

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council

held on Thursday, 12th December, 2013 at The Assembly Room - Town Hall,
Macclesfield SK10 1EA

PRESENT

Councillor D Flude (Chairman)

Councillor W Fitzgerald (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors C Andrew, Rachel Bailey, Rhoda Bailey, A Barratt, G Baxendale, D Bebbington, D Brickhill, D Brown, L Brown, B Burkhill, P Butterill, Carter, J Clowes, S Corcoran, H Davenport, W S Davies, R Domleo, D Druce, K Edwards, P Edwards, I Faseyi, J P Findlow, R Fletcher, H Gaddum, S Gardiner, L Gilbert, M Grant, P Groves, J Hammond, M Hardy, A Harewood, P Hayes, S Hogben, D Hough, P Hoyland, O Hunter, J Jackson, L Jeuda, M Jones, S Jones, F Keegan, A Kolker, W Livesley, J Macrae, D Mahon, D Marren, A Martin, M A Martin, P Mason, R Menlove, G Merry, A Moran, B Murphy, H Murray, D Neilson, D Newton, M Parsons, P Raynes, L Roberts, J Saunders, M Sherratt, B Silvester, L Smetham, D Stockton, A Thwaite, D Topping, G Wait, G M Walton, M J Weatherill, R West, P Whiteley, S Wilkinson and J Wray

Apologies

Councillors R Cartlidge, S McGrory, B Moran, P Nurse, M J Simon and C G Thorley

49 PRAYERS

As the Mayor's Chaplain was unable to attend the meeting, Cllr S Wilkinson said prayers, at the request of the Mayor.

50 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 OCTOBER 2013

RESOLVED

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

51 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor:-

1. Informed Members that, since our last Council meeting she and the Deputy Mayor had attended over 60 events across the Borough, details of which had been circulated around the Chamber.

2. Thanked those Members who had attended her Civic Service on 20th October and expressed thanks to her Chaplain, Rev Hazel Rugman, for the way in which she led the Service.
3. Announced that she and Cllr Rhoda Bailey had attended the launch of Family Matters, a resolution service funded by central government in Crewe, for all residents in Cheshire East. The service was for parents going through a break-up and was free if one person was in receipt of a benefit or earning the less than the living wage. A leaflet in respect of the service had been circulated to Members and the Mayor requested that they spread the word, as there were many children in the care of the Borough who would not be in care if the right support and advice had been given to their parents at the right time.
4. Reported that she considered that one of the most important things that the Mayor of any Borough could do was to lead the Borough's tributes on and around Remembrance Day. This year, she and the Deputy Mayor had attended 7 remembrance services. These occasions were always poignant, but seemed more so this year, approaching the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War.
5. As this was the last meeting of Council in 2013, she wished everyone a very happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

52 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

53 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

Honorary Alderman, Terence Beard spoke in relation to the devolution of some services from Cheshire East Council to Town and Parish Councils and the Council tax precept charged by Cheshire East, where Parish and Town Councils provided services.

The Leader of the Council responded to the question and stated no one would wish to see an increase in Council tax over the next year, or indeed the next 3 years.

54 NOTICES OF MOTION

Consideration was given to the following Notices of Motion:-

1 Good Governance: Openness and Transparency

Proposed by Councillor M Jones and seconded by Councillor B Murphy:-

This Council resolves that it will move swiftly to update its open-data policies in order to ensure that Cheshire East Council becomes a leading local authority for openness and transparency. It tasks the Chief Executive, working with and taking direction from Members, to review our governance arrangements to ensure that the objectives of openness and transparency are central to the way in which Cheshire East Council works, and that the use of Part II reports is minimised.

RESOLVED

That the motion be accepted.

2 Local Plan

Proposed by Councillor David Brickhill and seconded by Councillor B Murphy

This Council deplores the fact that an adopted Local Plan is not yet in place.

RESOLVED

That the motion stand referred to Cabinet.

3 Garden Waste

Proposed by Councillor David Brickhill and seconded by Councillor A Moran

This Council is critical of the recent decisions made concerning the collection of recyclable garden waste.

