

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Scrutiny Committee**
held on Monday, 11th November, 2013 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor S Wilkinson (Chairman)
Councillor P Edwards (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors S Corcoran, H Davenport, W Fitzgerald, D Newton and J Wray

Apologies

Councillor R West,

Jill Kelly and Jon McCann

59 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2013 were confirmed as a correct record.

60 ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Rachel Bailey – Children and Families and Rural Affairs Portfolio Holder

Councillor B Moran – Performance Portfolio Holder

Councillor Peter Raynes – Finance Portfolio Holder

Councillor Phil Hoyland - Chairman Children and Families PDG

Councillor Ken Edwards -Vice-Chairman Children and Families PDG

61 OFFICERS PRESENT

Peter Bates – Chief Operating Officer

Ton Crane – Director of Children's Services

Nigel Moorhouse – Head of Service Social care

Mark Bayley – Principal Manager Quality assurance

Peter Hartwell – Head of Public Protection and Enforcement

Rod Brown – Highways Maintenance manager

Denise Griffiths –Facilities Manager

Peter Hall – Head of Property Services

Brenda Smith – Director Adult Social care and Independent Living

Iolanda Puzio – Legal Team Manager

Alex Thompson - Finance Lead - Strategy & Funding

Steve Reading - Principal Accountant

Suzie Kennedy - Graduate Project Support Officer

Mark Nedderman – Senior Scrutiny Officer

62 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S Corcoran declared a non pecuniary interest in respect of the mid year review of performance on the grounds that he was a member of co-operative society.

63 DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest.

64 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

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

65 2013/2014 MID-YEAR REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Operating Officer on the 2013/14 mid-year review of performance.

The Chief Operating Office informed the Committee that the report had been presented in a new style, and welcomed comments from members on both the format and content of the report.

The report provided summary and detailed information about the Council's financial and non financial performance at the mid year stage 2013/2014. The report concluded that the financial position had improved since the first quarter and that there had been substantial improvement compared to this position in previous year.

The report was divided into 3 sections:

Section 1 provided a summary of Council Performance, brought together the impact that service performance, the change management programme and financial performance were having on the 5 Outcomes in the Council's 3 Year Plan.

Section 2 covered financial stability and provided an update on the overall Financial Stability of the Council. It demonstrated how spending in 2013/2014 was being adequately funded, including the positions on overall Service budgets, Grants, Council Tax and Business Rates, Treasury Management, centrally held budgets, and the management of the Council's Reserves.

Section 3 dealt with workforce development and provided a summary of the key issues relating to the Council's Workforce Development Plan.

RESOLVED –

(a) That the report be received;

- (b) That Cabinet be informed that this Committee welcomes the improving position in the first quarter in relation to finance and performance;
- (c) That, in future, prior to any decision being taken involving the introduction of changes to the level of provision of a service, particularly those services rated as excellent such as the green waste collection service, Cabinet be requested to undertake a full consultation exercise on the proposed changes, including where relevant details in respect of the timing of any changes, particularly where seasonal matters are an important consideration, in order to avoid a repeat of the negative feedback received by the Council in connection with the recent decision to stop green waste collections early this year;
- (d) That Cabinet also be requested to provide an analysis of the cost per month of stopping the collections of green waste early;
- (e) That in connection with the Council's new arrangements regarding Wholly Owned Companies and Trusts, Cabinet be informed that it is the view of this Committee that the scrutiny of the performance of the new delivery vehicles should be recognised as a formal scrutiny function and therefore Cabinet be requested to prepare a framework defining the future arrangements to scrutinise the performance of the new delivery vehicles so that these arrangements can be written into the formal articles of association for each of the new companies/trusts;
- (f) That the Chairman be requested to formally write to the Leader of the Council outlining the Committee's wishes in respect of the future Scrutiny arrangements regarding new delivery vehicles;
- (g) That the Committee's appreciation be placed on record for the excellent progress made repairing potholes across the Borough and in particular, the significant surface dressing works recently undertaken across the Borough.

66 CHILDREN'S AND ADULTS' SAFEGUARDING ISSUES - IMPROVEMENT NOTICE

Councillors Phil Hoyland and Ken Edwards attended the meeting and addressed the committee in respect of this item.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children's Services relating to the progress, performance and issues arising from the Children's Improvement Plan. The report also included at appendix 1 the findings of a peer challenge of the Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS) undertaken by an inspection

team from Lancashire County Council on 3 and 4 October 2013 which had provided very positive feedback.

Other Key highlights from the improvement plan included:

- Plans were underway for the wider Safeguarding Peer Review which was to begin on 10 March 2014;
- Cheshire East was one of 3 authorities that had been invited to take part in Ofsted's Improvement Support Programme Pilot;
- Partners were engaging with improvements;
- The Children's Rights and Participation provider was prioritising improvements
- A young person had joined the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and the Chief Executive would attend 2 meetings each year
- The Realignment of social care teams would improve service delivery
- A new case management system provider, Liquid Logic had been selected which was used by the majority of Local authorities in the Country.

In respect of potential future scrutiny activity, the Director of Children's Services informed the committee that a new Ofsted framework had been issued in October and that as part of the new framework, Ofsted would be reviewing leadership in Cheshire East and that this was likely to encompass scrutiny activity.

He suggested that the Committee may wish to invite Ian Rush the Chair of the LSCB to a future meeting to gain an understanding of the work of the Board.

He also drew Members' attention to various examples of national guidance on scrutiny activity in Children Services.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be received;
- (b) That an invitation be extended to Ian Rush the Chair of the LSCB to attend a future meeting of the committee;
- (c) That the Chairman report back to a future meeting on potential items for additional scrutiny in Children's Services, having regard to national guidance.

67 RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Service Early Help and protection relating to progress made in respect of the recommendations contained in the task and finish report on residential care completed in August 2010.

The report indicated that all of the recommendations of the task and finish groups had been enacted, but that since the review had been undertaken a number of changes to the Councils arrangements for cared for Children had occurred.

In addition, an increase in in-house residential provision had ensured a reduction in the number of children placed in costly residential provision from 42 in April 2012 to 25 at the end of September 2013.

At the end of August 2013 82% of cared for children were living within a family situation compared to only 68% in April 2012. Adoption rates were increasing leading to the number of children exiting care increasing from 16 in 2009/10 to 26 in 2012/13. There was also a continuing drive to reduce the number of children placed in external residential care.

RSOLVED - That the report be received.

68 SCHOOL EXAMINATION RESULTS

The Committee received a presentation from the Principal Manager Quality Assurance on school performance 2012/13.

The Committee was informed that the data was still provisional and that final data was expected to be received in January 2014 with a view to a full annual report being submitted to the committee in February 2014.

RESOLVED - That the presentation be received, and the Principal Manager Quality Assurance be requested to provide a full report on school performance as soon as possible in 2014.

69 WORK PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee reviewed its work programme for the current municipal year.

RESOLVED

(a) That the report be received;

(b) That the following changes to the work programme be approved:

- Review of Library Strategy - delete
- Home to School Transport – Task and Finish Update – delete
- Business Generation Centre – Report to be submitted in December
- New Service Delivery Vehicles – new item
- Green Waste Service – new item – Spring 2014

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.15 pm

Councillor S Wilkinson (Chairman)