

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the **Cabinet**
held on Tuesday, 4th May, 2021

PRESENT

Councillor S Corcoran (Chairman)
Councillor C Browne (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors L Crane, K Flavell, T Fox, L Jeuda, N Mannion, J Rhodes, A Stott and M Warren

Councillors in attendance

Councillors Q Abel, R Bailey, M Beanland, M Benson, L Braithwaite, S Brookfield, D Brown, C Bulman, S Carter, J Clowes, T Dean, S Edgar, B Evans, H Faddes, J P Findlow, R Fletcher, S Gardiner, L Gilbert, S Holland, M Houston, A Moran, R Moreton, D Murphy, J Nicholas, K Parkinson, S Pochin, B Puddicombe, P Redstone, J Saunders, M Sewart, M Simon, L Smetham, D Stockton, L Wardlaw, J Weatherill, P Williams and J Wray.

Officers in attendance

Lorraine O'Donnell, Chief Executive
Frank Jordan, Executive Director Place
Jane Burns, Executive Director Corporate Services
Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services
David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance
Ged Rowney, Interim Director of Children's Services
Jill Broomhall, Direct of Adult Social Care
Nichola Thompson, Director of Commissioning
Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance
Paul Mountford, Executive Democratic Services Officer

The Leader welcomed everyone to what would be the final meeting of the Cabinet before the Council moved to a committee system.

The Leader expressed disappointment at the Government's decision not to renew the legislation allowing councils to hold virtual meetings, thereby preventing such meetings from being held after 7th May. Virtual meetings, he said, had benefited the public, members and officers, and the environment.

The Leader announced that, because of the restrictions imposed on gatherings of more than 30 people, the Annual Council meeting had been brought forward to 5.00 pm today.

The Deputy Leader announced that the Council and the Government had completed the reconciliation of grant funding in connection with retail, leisure, hospitality and discretionary grants. The Council had been able to pay out about £98.1m in grant funding between April and October 2020 to local businesses. Despite lobbying the Government to be able to spend the

remainder of the grant, the Council would be required to repay to the Government £3.7m. He thanked everyone who had been involved with administering the grant schemes.

The Deputy Leader also announced that the Council had received confirmation of £100,000 grant from the Department of Transport through bus capacity funding, which was intended to support local authorities in developing bus service improvement plans.

112 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

113 **PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION - VIRTUAL MEETINGS**

Cllr Robert Douglas, Congleton Town Council, referred to a report on the agenda concerning household waste recycling centre provision. He questioned the conclusion in the report that the effect on local air quality arising from the closure of the Congleton Waste Recycling Centre would be neutral to minor beneficial. He also questioned the estimated cost of replacing the site compared with the cost of providing similar sites in Norfolk and Nottinghamshire. He suggested that the Council defer a decision and appoint a task and finish group to consider all available options for a replacement site for Congleton. He added that Somerford Parish Council had agreed with the comments raised.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste explained the basis of the air quality measures in the report. She added that Norfolk County Council had confirmed that the cost quoted by Cllr Douglas in relation to their site did not include the purchase of the land or the building of a service road. She concluded by saying that the Council had provided sufficient information and had consulted prior to a decision being brought forward to Cabinet and that there had been ample opportunity for scrutiny to look through the full list of reports provided, and that therefore the Council had fulfilled the proper requirements for the recommendations to be considered at Cabinet today.

Sue Helliwell asked about progress with a proposed zebra crossing for Crewe Road/Cranberry Lane, Alsager which residents thought would be installed by February. She also asked if ANSA was involved with the scheme.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste responded that the new zebra crossing was in the works programme for the current year and a budget had been allocated. She was expecting the completion of the works this summer, in time for the start of the September school term. She confirmed that Ansa was not involved with the scheme.

Kay Wesley, Congleton Town Council, asked why a task and finish group had not been appointed to evaluate options for a replacement household waste recycling centre for Congleton. She also questioned the findings regarding equality and accessibility as set out in the report on the agenda.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste responded that it was not in the Cabinet's remit to appoint a task and finish group; this was a matter for the relevant overview and scrutiny committee. Under the new committee system, it would be a matter for the Environment and Communities Committee. She added that the alternative recycling sites at Macclesfield and Alsager provided level access to skips, increasing accessibility over and above the existing site. The Council would also be considering the possible provision of pop-up mobile sites as part of the new contract in 2023.

