

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee**
held on Thursday, 1st September, 2011 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor H Murray (Chairman)
Councillor M Grant (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors A Barratt, L Brown, D Hough, J Jackson, W Livesley, M Parsons,
G Morris, P Raynes and J Wray

Co-opted E Lam

ALSO PRESENT

Councillors D Flude, A Thwaite, Lesley Smetham

OFFICERS PRESENT

James Morley – Scrutiny Officer
Mark Nedderman – Senior Scrutiny Officer
Paul Bayley – Customer Services Manager
Martin Grime – Lead Emergency Planning Officer for Cheshire East
Norman Powell – Lead Emergency Planner for Industrial Issues

116 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That subject to the following amendments the minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2011 be approved as a correct record.

(a) That Emily Lam be added to the list of Committee members present.

(b) That the name of Councillor M Grant be deleted under the heading 'Declarations of Interest/Party Whip and the name of Councillor J Jackson be replaced therefor.

117 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

There were no members of the Committee present who wished to declare any interests.

118 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN

There were no members of the public present who wished to address the Committee.

CUSTOMER SERVICES UPDATE

The Committee received a presentation from the Customer Services Manager. The presentation gave information on what Customer Services was, what the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were, what performance issues had recently occurred and what was planned to improve performance.

The Customer Services Manager gave the presentation; questions were asked and the following information arose.

- The Council's website had received nearly three million visits during 2010/11, these included visits made by Councillors and members of staff. The website contained a rating system with only 0.025% of feedback rating the site as poor at the time.
- 475,449 telephone calls had been made to the contact centres with an average speed to answer of 20 seconds. These figures included appointments with officers however they did not include calls made directly to officers bypassing the contact centres.
- The policy for officers responding to voicemails was to do so within one working day. All departments within the Council should adhere to the Customer Charter which was a benchmark for performance of services. The Committee believed those calls going directly to officers also need to be monitored.
- Mystery shoppers were used to monitor performance related to customer service for each department in the Authority. Committee Members expressed belief that they were ideally placed to take part as mystery shoppers and stated that in future they should be consulted as mystery shoppers due to the feedback they received from constituents.
- 24 hour emergency contact had been transferred to CCTV operators. This had improved the service however further developments were needed. CCTV operators needed to assess whether calls were genuine emergencies more critically. If emergencies needed to be dealt with the CCTV operators had contact details for those officers on call.
- Face to face interaction with customers was offered at four customer service centres across Cheshire East as well as in several libraries. The Council's plan was to extend this to all libraries in Cheshire East to offer better access and increase the use of libraries. Library staff understood the need to offer these supplementary services.
- The strategy was to enhance face to face quality however there was also an intention to reduce the number of customers

accessing face to face by directing them to the telephone and internet access. Face to face costs were on average £7.23 per interaction; by telephone was £2.40 and use of the website was 23p per visit. The Customer Service Manager stated that there was a need to improve service quality but also reduce costs. There was no increase in overall cost for rolling out face to face access to libraries and the strategy resulted in a net saving for the Council.

- The contact centres in Cheshire East experienced poor service during March, April and May due to issues with the telephony infrastructure following the introduction of the essential numbers; this had since been dealt with. The new waste collection system that was rolled out in the South of the Borough in March 2011 was poorly carried out which resulted in a large number of calls that the contact centre wasn't prepared for. The Customer Service Manager assured the Committee that lessons had been learnt and that the same would not happen during the roll out of the silver recycling bins.
- Although the Council wanted more people to use the website to access information, many areas of the Borough didn't have access to broadband. The Council would try to fund extension of broadband access and was bidding for funding as part of the IT strategy. Those residents with access to broadband yet not using it would be encouraged to access training, available in libraries, known as Digital Inclusion.

The Chairman thanked the Customer Service Manager for the presentation.

The Chairman asked the Committee to consider the presentation and decide if they wanted further information. The Committee requested information on the Customer Charter performance of each department and figures from customer services after the roll out of silver bins.

RESOLVED:

- (A) That the Customer Service Manager be thanked and the presentation be noted.
- (B) That a report be produced by the Customer Services Manager, within a month of the roll out of silver bins, on contact centre performance and present it to the Committee at the November meeting.
- (C) That information on the Customer Charter performance for each department be presented to the relevant Scrutiny Committee.
- (D) That information on the types of issues the contact centre was receiving would give indications as to which services were failing. Information for each department could be presented to relevant

scrutiny committees to establish whether further review of departments was necessary.

(E) Councillors should be included in future mystery shopper exercises

The Customer Services Manager left the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned for five minutes

120 **FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT UPDATE**

The Committee received a report on Flood and Water Management from the Lead Emergency Planning Officer for Cheshire East. The Officer took the Committee through the Council's key duties and responsibilities as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) including a summary of each duty and dates of when the duties will become effective.

