies could be composted or transferred from waste into energy the black bin for some people would not be necessary.

RESOLVED

That the comments made by Members of the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee be included, with responses from other key groups in the Council's liaison with Councillors in their Member briefing meetings, public focus groups and Town and Parish Councils.

45 FORWARD PLAN

Consideration was given to the areas of the Forward Plan which fell within the remit of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the Forward Plan be noted.

46 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the work programme.

It was noted that an additional meeting had been arranged to take place on 10 February 2020, that the item relating to the Environment Strategy would be considered at either the February or March meeting and that the issue of fly tipping fall into the remit of the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee rather than the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be approved subject to the amendments as outlined above.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 2.18 pm

Councillor JP Findlow (Chairman)