

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Economy and Growth Committee**
held on Tuesday, 30th November, 2021 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor N Mannion (Chair)
Councillor M Goldsmith (Vice-Chair)

Councillors J Barber, S Brookfield, D Brown, J Clowes, A Gregory, P Groves,
M Houston, A Kolker, R Moreton and P Williams

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Peter Skates, Director of Growth and Enterprise
Karen Carsberg, Head of Housing
Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development
Andy Kehoe, Head of Estates
Joanne Wilcox, Head of Financial Management
Adrian Leslie, Solicitor
Rachel Graves, Democratic Services Officer

20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors D Jefferay, R Moreton and D Stockton.

21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In the interests of openness, the following declarations were made:

Item 5 – Housing Enforcement Policy Revised: Councillors M Goldsmith and A Gregory declared that they owned rented property.

Item 6 – Domestic Adaptations and Retrofit Procurement: Councillor P Williams declared a potential interest.

22 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2021 be approved as a correct record.

23 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

Mrs Ann Pye stated that she was speaking in relation to Digital Connectivity item and the poor digital connectivity experienced in her neighbourhood. She noted that substantial funds had been obtained for

the Connecting Cheshire project and that the business support element had been a success and stated that little appeared to have been achieved on connectivity in areas of 'not spots'. She asked if sufficient staffing could be applied to the project to ensure all in Cheshire East could have a digital connection within the timescales required. The Director of Growth and Enterprise undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr Andrew Kolker stated that in many parts of the Borough it appeared that the Royal Mail was struggling to provide a service and meet the timescales for delivery of mail and that the situation could get worse as move towards a busy period for the mail service. He requested that the Council write to Royal Mail requesting a definitive statement and then the Council could issue a press release suggesting organisations make changes to their working practices to mitigate for this problem. The Director of Growth and Enterprise undertook to write to Royal Mail.

Cllr Anthony Critchley spoke in relation to a stalled development on Heathfield Avenue in the Hightown area of Crewe and the state of site, which had suffered from fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour and asked that the Council provide a written update on any work being done by the Council in relation to the site that he could share with residents. The Director of Growth and Enterprise undertook to provide a written response.

24 HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY REVISED

The Committee considered the revised Housing Enforcement Policy.

Challenging poor quality housing was a priority in the Housing Strategy 2018-2023, with regulation and enforcement being key activities in ensuring that landlords provided good quality, safe accommodation that was well managed.

The proposed changes to the Housing Enforcement Policy included:

- setting out what good accommodation looked like
- publishing service standards
- providing clarity about enforcement considerations
- providing clear guidance to the public about how civil penalties were calculate for Housing Act 2004 offences, minimum energy efficiency standards and electrical safety standards
- setting out the considerations for applying for a banning order against landlords.

The Committee unanimously **RESOLVED:**

- 1 to approve the amendments to the revised Housing Enforcement Policy be approved ; and
- 2 to authorise the Director of Growth and Enterprise, in consultation with the Chair of the Economy and Growth Committee, to make

further amendments to the Policy to ensure ongoing compliance with the law and guidance from the Government.

25 DOMESTIC ADAPTATIONS AND RETROFIT PROCUREMENT

The Committee considered the report which sought approval to undertake procurement exercises for the procurement of Level Access Showers and for the procurement of Domestic Retrofit works.

Cabinet in July 2020 had approved the procurement of a new framework for Level Access Showers and the Council had subsequently entered into a Framework Agreement with a supplier who was assessed as providing the most economically advantageous tender. However, market conditions had had a detrimental effect on the delivery of the framework by the appointed supplier and, following legal advice, the Housing Service terminated call-off orders under the Framework Agreement. There was now a need to carry out a new procurement exercise to appoint a replacement supplier.

The Council, working with Cheshire West and Chester Council and Warrington Borough Council, had submitted a bid for funding from the Sustainable Warmth Home Upgrade Grant funding and had been successful for the off-gas element of the funding and awarded £3,288,960. Cheshire East council would act as the accountable body for the funding on behalf of the sub-region and lead on procurement which would be secured through a suitable external framework by appointing from a panel of suppliers procured in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

The Committee unanimously **RESOLVED:**

- 1 that the procurement of a Framework Agreement for Level Access Showers be approved and authority be delegated to the Director of Growth and Enterprise to award and enter into a Framework agreement with a single, successful, supplier who meets the procurement criteria and the requirements of the Framework.
- 2 that the procurement of a Framework Agreement for Domestic Energy Efficiency Retrofit works be approved and authority be delegated to the Director of Growth and Enterprise to award and enter into a Framework agreement with the successful suppliers.