114 **QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS - VIRTUAL MEETINGS**

Councillor J Clowes, referred to three pilot schemes discussed at a town and parish council consultation session held last week: the Cheshire East and Town Council Climate Emergency Toolkit and Hub; the Draft Asset Transfer Policy; and the Connected Communities Strategy. She asked about the terms of reference for each of the schemes, how the social and financial capacity of local communities had been assessed, what the objectives of each scheme were, how success would be measured, and when and where the schemes had been scrutinised before being implemented.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities responded that the purpose of the consultation sessions was to improve engagement and communication with town and parish councils; the sessions had been positively received to date. The items discussed at last week's session highlighted existing or forthcoming consultation exercises so that people were aware and able to contribute. The pilots outlined would be subject to further discussion with town and parish councils and would be used to inform future policy development. If any final proposals were to be taken forward, the intention would be to present these to the Highways and Transport Committee for consideration. The overall effectiveness would be measured through the feedback received at future sessions.

Councillor T Dean referred to the proposed closure of Congleton household waste recycling centre and sought confirmation that no other recycling centres in Cheshire East would be planned for closure up to 2023.

The Leader referred Councillor Dean to the report on the agenda and added that the future provision of household waste recycling centres in Cheshire East would be a matter for consideration through the committee system.

Councillor L Gilbert referred to a question he had asked at the previous meeting regarding a new policy for the provision of street lighting. Whilst he had since received a written response from the Portfolio Holder, he felt that it did not answer the question as to what process had been followed to adopt the new policy and what member involvement there had been.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste responded that the policy in question had been introduced before she had taken up her post as the relevant Portfolio Holder, and that in future such policies would be a matter for the appropriate committee under the committee system.

Councillor R Moreton asked Cabinet to defer a decision at today's meeting regarding the closure of Congleton household waste recycling centre with a view to the matter being considered by the relevant committee under the new committee system.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste responded that any further delay in taking a decision could prevent a new contract being in place in time for 2023. She stressed that the Council was not ruling out the possibility of a new site in Congleton, but that when the current site closed in September, the Council would not have an alternative site available to bring into use. She anticipated that the new contract provision would be discussed widely under the new committee system.

On behalf of Councillor M Simon, who was not able to be present, Councillor P Redstone asked when the Council would be publishing its plans for future winter gritting which had been expected by the end of April this year.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste responded that it had been the intention to have the scheme finalised by the end of April but that the Council had received a considerable number of responses to the proposals which had required detailed consideration. She anticipated that the scheme would be published very soon.

Councillor S Holland, referring to the proposed closure of the Congleton household waste recycling centre, asked if the Council would consider the future provision of three super recycling sites for the northern, central and southern areas of the Borough. She also asked if certain days could be set aside for Congleton residents only to use neighbouring recycling facilities.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste responded that the question of super recycling sites would be a matter for consideration by the relevant service committee.

Councillor Holland asked for a written response to both of her questions.

115 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th April 2021 be approved as a correct record.

116 **COVID-19 - ANNUAL REPORT OF OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY**

Cabinet considered a report which reviewed some of the key moments and achievements in the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and which provided a summary of developments since the April report.

The Leader took the opportunity to thank volunteers, Council officers and residents whose work had mitigated the impact of the pandemic. He emphasised in particular the work of the Cheshire East test and trace team, the People Helping People service and the Adult Social Care, Children and Families and Business Support teams for their work in supporting residential homes, schools and local businesses respectively.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. notes the main achievements in responding to Covid-19, outlined in Appendix 1 of the report; and
2. notes the developments since April 2021.

117 **HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE PROVISION**

Cabinet considered a report on household waste recycling centre provision in Cheshire East following a review of current service provision and subsequent public consultation to assist in the commissioning of a new contract in 2023.

Councillor J P Findlow, as Chairman of the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee, reported that Committee's comments and recommendations.