RESOLVED

That the motion stand referred to Cabinet.

55 RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET - COUNCIL TAX BASE 2014/15

At its meeting on 10th December 2013, Cabinet was notified of the Council Tax Base for Cheshire East and of important changes to the calculation of the tax base for 2014/2015. Cabinet, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, recommended to Council, the amount to be calculated by Cheshire East Council as its Council Tax Base for the year 2014/2015.

As the Council agenda had been published before the meeting of Cabinet, the Cabinet minute was circulated at the meeting.

RESOLVED

That in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the amount approved by Cheshire East Council as its Council Tax Base for the year 2014/2015 is 137,548.53, for the whole area.

56 RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET/LICENSING COMMITTEE - REVISED STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

Cabinet, at its meeting on 12 November 2013, had considered the final draft of the Revised Statement of Licensing Policy, which was being recommended to Council by the Licensing Committee. The Council was required to review its existing statement of principles and publish a revised version by 31st January 2014, having consulted those stakeholders identified by the legislation.

It was noted that, before Cabinet considered the Revised Statement of Licensing Policy, the Licensing Committee had received reports on the Policy on two occasions. The minutes of these meetings were appended to the agenda and the recommendations of the Licensing Committee had been incorporated into the revised Policy, which was included at Appendix 1 of the Cabinet report. Cabinet supported the recommendation of the Licensing Committee that the Council should resolve to adopt the revised Statement of Licensing Policy.

RESOLVED

That the revised Statement of Licensing Policy, as set out at Appendix 1 of the Cabinet report, be adopted, to take effect on 1st February 2014.

57 AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

The Audit and Governance Committee, at its meeting on 28 November 2013, had given consideration to the draft Annual Report of the Committee for 2012/13, prior to its submission to Council. There was a requirement in the Council's Constitution for the Audit and Governance Committee to submit an annual report to Council, to demonstrate how they had fulfilled their terms of reference and to account for their performance.

RESOLVED

That the Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2012/13 be received and noted.

58 LEADER'S REPORT TO COUNCIL AND LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council announced:-

- That he was pleased to confirm the appointment of Judith Tench as the Council's new Head of Governance and Stewardship (Deputy S151 Officer) illustrating his commitment to governance in the strongest terms.
- That he would be asking the Constitution Committee to review the role of planning in the Constitution, especially the Strategic Planning Board, working with all the three planning chairs to create a more transparent, resident friendly and holistic planning framework. This would be alongside Housing, Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration Portfolio Holder, Cllr Don Stockton.
- That he had requested a review of the Council's financial procedures, working with the Council's Chief Operating Officer, Peter Bates, with a strong emphasis on procurement, in order to improve this area and give greater transparency on the Council's finances, which were strong. He also wanted to support procurement locally. He believed that the Council would have a balanced budget this year, next year and the year after, all without increasing the burden on residents.
- That he would be requesting the Head of Paid Service to move away from zero hours contracts towards flexible contracts and also that the Council would move towards the living wage for all its employees, something the Council already did in most areas.
- That the Council would also look to open a controlled redundancy process in 2014, to allow all officers to apply for redundancy. This did not automatically mean that all staff would be allowed terms, as many roles were important to the Council.
- That he would introduce a review of the Council's Policy Development Groups and would like to know what Members thought should be done to change and adapt in order to strengthen Member decision making.
- That he would also be asking the Council's Constitution Committee to look into an addendum to the Constitution, illustrating that, where possible, Ward Members would receive information at the earliest opportunity. This protocol already existed, but he wanted it to be strengthened and potentially added into all Council and officer protocols and to be part of officer behaviour. He would also be working with the Council's Corporate Leadership Board and union colleagues on the introduction of confidentiality and non disclosure clauses in all managers' contracts of employment.
- That he was committed to strong open leadership, but there must be structures in place to underpin transparency. He would be requesting the Council's Head of Paid Service and Chief Operating Officer to review the terms of reference of the Monitoring Officer. He

wanted a robust and effective officer core and believed that the Council currently had the strongest leadership board in the history of Cheshire East Council and he wanted to ensure that the Monitoring Officer was empowered to deliver the Council's ambitious agenda.

