

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Advisory Panel - People Held on Tuesday, 23rd September, 2008 at Council Chamber - Crewe

PRESENT

Councillor R Westwood (Chairman)

Councillors D Brown, J Crockatt, R Fletcher, Mrs D Flude, W Livesley, M Parsons and R West

In attendance Councillor JP Findlow (Portfolio Holder Children and Family Services) and Councillor L Smetham

Apologies

Councillors Miss C Andrew, D Beckford, R Domleo, A Knowles, H Murray and Mrs C Tomlinson

8 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A number of Councillors who were existing County Councillors, Borough Councillors and Town and Parish Councillors declared a personal interest in the business of the meeting en bloc.

Councillor Dorothy Flude declared a personal interest in several of the matters included on the agenda, by virtue of the fact that she was a member of the Alzheimer's Society, a Trustee for Crossroads Care, a member of several history societies and a member of the Central Cheshire Advocacy Services for People with Learning Difficulties.

Councillor Jim Crockatt declared a personal interest in the item relating to Working with the Third Sector - A Partnership Framework for Cheshire East Council, by virtue of the fact that he was a member of Senior Voice for Macclesfield, and Councillor Ray Westwood declared a personal interest in this item by virtue of the fact that he was the Chairman of a community organisation.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, the above Members remained in the meeting during consideration of these matters.

9 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

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

10 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes be approved as a correct record, subject to the addition of Councillors J Crockatt and M Parsons and D Beckford to the list of Committee

Members present and Councillors P Findlow and L Smetham to the list of Members in attendance.

11 PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report, which contained proposals for the future Panel Work Programme. It was noted that the focus of the report was on content rather than process and it would also be necessary for the Panel to consider what methodology would be effective for whatever pieces of work the Panel resolved to pursue. The report set out some suggestions in respect of future working.

RESOLVED

That the suggestions for future working, as set out in the report, be agreed and that the Panel consider whether it was appropriate to form Task Groups in relation to any of the items included on the agenda when consideration was given to them.

12 TRANSFORMING LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Consideration was given to the report of the Cheshire County Council's Scrutiny Review Panel on Transforming Learning Communities. The Terms of Reference for the review by the Panel was to assess whether the TLC process was addressing the issue of surplus school places and to review and report on the consultation process undertaken to date on TLC proposals, so that lessons learnt may be applied across the Council's activities in the future. The report to the Scrutiny Review Panel had included graphs, which demonstrated surplus places forecast and actual positions for primary and secondary schools. David Ayres, Project Manager for TLC, attended the meeting and presented a series of slides providing detailed and updated information for Cheshire East. Copies of the presentation slides were circulated, together with the leaflets "Transforming Learning Communities in Cheshire - A Case for Change" and "Transforming Learning Communities - Securing Learning for the Future".

It was noted that the new Cheshire East Council would need to consider how to manage the gap between supply and demand of school places.

In considering the report, Members of the Panel raised the following issues:

- (i) Reference was made to the merger, which had taken place, of an infant and junior school in Wilmslow and concern was expressed that it had been necessary to provide new classrooms and other facilities, at a substantial cost. It was considered that the new Council needed to be aware of this and to make sure that any proposals were economically sound. It was reported that one of the aims of the Primary Capital Programme was to rebuild and refurbish 50% of primary schools and to improve others and that Members of the Panel could be provided with information in respect of this, if required.
- (ii) It was noted that the TLC process in Crewe had been very positive. However, there were still some concerns in respect of costs and the amount of money spent on some individual schools and these issues

needed to be addressed locally. It was also hoped that Members would be more closely involved in the future TLC process.

RESOLVED

1. That a Task Group be formed to take this matter forward and to consider the process and how TLC needed to be managed across East Cheshire, the Task Group members to be :-

Councillors Jim Crockatt
Bill Livesley
Michael Parsons
Ray Westwood
One representative from the Labour Group

2. That the relevant Portfolio Holder be notified of the Task Group meeting dates.
3. That consideration be given to the Terms of Reference, at the first meeting.

