

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

held on Wednesday, 8th August, 2012 at The Tatton Room - Town Hall,
Macclesfield SK10 1EA

PRESENT

Councillor W Livesley (Chairman)
Councillor D Stockton (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors A Barratt, H Davenport, W S Davies, K Edwards, R Fletcher,
S Hogben, P Hoyland, A Moran and B Silvester

Apologies

Councillors D Brickhill P Hayes and W Fitzgerald.

Substitutes

D Marren, A Moran and B Silvester

Officers

R Kemp – Waste Strategy Manager
R Skipp – Waste and Recycling Manager
C Williams – Transport Manager

28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

29 DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

None

30 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/ OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public wishing to address the Committee

31 POTENTIAL CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL'S SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Consideration was given to a report informing Members that the Council currently spends £2.2million (net of income) supporting public transport in the Borough. The adopted Business Plan (2012-15) for Cheshire East Council anticipated a reduction of £0.5million in that support. However this was now more likely to be around £0.75million, subject to a full public consultation on the equality impacts.

The report set out a series of options for how best to meet the transport needs of local communities within the context of reduced budgets.

The Transport Manager highlighted that appropriate alternative provision would be found for children entitled to transport under the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, one possibility would be a smaller private hire vehicle

During a detailed debate of the report, Members made the following comments:

- The Committee needed to give consideration to the full responses from the consultation and also receive details of the impact previous years cuts had on the public.
- Children were being discriminated against as buses were often their only form of transport available, the proposals could be denying access to education and social activities.
- The report to Cabinet should refer to the fact that meetings with representative groups had taken place outlining the proposals to fulfil the obligations to engage as well as consult with affected groups.
- There were also savings being made through changes to the Council's Home to School Transport Policy. This report did not give full details of the level of support to be reduced by the Council as a whole.
- The elderly would also suffer as a result of the proposals as they may be cut off from essential services.
- The survey may not have been accessible to all those affected by the proposals. Drop in sessions need to be held in hard to reach areas.

The Committee agreed that it wished to consider the full results of the consultation and proposals prior to them being submitted to Cabinet in October 2012. The report should map those responses to the consultation to ensure that no areas had been missed.

RESOLVED

That the Committee receive the Cabinet report at its meeting scheduled to be held on 18 September 2012. The report should include a map of those responses to the consultation to ensure that no geographical areas have been missed.

32 FUNDING BID TO CENTRAL GOVERNMENT WEEKLY COLLECTION SUPPORT SCHEME

Consideration was given to a report outlining information and costings on a potential weekly food waste collection service that would be added to the existing household recycling and waste collection from May 2014. Capital and revenue start up costs would be subject to an outline bid of £3.8million to Central Government's Weekly Collection Support Scheme. Annual running costs would be expected to be absorbed into proposals for alternative delivery of recycling and

waste services from 2014-15 as part of future savings on the recycling and waste budget. On the basis of an external review, it was estimated that the costs of running the service in house would equate to an additional £2m a year.

The Chairman had determined that this matter should be considered as a matter of urgency under Section 100 (B)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 in view of the 17 August 2012 government deadline to submit bids for capital and revenue start up funding .

The Portfolio Holder for Environment attended the meeting and informed the Committee that as options for food waste needed to be considered, it would be sensible to bid for the funding. There was no guarantee the bid would be successful and even it was, the monies could be returned if the authority decided not to progress with the proposals.

It was highlighted that the average family throw away £860 of food waste each year. Members agreed that rather than collecting food waste, people should be encouraged to use composters and the possibility of providing free composters should be investigated.

Members of the Committee felt that if the bid was successful, the authority would have no option but to progress with the scheme as not doing so would create bad press and have a negative impact on the authority's reputation.

Questions were raised with regard to the accuracy of the financial and statistical information provided, as it could be interpreted in several different ways. It was also agreed that the reference made to anaerobic digesters in paragraph 10.1 was misleading and should be reworded.

Members agreed that the proposals may be the right way forward and should not be ruled out, however there were other ways of collecting food waste, which should be investigated before any decisions were made.

Following detailed consideration of the report, it was agreed that as no policy development had taken place within the Authority on the implications of a weekly food waste collection service, the bid should not be submitted.

RESOLVED

That the Portfolio Holder for Environment be recommended not to submit a final bid to the communities weekly collection support scheme as no policy development had taken place within the Authority on the implications of a weekly food waste collection service.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 1.10 pm

Councillor W Livesley (Chairman)