At the Leader's request, the Executive Director Place responded to a number of questions asked by the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee. First, the Executive Director confirmed that on the expiration of the current lease in September 2021 the site would no longer be available to the Council. Secondly, the Executive Director confirmed that the provision of a new site at Congleton would have an additional environmental impact in relation to any construction of a new facility. Finally, he confirmed that neighbouring recycling centres had the capacity to absorb any waste displaced by the closure of the Congleton site.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. notes that the lease on the current Congleton Household Waste Recycling Centre expires in September 2021;
2. approves the procurement of the new contract and notes that a further decision will be sought to award the contract, confirm the distribution of Household Waste Recycling Centres and their cost; and
3. agrees that the Congleton Household Waste Recycling Centre will not be replaced at this time whilst the procurement process outlined at 2 above is undertaken and a decision is taken regarding the overall provision for the Borough, and as such the amount indicated in the addendum to the capital programme will remain.

118 **CARBON NEUTRAL PROGRAMME - PROGRESS REPORT**

Cabinet considered a progress report on the Carbon Neutral Programme. The report recommended future decisions that would need to be taken by relevant committees in order to meet the target of becoming carbon neutral by 2025.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities reported that the current cross party Carbon Reduction Monitoring Group would be retained as an informal advisory group as the Council transitioned to the committee system.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. notes the progress made to date on the agreed Carbon Action Plan;
2. notes that a supplementary estimate decision may be necessary to accept up to £3,000,000 of additional funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund. And that this may be decided under urgency provisions due to the timescales associated with this funding; and
3. invites the appropriate committees to consider further decisions required to achieve the carbon neutral by 2025 target, especially:
 - (a) the inclusion of carbon budgeting and accounting in the Council's business planning process and Medium-Term Financial Strategy;
 - (b) the results of the building decarbonisation plan to further decarbonise the heating of Council buildings;

- (c) future business proposals for the implementation of council vehicle charging infrastructure to complement the planned electrification of the council's vehicle fleet;
- (d) consideration of the future land assessment report and the allocation of sufficient land to complete the council's nature based and sustainable energy inset projects necessary to achieve carbon neutrality;
- (e) consideration of investment opportunities in association with heat network and green energy proposals forming a green investment programme as projects come forwards; and
- (f) the adoption of a Cheshire East low carbon standard for new build and refurbished buildings in addition to the reductions planned as part of the council's estates transformation project.

119 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH GROUP -
MEMBERS' FACILITIES, ACCOMMODATION AND CULTURE
RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet considered a report on the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the overview and scrutiny task and finish group, set up by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to review Members' Facilities, Accommodation and Culture.

In the absence of Councillor M Simon, the Chairman of the task and finish group, Councillor A Moran spoke as the other remaining member of the group. He began by thanking Councillor Simon and the scrutiny officers involved with the review. He then drew attention to Councillor Simons' hope, as expressed in her foreword to the report, that both she and Councillor Moran would be invited to participate in any work undertaken by the Council to take the group's recommendations forward.

Councillor J Clowes, as Chairman of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, commented that Councillor Simon would also wish to thank the other members involved in the review, and in particular to note the contribution made by the late Councillor Dorothy Flude. She added that the Committee hoped that the report would be referred to the Member Input Panel to ensure that the work of the task and finish group was not lost and was taken forward in an appropriate way.

RESOLVED

That the report of the Members' Facilities, Accommodation and Culture Task and Finish Group be received.

Before moving the meeting into Part 2 to consider the final report on the agenda, the Chairman took the opportunity to thank all those who had been involved with the Cabinet meetings over the last two years. He

expressed his heartfelt thanks to all current members of the Cabinet and expressed his appreciation of the late Councillors Dorothy Flude and Brian Roberts who had both served on the Cabinet.

120 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

121 **ASDV REVIEW - TRANSPORT SERVICE SOLUTIONS**

Cabinet considered a strategic review of the commissioning and delivery of services provided by Transport Service Solutions.

Councillor J Clowes, Chairman of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, reported the comments and recommendations of the Committee which had considered the draft Cabinet report at its meeting on 30th March 2021.

Councillor S Carter, Chairman of the ASDV Shareholder Committee, reported the comments and recommendations of the Committee which had considered the draft Cabinet report at its meeting on 6th April 2021.

RESOLVED

That the recommendations set out in the report be approved.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 3.20 pm

Councillor S Corcoran (Chairman)