13 PERSONALISATION OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Consideration was given to a report, which would be considered by Cabinet, at its meeting on 7 October, for endorsement of the emerging Model of Social Care, including the high level design principles contained within the report, as a framework for developing more detailed proposals for phased implementation by new Councils and for inclusion within the 2009/10 budget setting process. The report was presented to the Panel, to enable Panel Members to be aware of the forthcoming Cabinet issue and to contribute any views to inform the decision making of Cabinet.

In considering the report Members of the Panel raised the following issues:

- (i) It was suggested that a set of indicators be produced to evaluate how the Model was performing, over a period of time, in terms of outcomes for Service Users and it was suggested that a Task Group be formed in order to do this.
- (ii) Reference was made to paragraph 3.1 of the report, relating to Financial Implications for Transition Costs and it was agreed that Cabinet be requested to consider ring fencing the Social Care Reform Grant for the Change Programme only.
- (iii) It was noted that, in the past, some people had experienced problems in respect of direct payments. Currently the County Council were assisting people in respect of direct payments and it was hoped that the Cheshire East Council would continue to provide this service. It was confirmed that this would continue and was referred to in the report.

RESOLVED

- 1 That Cabinet be requested to consider ring fencing the Social Care Reform Grant for the Change Programme in respect of the new Model of Social Care only.
- 2 That a Task Group be formed to evaluate the performance of the new Model, the Panel representatives to be:

Councillors Rod Fletcher
Dorothy Flude
Bill Livesley
- 3 That the relevant Portfolio Holder be notified of future meeting dates for the Task Group.
- 4 That the Terms of Reference be considered at the first meeting.

14 WORKING WITH THE THIRD SECTOR - A PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK FOR CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Consideration was given to a report, which presented a draft Framework to guide and govern the Council's future partnership relationship with the third sector in Cheshire East.

It was noted that, whilst this matter was not within the remit of the People Advisory Panel, people would be affected by the decisions made in respect of this. Therefore, the Chairman had requested that the report be included on the agenda, for comment.

In considering the report Members of the Panel raised the following issues:

- (i) Reference was made to the table within the report headed "Resources - What do Councils in Cheshire East currently spend in the Third Sector?" and concern was expressed that some District/Borough figures were not included. It was considered that the report required further refinement to bring together the various issues in respect of partnership working and in particular how Cheshire East Council would work with the LSPs. It was also considered that the document should refer to working with statutory groups, in addition to voluntary bodies. There should also be consistency across the titles of the various documents.
- (ii) It was noted that, in addition to financial investment, the existing Councils provided help "in kind" by the provision of help and advice from professional officers and it was considered that reference should be made to this within the document.
- (iii) Reference was made to a recent open night event for carers in Crewe, where compliance with existing Compact commitments had been welcomed. It was noted that Compact funding needed to be guaranteed for voluntary organisations for three years and it was considered that reference to this should be included within the document.

The Portfolio Holder undertook to raise these issues through the Places Directorate.

15 HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Partnership in Service Delivery

Consideration was given to a report, which was submitted to the Panel to enable Members to contribute views to inform the decision making of the Cabinet.

It was noted that all the Authorities forming the constituent parts of the new Cheshire East Council currently partnered in different ways, with a wide range of organisations to deliver services to their respective communities. These could be through either a formal contract, with funds specifically allocated to a service area, or through more general grant funds, which communities could bid into. The purpose of the report was to seek Cabinet confirmation that, at least for the coming year 2009/10, support to partner organisations would be at a level equivalent to the current 2008/09 year or at a level previously agreed with the current grant giving authority.

In considering the report Members of the Panel requested that a cross checking exercise take place to establish where grants were paid to partners from more than one of the existing Councils.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet be recommended to approve the decision required, as set out in the report:

- 1 That Cheshire East Council consider and agree the level of financial support to existing external service delivery partners be maintained for 2009/10 at current levels.
- 2 That it is agreed that all the partnership arrangements be subject to more detailed review in Year 1, to assess cost/outcomes of all individual agreements.

