

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Economy and Growth Committee**
held on Tuesday, 13th September, 2022 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

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

Councillors S Brookfield, D Brown, J Clowes, P Groves, S Hogben,
M Houston, D Jefferay, A Kolker, R Moreton, D Stockton and P Williams

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Peter Skates, Director of Growth and Enterprise
Karen Carsberg, Head of Housing
Karen Whitehead, Housing Standards & Adaptations Manager
Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development
Paul Griffiths, Infrastructure Delivery Manager
Brendan Flanagan, Head of Rural and Cultural Economy
Paul Goodwin, Head of Financial Services & Deputy Chief Finance Officer
Adrian Leslie, Solicitor
Rachel Graves, Democratic Services Officer

Elected members, officers and members of the public stood in a minutes
silence as a mark of respect for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In relation to Item 8 – Broadway Meadows Car Park, the following made
declarations of interest in the interest of openness:

Councillor M Goldsmith declared that he was the ward member for
Wilmslow West and Chorley, and a member of Wilmslow Town Council.

Councillor D Jefferay declared that he was the ward member for Wilmslow
East.

Councillor D Stockton declared that he was the ward member for
Wilmslow Lacey Green.

17 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2022 be approved as a correct record.

18 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no public speakers.

19 SOUTHERN GATEWAY PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLEWAY CONNECTIVITY SCHEME - LAND AND RIGHTS

The Committee considered a report on the proposals for the Southern Gateway Pedestrian and Cycleway Connectivity Scheme to provide a new gateway entrance to the south of Crewe town centre via a new pedestrian and cycleway linking High Street and Forge Street.

The Committee asked what proposals would be in place to enable pedestrians to cross the main road network around Mill Street. In response it was explained that as part of the scheme there would be a wide central crossing at the roundabout splitter island on Mill Street and the existing crossings would be retained. It would not be possible to put a signal-controlled crossing at that location due to the high traffic flow and congestion at the junction.

It was also asked if there were any statistics on how many accidents to pedestrians in this area. It was reported that this had not been highlighted in the transport assessment as an issue and that the figure would be provided to the committee members.

Concerns were raised about antisocial behaviour in the area of the proposed pedestrian and cycleway and it was asked that safety and lighting be addressed in the planning application to ensure a safe route for people to walk and cycle to the town centre.

RESOLVED (unanimously) : That the Committee

- 1 note the findings of the public consultation exercise as set out in the Engagement Report, at appendix 1 to the report.
- 2 delegate authority to the Head of Estates, in consultation with the Director of Governance and Compliance and the Chief Financial Officer, to:
 - 2.1 take all action necessary for the acquisition, extinguishment or otherwise rendering ineffective any third-party interests over the Scheme land or to appropriate such land so as to come within the provisions of Section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016.

- 2.2 release or procure the release of any rights, covenants, and other interests over the Scheme land insofar as it has the right to do so and provided that such release would not put the Council in breach of any obligations to a third party or parties.
- 3 approve the development of a CPO pursuant to section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to acquire the land and interests in respect land required for the Scheme and pursuant and Schedule 3 of the Acquisitions of Land Act 1981 and all other powers as appropriate for the purpose of acquiring the land and new rights for the purpose of facilitating the development, redevelopment, and improvement of the land by way of highway and public realm works.
- 4 authorise the Head of Estates to:
 - 4.1 negotiate and agree terms to seek to acquire the land and rights (or extinguish the same) required for the Scheme by agreement and to instruct the Director of Governance and Compliance to negotiate and enter into the legal agreements necessary to facilitate any such agreements.
 - 4.2 negotiate and approve the payment of any relevant and reasonable professional fees incurred by landowners and others with compensatable interests in taking professional advice in connection with the acquisition of their interests required for the Scheme.
- 5 delegate to the Head of Infrastructure the authority to negotiate and enter into all necessary agreements in connection with the relocation of a sprinkler system water tank.

20 DOMESTIC ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The Committee considered a report which outlined the changes to the Council's existing Home Repairs and Adaptation for Vulnerable People Policy 2021-2026 and the ECO Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent, to support low-income households to maintain their health and wellbeing in a warm home, in response to the Government's energy efficiency policy changes for low-income households.

Following changes by the Government to the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) to align with the strategy to be net zero by 2050 and focus on insulation measures and renewable heating systems, the Council provided a safety net to vulnerable residents where insulation is not practical or was too disruptive, or where emergency boiler repairs or renewals were needed to safeguard their health and wellbeing.

The Council's existing policy had links to the Government's ECO policy as households are eligible for support from the Council if they also qualified for ECO. It was proposed that the Council's Home Repairs and Adaptation for Vulnerable People Policy be amended to remove the requirement to qualify for another fuel poverty related domestic energy efficiency scheme – such as ECO and replace with a maximum income and savings threshold – the income threshold set at £31,000 in line with the ECO4 Flexible Eligibility criteria and that savings threshold set at £23,250 in line with the Care Act 2014. The proposed thresholds to be adjusted if the ECO4 or Care Act thresholds were adjusted at any time whilst the Home Repairs and Adaptation for Vulnerable People Policy was in force.

