

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee**
held on Thursday, 16th March, 2023 in the Committee Suites 1,2,3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach, CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor L Wardlaw (Chair)
Councillor D Murphy (Vice-Chair)

Councillors L Anderson, L Crane, B Murphy, M Simon, L Smetham,
P Redstone, R Vernon, S Handley and D Edwardes.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mike Barnett, Head of Highways Cheshire East
Mark Heywood, Cheshire East Highways
Jill Broomhall, Director of Adult Social Care
Richard Christopherson, Locality Manager – Community Safety
Dr Suzie Roberts, Public Health Consultant
Guy Kilminster, Head of Health Improvement
Katie Small, Democratic Services Manager
Nikki Bishop, Democratic Services Officer

OTHER ATTENDEES

Neil Griffith, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Cheshire Fire Authority)
Matt Barlow, Station Manager (Cheshire Fire Authority)
Sam Sloan, Network Business Manager (United Utilities)
Emma Birch, Area Engagement Lead (United Utilities)
David Brown, Senior Advisor – Flood Risk Management (Environment Agency)
Paul Gates, Area Flood Risk Manager (Environment Agency)
Ben Scott, Area Flood Risk Manager (Environment Agency)
Claire Jesson, Local Police Unit Commander (Cheshire Police)

The Chair referred to the sad death of the late Councillor Steve Carter who represented the Hurdsfield Ward and was also a member of the Scrutiny Committee. The Committee passed on their condolences to the family and friends of late Councillor Carter.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Sally Handley, newly appointed member of the Scrutiny Committee, to the meeting.

61 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rachel Bailey and Andrew Gregory. Councillors Patrick Redstone and David Edwardes were present as substitutes.

62 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In the interest of openness, Councillor Wardlaw declared that she occasionally worked for the Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Trust. Councillor D Murphy declared that he was a member of the Cheshire Fire Authority.

63 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Cllr Wardlaw referred to the Prevent information that had been requested at the last meeting. It was requested that consideration was given to how Committee Members could receive this information in the future.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2022 be approved and signed by the Chair.

64 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

65 FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS BY FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT AGENCIES

Committee Members received presentations on flood risk management functions from key colleagues representing Cheshire East Highways (LLFA), Ringway Jacobs, Cheshire Fire Authority, United Utilities and the Environment Agency. Representatives updated Committee Members on the role of their organisations in the event of flooding, how they communicated and worked with partners and what needed to be improved in the future.

The Committee and representatives in attendance agreed that the responsibility to manage flood risk was shared and that whilst there had been clear progress made in improving communication between all agencies, this needed to be developed upon even further in the future to ensure effective collaborative working. It was highlighted that the key priority for all agencies was to identify opportunities to demonstrate joined up working, educating residents on flood risk and jointly seeking further funding opportunities for flood risk management.

Key comments noted:

- It was noted that the Cheshire East budget for flood risk management, from 1 April 2023, would be separated from highway drainage. Committee Members requested that further detailed information on this budget (and the % allocated to LLFA) was shared with Committee Members. Mike Barnett committed to providing a written response.

- Committee Members requested further information on the number of local schemes for mitigating food risk that were completed/outstanding for 22-23 and also an indication of the number of schemes planned for 23-24. Mike Barnett committed to providing a written response.
- Committee Members raised concerns relating to the number of planning applications being approved for new homes to be built on floodplains across the Borough. It was requested that the updated Local Flood Risk Management Strategy took these important issues into consideration.
- Committee Members referred to the £1.5m unclaimed funding for flooding. It was confirmed that this related to the Flood Defence Grant and in order for the funding to be secured, a detailed business case needed to be submitted to the Environment Agency demonstrating a reduction in flood risk. It was noted that due to the nature of the flooding in Cheshire and the number of properties affected, it was difficult to meet the requirements of the business case. Cheshire East Highways committed to working in partnership with the Environment Agency in readiness for the new 6-year cycle of funding to move as many schemes forward as possible.
- Mike Barnett committed to investigating the flooding concerns raised by Cllr Edwardes in relation to Manchester Road, Congleton prior to the implementation of any new Active Travel Scheme.
- Members were informed that the 'Fix My Street' reporting tool should be used to report any flash flooding incidents. It was highlighted that the logging and recording of such incidents would help to build a better understanding of the drainage network in Cheshire East and help to inform decision-making.
- Committee Members queried the location of the Swift Water Rescue (SWR) vehicles and noted that none of these were based in Cheshire East. It was confirmed that the location of SWR vehicles was based upon risk. However this was under continual review as the number of severe weather events was increasing as a result of climate change. It was highlighted that SWR responded to fast moving water incidents and that the majority of water incidents in Cheshire East were still. Capability across the Cheshire Fire Authority had been increased and all firefighters had now been trained and equipped to enter water with the correct PPE.
- Committee Members requested more detailed and localised information in relation to Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) in Cheshire East (incidents/plans to remove). Cllr Anderson referred to a particular issue in Wilmslow and requested that where there were issues in the future, United Utilities informed local ward Members.