- That the full introduction of the Alternative Service Delivery Vehicles had been delayed until March 31st 2014. This was so that the Council could get the governance right. Members could already attend any formal meeting and speak, at the discretion of the chair and he wanted more control for Members, especially the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and the Audit and Governance Committee. This was an ongoing process and as such he had delayed their introduction until March, so that these vehicles were ready and to ensure that the governance was strong. He also wanted the Constitution to illustrate these new delivery vehicles. He was pleased to inform Members that many staff had already embraced the new delivery vehicle ideology and that there had been some excellent work going forward, one example being the environmental WOC, where teams were already working together and a refuse collection trial was already underway which would see the end of all landfill for the Council's highways waste.
- That he was keen to introduce a compulsory mileage rate of 45p per mile for Members and would work with officers and union colleagues to move to the HMRC level for officers too. He commended union colleagues for their efforts in reaching broad agreement and in putting residents and officers first.
- That, as a part of the budget process, there would be focus on delivery in the community, in order to make the Council "resident first" and "partnership first", working with partners to ensure that the Council would become local and that localism was alive in Cheshire East. To this point he was charging the Corporate Leadership Board to focus on working more at the local level and was pleased to announce that, in the next three years, renewal schemes would be introduced across the borough, working with local Members, in consultation with shopkeepers and residents. These would include public realm in Nantwich and Knutsford and Mill Street in Macclesfield, where he saw the future for residential and retail together, creating a cultural quarter to go along with silk heritage. He would also be working to renew Crewe, especially its town centre and was working for further fantastic news on jobs and investment for Crewe, coming on top of the fabulous investment by Bentley.
- That he was also keen to deliver equity in health and formally announced a new Health and Wellbeing centre as a destination point in Crewe. It would be consulted on shortly and he was

pleased to have the support of the local Members and looked forward to hearing what residents thought it should look like.

- That he would work with Congleton to enhance their town centre work, creating a new Museum and Leisure Centre. He would also consult with Middlewich and Wilmslow residents to discuss what they wanted the Council to do with its resources locally. He would also have a new offer for all villages, led by the Council's new Stronger Communities Officer.
- That an application would be coming forward on the MMU site in Alsager, which will include a sports hub embracing all the current pitches, like for like and this would provide the best facilities in sport.
- (A leaflet was circulated providing the latest information on what the Council had delivered in respect of highways, which set a broad agenda for the Council to move forward, building on its achievements, such as 102,000 potholes. The leader reported that this was a start, with more to come).
- That, in 2014, the Council would look for excellence in education and was hopeful in respect of its bid for a UTC in Crewe and also the development of apprenticeships in engineering and health. The Council would also be leading a conference for pan Cheshire East schools on cyber crime and on drugs within schools.
- That Cheshire East was leading the £31.4m Connecting Cheshire Project, which was one of the fastest rollout projects of fibre-optic broadband in the country and would enable 96% of premises, or another 80,000 new homes and businesses to access high speed broadband by March 2015. This was great for all communities; rural, urban and business and was a massive engineering challenge.
- The reinforcement of the Council's commitment to HS2. The Council would publish its consultation document, which would not only give a compelling argument for HS2 in Cheshire and underwrite the broader economic argument for HS2 but, as part of the Council's faith in HS2, was a compelling logic for not only an HS2 stop at Crewe but an HS2 station at Crewe. This was so compelling that he had called for Network Rail to build a new station at Crewe, to be completed by 2020. This was because Crewe embodied the essence of the hub model connecting North Wales, Liverpool, Stoke, Birmingham, Manchester and the North West and was why Cheshire East was the engine for the development of the Northwest. A new station at Crewe would add up to 60,000 new jobs.

