

# CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Policy Committee**  
held on Tuesday, 6th July, 2021 at Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings,  
Earle Street, Crewe CW1 2BJ

## **PRESENT**

Councillor S Corcoran (Chair)  
Councillor A Stott (Vice-Chair)

Councillors C Browne, J Clowes, JP Findlow, K Flavell, R Fletcher,  
S Gardiner, N Mannion, A Martin, J Rhodes, M Warren and S Edgar (for Cllr  
Parkinson)

## **Officers**

Lorraine O'Donnell, Chief Executive  
Jane Burns, Executive Director Corporate Services  
Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services  
Sara Barker, Head of HR  
Deborah Nickson, Legal Team Manager  
Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance  
Paul Mountford, Democratic Services

## **Apologies**

Councillor K Parkinson

## **11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors S Gardiner and S Edgar declared non-pecuniary interests in relation to an item on the review of parliamentary constituency boundaries as they each worked for a Member of Parliament whose constituency boundary was affected by the review.

## **12 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION**

Sue Helliwell asked if the Council could confirm that four members of the Corporate Leadership Team had left the Council as she had been informed at the previous meeting that three members of the Team had left.

The Chair responded that the report to the Corporate Policy Committee on 8 June (para 6.17) had included the following information: "It should be noted that the need to recruit to another senior management post is anticipated in the near future." The current Executive Director Place had tendered their resignation shortly thereafter but had not yet left the Council. Therefore, the answer given by the Chief Executive at the previous meeting had been correct.

Sue Helliwell also asked if the Chair could confirm that any complaints lodged at Cheshire East Council, made against councillors would not be

seen by the Leader or the Deputy Leader of the Council unless the complaint was made against them.

With regard to the Member Code of Conduct complaints process, the Chair responded that he hoped that the current process whereby all complaints were completely confidential would be reviewed as part of the new Code, when workloads allowed. The Monitoring Officer had advised that there was a clear expectation of privacy for untested complaints. If a complaint were found to be justified, the balance usually was for full disclosure (subject to complainant and other third party rights).

### **13 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021 be approved as a correct record.

### **14 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY - CORPORATE SERVICES BUDGETS 2021/22**

The Committee considered a report on the MTFS Corporate Services budgets for 2021/22.

The Vice-Chair as Chair of the Finance Sub-Committee reported that the Sub-Committee at its meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 had approved the allocation of the approved capital and revenue budgets, related policy proposals and earmarked reserves to each of the service committees. The financial alignment of budgets to each Committee was set out in Table 1 of the report with further details on the Corporate Policy Committee budgets at Appendix A.

The Committee also considered an outline of the budget setting process, timeline and consultation arrangements, which would provide each service committee with a review of the mid-year position and the opportunity to comment on future proposals relating to their areas. In addition, sessions would be arranged for all members in advance of the wider consultation on the MTFS.

Appendix B to the report set out details of supplementary estimates and virements.

Members asked if they would receive full details of Covid-related expenditure at a future meeting. The Chair suggested that this was something that the Finance Sub-Committee might wish to consider.

#### **RESOLVED**

That the Committee

1. notes the decision of the Finance Sub-Committee to allocate the approved capital and revenue budgets, related policy proposals and earmarked reserves to the Corporate Policy Committee, as set out in Appendix A of the report;
2. notes the MTFS timelines, as set out in paragraphs 5.9 – 5.12 of the report; and
3. notes the supplementary estimates and virements as set out in Appendix B.

## **15 APPRENTICESHIP LEVY PROCUREMENT FRAMEWORK**

The Committee considered a report on a proposed way forward for the procurement of apprenticeship training provision across the Council, ASDVs and maintained schools, utilising the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) framework.

Members asked if there were other frameworks available, what break clauses would be included in the contract and why the Council would be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement.