The Committee made the following points:

- The structure shown in Appendix B was good.
- The LLFA would maintain a register of structures or features which they considered to have a significant effect on flood risk. An on going structure list had been obtained and was being arranged in parish order. That would then form part of the Council's Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) in order that the Council could identify areas that were a potential risk. Any property, such as walls, that would contribute to flood defence can be considered as such. Any property considered part of the register would have to be easily identified to ensure residents do not make changes without alerting the LLFA. Councillors expressed an interest in assisting with the production of the list. The Flood Risk Officer was located in Westfields and could be contacted by Councillors as normal.
- Paragraph 11.1.1 of the report; the £176,500 budget received from DEFRA was an annual budget. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) adoption would also be funded in full; consultation on this would be completed in autumn 2011. The SuDS Approving Body (SAB) timeframe for approval of drainage applications would be well within 7 weeks so as not to hold up the planning process.
- The Lead Emergency Planning Officer for Industrial Issues was present to discuss reservoirs. Reservoirs in the top 100 high priority category for flood risk were assessed based on size and the materials within them, the risk of failure and the potential damage that a failure would cause. The two Cheshire East reservoirs in the top 100, Trentabank and Ridgate, in the top 100 were not the highest risk, ranking between 50th and 70th approximately.

- There was a possibility that emergency planning stock, such as sand bags, would be decentralised to Parish and Town Councils deemed able to distribute them competently.

Cllr D Flude attended the meeting to raise an issue about the risk of flooding and surface water to unadopted areas of Cheshire East that weren't cleaned as part of the Council's legal requirement. In response Councillors were asked to speak with the Flood Officer to identify these areas. The SWMP would be able to identify areas of risk to be dealt with and the Highways contract with Ringway Jacobs included provision for emergency call out for cleaning of gullies etc.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Officers be thanked and the report be noted by Councillors for their knowledge.
- (b) That emergency planning stock should be decentralised to competent areas of Cheshire East.

Cllr D Flude and A Thwaite left the meeting. The Lead Emergency Planning Officer for Cheshire East and Lead Emergency Planning Officer for Industrial Issues left the meeting.

121 **UPDATE FROM CCTV CONTROL ROOM SITE VISIT**

Members that attended any site visits to the Macclesfield CCTV control room were asked to present feedback to the Committee. The Committee discussed the feedback from each Member.

The following points were made:

- Each Member that attended was impressed with the performance and effort of the CCTV room staff.
- The evidence that the CCTV staff provided to the Police was sent within hours of incidents. This was effective in helping the Police to get convictions quickly and should be applauded.
- The CCTV room equipment was impressive and the staff's ownership or rotas and operations were considered an effective way of working.
- Should Parish Councils wish to establish CCTV cameras in their areas the central control room in Macclesfield would possibly provide the service to monitor them.
- A review to establish which cameras were in the most effective positions should be carried out. For those that weren't the Committee would look into whether cameras could be moved to other locations. There was a mobile CCTV camera in use in

Cheshire East. It was recommended that this should be used in hotspot areas.

- Any relocation or placing of new cameras should be Police lead and evidence based to ensure effective placement. Also, collaboration between Safer and Stronger Communities and Environment Service should be carried out to ensure that any trees or other street furniture will not obstruct CCTV camera sightlines or grow to do so in future.

The Chairman thanked the Members for their feedback and concluded that a report will be produced to publicise the Committees findings.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Scrutiny Officer be requested to produce a report based on the feedback from Members and the discussions of the Committee and present it at the next meeting.

122 **SCRUTINY MEMBER TRAINING**

The Senior Scrutiny Officer explained to the Committee that they had the opportunity to request any training they thought would be necessary to perform their duties on the Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairman asked the Committee if they where interested in training on the Scrutiny Toolkit or anything provided by North West Employers.

The Committee discussed possible dates for any training.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Chairman feedback to the Scrutiny Chairmen's Group that Friday mornings would be the most convenient time to attend any training however several dates would need to be set up in order to accommodate as many Members as possible.

123 **WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Committee was asked to consider the Committee's Work Programme for the civic year. Members were asked to suggest possible items that would be of interest to the Committee.

The Committee discussed the subject of Libraries and the Libraries Strategy that had recently been to informal Cabinet. The Committee decided to conduct a mid-term fact finding meeting to gather information on Libraries from reports and officers. The Committee would then offer comments to Cabinet to aid their consideration. The Committee discussed the links between the Libraries strategy and other strategies that would need to be considered along side libraries.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the work programme be noted with the agreed amendments.
- (b) That the Scrutiny Officer be requested to arrange an informal meeting on 15th September 2011 to determine if the proposed libraries strategy is congruent with the information centre strategy and the contact centre strategy.

Emily Lam left the meeting

124 **FORWARD PLAN - EXTRACTS**

The Committee considered the Forward Plan and the relevant Service Plans which had been tabled at the meeting and were asked to suggest whether any part of them should be considered further by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Plan and Service Plans be noted.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 1.30 pm

Councillor H Murray (Chairman)