- That the North of the Borough would see the opening of the Waters Corporation headquarters and the sale of Alderley Park. Both reinforced the fact that there was a growing corridor of science jobs, which would continue to grow. This corridor stretched from Hurdsfield in Macclesfield, Jodrell Bank, Radbrooke Hall, Booths Hall at Knutsford, Alderley Park and its growing Bio Hub and the Waters Corporation. This corridor promoted a UK PLC corridor of growth in science, supporting the Northwest burgeoning scientific offer.
- That 2014 was a very important year for the Council. It would commemorate the 100 year anniversary of the start of the Great War. A poignant event which would hold great personal and emotional impact for the residents of Cheshire East. This would be commemorated with dignity and he thanked the officers and Members who were collaborating on this issue. A paper would be bought to Council shortly illustrating the plans. As part of this he announced a £100,000 fund for repair and renewal of any Great War memorials which may need enhancing. Parishes could apply directly to the Council, as could the Royal British Legion, which he respected immensely.
- The Council would also commemorate National Holocaust Day on 27 January 2014 with a two minute silence and civic event.
- That he believed in plan led development and would fight to protect the greenbelt and announced that the Council was close to achieving its Five Year Housing supply and a 5% buffer and that he was fighting against the 20% buffer. Once the Council had established its Five Year Housing Supply this would give more strength to its planners to defend the Borough's green gaps, greenbelt and villages. Moreover on safeguarded land, he believed a position would be reached to reduce the current levels in the draft plan so that the Council could both reflect local opposition, but also get a sound plan.
- That the Council would minimise all Part II items, unless there was a clear and absolute risk for the Council, a company or an individual. This should mean an end to most Part II reports.
- That he would be requesting that the Corporate Leadership Board ensure that in pre planning applications all Members were invited, unless there was a clear and absolute risk for the Council and thus to remove the "tick box" exclusion of Members which has occurred to date.
- Finally, that all staff be thanked and supported and as part of this he would be encouraging better practice of the Council's robust processes in order to create, especially through the Alternative Service Delivery Vehicles, a work ambience that supported

openness, so that officers could complain and that senior officers learnt from these complaints, which had not always been the case.

59 QUESTIONS

The following Members asked questions at the meeting:-

Cllr S Gardiner, in respect of the Council's receipt of a national award for adoption services and what specific impact this had on families in Cheshire East. – The Children and Family Services and Rural Affairs Portfolio Holder, Cllr Rachel Bailey responded.

Cllr S Wilkinson in respect of HS2- The Leader of the Council, Cllr M Jones responded.

Cllr J Jackson, in respect of whether Macclesfield residents would be given the opportunity to vote on the mode of governance they wanted - The Leader of the Council, Cllr M Jones responded.

Cllr G Walton, in respect of the Leader's announcement relating to the departure of senior officers - The Leader of the Council, Cllr M Jones responded.

Cllr S Corcoran, in respect of the release of the minutes of a recent meeting of the Strategic Planning Board relating to appeals, the release of the appeal decisions and the DIP report - The Leader of the Council, Cllr M Jones responded.

Cllr F Keegan, in respect of details contained in the highway leaflet circulated on behalf of the Leader, as part of his announcements – The Environment Portfolio Holder, The Environment Portfolio Holder, Cllr D Topping responded.

Cllr J Hammond, relating to the timescale for the advice in respect of the 5 year housing supply - The Leader of the Council, Cllr M Jones responded.

Cllr S Jones, relating to the effect that dementia has on the global health programme, including a request for an update report on dementia services in Cheshire East – The Health and Adult Social Care Portfolio Holder, Cllr J Clowes responded.

Cllr Neilson, in respect of the decision to allow fostering placements to remain with carers until the age of 21 and how Cheshire East would incorporate these changes – The Children and Family Services and Rural Affairs Portfolio Holder, Cllr Rachel Bailey responded.

Cllr Murray, in respect of more suitable venues for Council meetings and acoustic issues – The Mayor responded.

Cllr K Edwards – In respect of the Print Room and Post Room at Macclesfield Town Hall. - The Leader of the Council, Cllr M Jones responded.

The meeting commenced at 12.00 pm and concluded at 2.20 pm

Councillor D Flude (Chairman)
CHAIRMAN