26 UPDATE ON TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION PROGRAMMES

The Committee received a progress report on Town Centre Regeneration programmes which included an update on the Crewe town centre regeneration programme, details of the projects being progressed to support the revitalisation of Macclesfield, progress with the emerging Town Centre Vitality Plans for the nine key service centres, and pandemic recovery support for Town Centres utilising Welcome Back Funding.

The Committee noted the inclusion of a list of Crewe Regeneration projects being led by Crewe Town Board in the report but were concerned about the lack of openness and transparency of Crewe Town Board as its meetings were not open to the public. In response it was stated that the Town Board had been established as a requirement of bidding to the Government's Towns Fund and developing a Town Investment Plan. It was reported that the Town Board had a webpage – [We Are All Crewe](#) and that the agendas and minutes of the meetings were available on the Council's website - [agendas and minutes for Crewe Town Board](#)

The Committee unanimously **RESOLVED:**

- 1 to note the progress which has been made in relation to the development and delivery of town centre regeneration projects in Crewe and Macclesfield
- 1 to note the progress made in developing Town Centre Vitality Plans for Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow, and agree that the draft reports shall be issued for public consultation in early 2022, and that a report shall be made back to this Committee post that consultation with specific recommendations aligned to those reports.
- 3 to note the ongoing work to support town centre recovery across all principal towns and key service centres and proposals for revenue spend to be claimed back from the Welcome Back Fund.

27 **DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY - UPDATE**

The Committee received an update report on Digital Connectivity which provided an overview of current activities, future projects and the challenges faced by the Council in achieving its digital ambitions.

It was reported that approval of funding referred to in paragraphs 7.5 to 7.7 of the report, would now go to the full Council meeting on 16 December 2021 due to the value of the funding to be received.

The Committee unanimously **RESOLVED:**

- 1 to note the progress which has been made in relation to the delivery of digital and agrees that a further report be brought to the Committee identifying progress and performance in Autumn next year.
- 2 to note the development and pipeline of future projects.

28 MID-YEAR PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The Committee considered the Mid-Year Performance Review report for the Economy and Enterprise Department for the first half of 2021.

The report detailed the performance against the key priorities and key performance indicators of services in Housing, Estates, Rural & Cultural Economy and Economic Development.

The Chair reported that the Council had been awarded a highly commended award for the Crewe Market Hall project by the ACES Award for Excellence in Property Management.

The Committee unanimously **RESOLVED:**

- 1 to note the performance of the Growth and Enterprise Department.

29 ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN - PRINCIPLES

The Committee considered a report on the Council's proposed Asset Management Plan.

The Council's previous Asset Management Plan was for the years 2015 to 2020. The Council had delayed producing an updated Asset Management Plan as the Council had been focusing on responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Since 2015 there had been changes to legislation and regulations which had an effect on the way the Council could choose to use assets. The Council had also adopted a number of policies that had an impact on the way the Council used its assets. The updated Asset Management Plan would look to identify the differing needs for assets, generating a framework to derive the overall best solution for the Council. The policy principles for the Plan were set out in Appendix A to the report. It was expected that the Asset Management Plan would be presented to the Committee in the next six months.

The Committee unanimously **RESOLVED:**

- 1 to note the report, and outcomes since the previous Asset Management Plan, as identified in paragraph 5.9 of the report; and
- 2 to approve the process and timetable for a draft Asset Management Policy to be brought back to Committee for endorsement.

30 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the Committee's Work Programme.

As reported when considering the Digital Cheshire item, the Connecting Cheshire item for 11 January 2022 meeting would now be going to the December meeting of full Council as it considered the acceptance of a grant award.

It was proposed that at the January meeting, the Committee discuss future work programme items for the next six months.

Items suggested for the Work Programme were a review of related policies around farm strategy, and development sites abandoned by developers.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be received and noted.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.32 pm

Councillor N Mannion (Chair)