The Government had also revised the local authority eligibility for the scheme as part of ECO and, whilst previously councils could opt to participate in this scheme by publishing their own qualifying criteria through a statement of intent, the Government had now advised that there was still an ability for the Council to participate in the scheme but they would now have to meet the Government's qualifying criteria. It was therefore proposed that the Council's Statement of Intent be amended to include the new qualifying criteria.

RESOLVED (unanimously): That

- 1 approval is given to the amendments to the Home Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Policy 2021-2026, as outlined in Appendix A to the report.
- 2 approval is given to the publication of the ECO Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent, as outlined in Appendix B to the report.
- 3 delegate to the Director of Growth and Enterprise to review the maximum income and savings thresholds as required.

21 **RURAL ACTION PLAN**

The Committee considered the Rural Action Plan to cover the period 2022/23 to 2025/26.

A Member Advisory Panel, comprising of Councillors J Clowes, P Groves, M Houston, R Moreton and P Williams had been set up to provide overview and direction on the workstreams and drafting of the Rural Action Plan.

The Rural Action Plan was identified by the Corporate Plan as a mechanism to support that delivery of the corporate outcomes to meet the needs of the rural communities. The focus of the current plan considered how the Council could help to build a strong and resilient rural economy with strong, supportive rural places and communities.

The Rural Action Plan identified the following strategic themes for actions to support rural area:

- digital connectivity including broadband and mobile
- access for residence, businesses and visitors
- rural housing
- strong support of rural places and communities
- planning for a green and sustainable place
- visitor and cultural economy
- rural-based businesses.

The Rural Action Plan also identified further emerging challenges that may affect the rural area over the period of the Plan but would not necessarily have plans currently in place to address them. The Appendix to the Plan identified these issues and opportunities that may require further consideration by the Committee and other service committees over the period of the Plan. These included energy vulnerabilities; agricultural transition, and the environment; investment in climate resilience; rural based businesses; shared prosperity and levelling up; access and transport; and research and intelligence.

It was reported that on 3 September, the Government had launched a new Rural England Prosperity Fund known, as the Rural Fund, as a top up to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for eligible local authorities. Cheshire East Council was an eligible authority and would receive an additional allocation of up to £827,000 subject to the preparation, submission and approval of an addendum to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund investment plan. The details of the fund were awaited but the criteria would be linked to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and would be reported to the Corporate Policy Committee.

RESOLVED (unanimously) :

That the Committee approve and adopt the Rural Action Plan 2022/23 – 2025/26.

22 **BROADWAY MEADOWS CAR PARK**

The Committee considered the report which provided details of the appraisal of the current surface car park at Broadway Meadows, Wilmslow, for the development of a Multi Storey Car Park and ancillary residential development, to support additional provision of car parking spaces.

The Council had published the Wilmslow Parking Strategy in February 2020 and a key recommendation was to examine the business case for creating a multi-decked car park at Broadway Meadows to provide additional long stay parking for Wilmslow.

The existing surface car park had 272 spaces and was open seven days a week and allocated for long stay occupiers. Pre-pandemic there was high

level of usage weekdays with the car park becoming full between 7 am and 9 am, which led to parking on the neighbouring streets.

A feasibility and market assessment were undertaken and the optimum size of a multi-storey car park was assessed to be 403 spaces, with an option to create additional value with some ancillary residential development on the site.

However, the impact of the pandemic had seen a change in usage of the car park. In 2021 the Council undertook an evaluation exercise and engaged with a contractor on construction, cost, design and delivery, with these being upgraded for inflation in 2022 and the financial sensitivity analysis progressed on multiple variations. The Council would have to borrow the capital for the delivery of the car park, assessed at a total cost of circa £9.08m and it would only produce an additional 131 spaces. These additional spaces along with the predicted revenue from the present 272 spaces would not see any payback of the capital outlay and financial costs, therefore the viability of the business case was not demonstrated.

RESOLVED: That the Committee

- 1 note that currently the financial viability of a new Multi Storey Car Park constructed on the existing surface car park has not been demonstrated.
- 2 note that a further review of viability will be undertaken in 12 months, and alternative options of funding delivery and potential alternative locations will be explored.

23 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered its work programme for 2022/23.

It was noted that at present there were nine agenda items listed for the November meeting of the Committee and it was agreed that the meeting start time would be moved to 1 pm.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme for 2022/23 be noted.

24 **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 as amended on the grounds that it involved the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of

Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

25 UPDATE ON REGENERATION PROJECT

The Director of Growth and Enterprise gave a verbal update on a regeneration project.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.40 pm

Councillor N Mannion (Chair)