Committee Members also requested reassurance from United Utilities that they were also seeking opportunities for increased funding for flood risk management in Cheshire East.

- Cllr D Murphy suggested that the Environment Agency attend a Congleton Environment and Communities Committee in the future. David Brown (Environment Agency) agreed to attend.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the presentations and updates provided be noted.
- (2) Representatives from all agencies to be invited to return to provide a further update on Flood Risk Management in March 2024.

66 VIOLENCE & INTIMIDATION AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS

Richard Christopherson, Locality Manager (Community Safety) and Claire Jesson, Local Police Unit Commander attended the Committee meeting and provided a presentation on the initiatives being rolled out across Cheshire as part of the ongoing commitment to tackling violence and intimidation against women and girls.

It was reported that this area of work was initially developed following the tragic death of Sarah Everard in 2021. A survey was undertaken across the borough which received over 500 responses. The majority of responses were received from women and girls which highlighted that this cohort of individuals did not feel safe. A multi-agency sub-group, Violence and Intimidation against Women and Girls, was later formed.

The Committee noted that £1.5m funding had been secured from the Home Office for a number of innovative projects that would be rolled out across Cheshire by September 2023. The project consisted of various elements including training in the education sector and wider community, promotion of safety apps, extension of the use of GoodSAM, mandatory safeguarding training for taxi drivers and deployment of safety vehicles in the night-time economy (one bus solely for Cheshire East located predominately in Crewe and Macclesfield).

Committee Members were encouraged to share the details of the safety app, Hollie Guard, within their local communities. It was highlighted that the Hollie Guard app provided an enhanced level of protection which included emergency notifications to chosen contacts, location tracker and the transfer of audio and video evidence taken directly from the mobile phone.

Committee Members were pleased to hear that the focus of domestic abuse was now shifting towards the perpetrator, rather than victim. Committee Members queried the uptake of safeguarding training from

licence premise owners. It was confirmed that this training was not yet mandatory however there were ongoing discussions with the Licensing Team to look at making this mandatory when obtaining a licence in the future.

Superintendent Jesson committed to exploring the language used when referring to victims of domestic abuse. It had been suggested that the word 'target' may be more appropriate terminology.

Jill Broomhall informed Committee Members that the Knife Angel would be visiting Crewe Town Centre in May. It was highlighted that this emotive and thought-provoking monument aimed to educate and raise awareness of the increasing knife crime across Britain.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be received and noted.

67 PHARMACY PROVISION IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

The Committee considered the report which provided an overview of the findings from the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) in relation to community pharmacy provision in rural communities within Cheshire East. It was noted that the Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board had a statutory responsibility to publish an updated statement of pharmaceutical needs every three years.

It was highlighted to Committee Members that since the publication of the PNA, Lloyds Pharmacy had announced the closure of 237 of its chemists in Sainsbury's supermarkets by the end of the year. This directly impacted two pharmacies in Cheshire East (Nantwich and Macclesfield). Public Health officers were working closely with the Local Pharmaceutical Committee to understand the implications for the recommendations within the published PNA.

Cllr Anderson raised concerns relating to supplier issues and shortages of medicines. Cllr Anderson queried if the availability of certain medicines and the increasing shortages of them had been taken into account. Dr S Roberts committed to providing a written response.

Committee Members queried the value of the Blood Pressure (BP) contracts to pharmacists and also the impact this had on GP workload. It was confirmed that the BP service was commissioned by NHS England and pharmacists across the Country could opt in/out of this. The service had allowed individuals with high blood pressure to be detected at an early stage and resulted in earlier treatment. Dr Roberts committed to providing a written response which would update the Committee on the outcomes of the BP service and who was responsible for this.

RESOLVED:

That the report and PNA findings be noted.

68 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee were updated on the following changes to the Work Programme since the last meeting.

- An item on 'Safer Cheshire East Partnership Annual Report and Strategic Intelligence Assessment' had been added to the Work Programme for June 2023.
- An update on the 'Prevent and Channel Programme', 'Delivery of the new Integrated Care System and delivery of the Winter Plan' and the 'Future of Congleton War Memorial and Knutsford Cottage Hospital' had also been added to the Work Programme.
- Committee Members would receive an update on the return of Maternity Services to Macclesfield District General Hospital at their first meeting in June.
- Flood Risk Management be added to the Work Programme for the next municipal year.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee Work Programme be received and noted.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 2.04 pm

Councillor L Wardlaw (Chair)