Officers responded that the proposed framework was used nationally by local authorities; the alternative would be for the Council to use its own framework which would involve having to enter into individual contracts with each provider. The YPO framework was fully compliant with Public Contracts Regulations 2015, provided an extensive list of providers and would reduce the current administrative burden on the Council. It was necessary to enter into a non-disclosure agreement for commercial reasons; this was a standard requirement. The information on break clauses was not available at the meeting but would be provided to members.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Committee

1. delegates authority to the Executive Director of Corporate Services to set the Council up to utilise the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) Framework – Apprenticeships and Associated Training 883 to award contracts, where possible, to training providers using YPO's call off contract template, this requiring the Council to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement – Customer Access Agreement. Authority is further delegated to enable officers to utilise the replacement YPO framework scheduled for summer 2022 which will replace the existing version;
2. authorises the Executive Director of Corporate Services to take all necessary actions to implement the proposal; and

3. notes that it will receive a further update report on the strategic approach to apprenticeship delivery at the Council.

## **16 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE CHANGE PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered a report providing an update on the work undertaken on the Brighter Future Together (Culture) Programme, including key milestones, the pulse survey, benefits, and work planned for 2021 and beyond, with the aim of supporting and developing a workforce that was confident, motivated, innovative, resilient, and empowered.

With regard to the outcome of the pulse survey, members asked if staff would be expected to return to their offices on 19<sup>th</sup> July. Members also asked how new Directors would be inducted into the Council's culture.

The Chief Executive responded that with regard to the return to workplaces, members of staff would need assurance as to their health and safety. Further guidance was awaited but it was anticipated that any return to workplaces would be phased over the coming months. It would also be necessary to take advantage of the positives that had arisen from the pandemic as identified through the pulse survey. With regard to the induction of Directors, the Chief Executive commented that the Council's values would be emphasised in the recruitment process and that this would be reinforced subsequently through team development.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Committee notes the report and will monitor progress with future actions.

## **17 CONSULTATION ON COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2022/23**

The Committee considered a report on proposals to consult on the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022/23. The Scheme provided reductions in Council Tax to give financial assistance to people on low incomes. The Committee would receive feedback from the consultation process prior to making recommendations to Council on any potential amendments to the scheme.

In response to questions from members, the Chair commented that the results of the consultation would be reported back to the Committee. The Council Tax Support Scheme grant referred to in paragraph 7.2.4 of the report was a one-off grant and it would be necessary to ensure that the scheme remained financially sustainable in the future.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Committee

1. approves a formal consultation on the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022/23; and
2. delegates the final design of the consultation material to the Director of Finance and Customer Services in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee.

## **18 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee considered a report on progress with the agreed action plan in support of the Customer Experience Strategy. Significant progress had been made to raise awareness of the Customer Experience Strategy, and all actions were progressing to agreed delivery timescales.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Committee notes the progress made to date on the agreed Customer Experience action plan.

At 11.45 am, the Committee adjourned until 12.05 pm.

## **19 SHARED SERVICES REVIEW UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee considered a report on progress with a joint review of shared services. The report set out the purpose of, and approach to, the review, progress to date and the next steps.

The report had been considered and noted by the Shared Services Joint Committee on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2021. It was noted that the business plans of the shared services had also been considered at that meeting and that there would be a further opportunity to ask questions at the Shared Services Committee's next meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021.

### **RESOLVED**

That the report be noted.

## **20 2023 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES**

The Committee considered a report which outlined the proposals recently published by the Boundary Commission for England for revised Parliamentary Constituency boundaries and which made provision for a sub-committee to be established, with powers to produce a Council submission to the Commission's current and future consultation exercise.

It was noted that town and parish councils, as well as members of the public, were able to submit representations on the review to the Boundary Commission. It was also noted that there would be a second round of consultation and that, in the event that Cheshire East Council did not

submit representations in the first round, it would still have the option to submit representations in the second.

**RESOLVED**

That the report be received and no further action be taken at the present time.

**21 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered an updated work programme for 2021/22.

With regard to a report on Terms and Conditions Review to be considered at the Committee's meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021, the Executive Director of Corporate Services undertook to provide a briefing to members of the Committee prior to the meeting.

Members also asked if financial training could be provided to enable them to consider reports of a financial nature including those referred by the Finance Sub-Committee. The Chair noted the request.

**RESOLVED**

That the work programme be noted without change.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 12.25 pm

Councillor S Corcoran (Chair)