Cross Boundary Use of Library Services

Consideration was given to a report, which was submitted to the Panel to enable Members to contribute views, to inform the decision making of Cabinet.

The report advised the Panel of issues relating to cross boundary usage of library services, after April 2009 and recommended that there should be cross boundary usage of library services after April 2009 and that officers be instructed to take steps to implement this proposal.

In considering the report Members of the Panel raised the following issues:-

- (i) It was considered that the proposal should be supported, however, it was suggested that it might be appropriate to set up a Task Group, in the following year to consider this matter.

(ii) It was asked whether there was a proposal to issue new separate Cheshire East and Cheshire West library cards on 1 April and officers clarified that there was no such proposal.

(iii) It was queried whether mobile libraries would continue on their present routes and it was hoped that this would continue, if possible. It was reported that an Officer Task and Finish Group was considering the issue of mobile libraries and a report would be submitted to Members, if required.

(iv) It was noted that other users of the library service included schools, the Older People and those with mental health problems and this was not referred to in the report.

(v) It was suggested that consideration be given to the introduction of the national library card.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet be recommended to agree that there should be cross boundary usage for library service users, after 1 April 2009 and that officers be instructed to take steps to implement this proposal.

Fees and Charges 2009/10

Consideration was given to a report which was submitted to the Panel to enable Members to contribute views to inform the decision making of the Cabinet. The purpose of the report was to recommend an approach to setting fees and charges for the Council's Culture and Leisure Services for 2009/10.

All the existing Authorities, which formed the new Cheshire East Council, generated income through fees and charges for a range of services and activities. A comparison had been undertaken of some of the key existing headline fees and charges related to leisure facilities, managed by the existing Authorities and a number of significant anomalies had appeared, details of which were reported.

In presenting the report, officers suggested that it be recommended to Cabinet that the fees and charges for the Council's Culture and Leisure Services be increased by at least the rate of inflation, with other increases considered if appropriate.

In considering the report, Members made reference to paragraph 7.3, which set out the significant anomalies between the three existing Councils. It was noted that Crewe offered a junior discount for children under 17 years, whereas the other two local authority areas offered discounts for those under 16 years and it was suggested that Cabinet be recommended to give the discount to children under 17 years, in line with the current situation in Crewe. It was suggested that it might be more appropriate to extend the concessions, rather than reduce them but further work would need to be carried out to see what the repercussions of this would be.

It was also requested that, when consideration was given to the fees and charges, the figures be "rounded up", to avoid odd pence.

RESOLVED

- 1 That it be recommended to Cabinet, that the fees and charges for the Council's Culture and Leisure Services be increased by at least the rate of inflation, with other increases considered if appropriate.
- 2 That current arrangements for membership schemes and formal leisure card or other discount schemes remain the same for 2009/10, pending a formal review aimed at harmonisation for the new Authority in 2010/11.
- 3 That existing policies in the existing local authority area for discounts applied to the normal headline charges for key target groups be harmonised, as set out in the report.
- 4 That a further comprehensive review of fees and charges be carried out for 2010/11, to look at the feasibility of harmonisation of all charges for Culture and Leisure Services, where it is appropriate, across the Cheshire East area.

16 THE NATIONAL DEMENTIA STRATEGY: A RESPONSE TO THE NATIONAL CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to the response to the consultation on the National Dementia Strategy.

RESOLVED

That the response be noted.

17 THE PEOPLE DIRECTORATE: STRUCTURAL OPTIONS

A paper was circulated at the meeting, which proposed a set of principles to guide the creation of the new organisational design for the two new Unitary Authorities. John Weeks reported that he would be meeting with the new Cheshire East Chief Executive, Erika Wenzel, to discuss ways of bringing forward the structural proposals to Members, in due course, including the Panel.

It was agreed that an item in respect of this matter be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Panel.

18 FUTURE MEETING DATES

Future meeting dates were noted as follows:-.

27 October 2008

8 December 2008

19 January 2009
2 March 2009
April – To be confirmed

The meeting commenced at 4.30 pm and concluded at 6.55 pm

CHAIRMAN