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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee**

held on Thursday, 6th August, 2009 at The Capesthorne Room - Town Hall,
Macclesfield SK10 1DX

PRESENT

Councillor G M Walton (Chairman)
Councillor E Gilliland (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Rachel Bailey, H Davenport, R Fletcher, M Hollins, R Menlove,
M Parsons, L Smetham, C Thorley, J Weatherill and A Thwaite

In Attendance

Councillors T Beard, D Brickhill, S Conquest, D Flude and A Moran

Apologies

Councillors G Barton, S Broadhurst and M Hardy

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

Councillor D Brickhill declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 4 - Call In of Cabinet Member Decision – Introduction of Parking Charges on Thomas Street, Crewe, due to being the decision maker. In accordance with the code of conduct he withdrew from the room immediately after answering questions and giving evidence. He did not return to the meeting.

15 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2009

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

16 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/ OPEN SESSION

None

17 CALL IN OF CABINET MEMBER DECISION - INTRODUCTION OF PARKING CHARGES ON THOMAS STREET CAR PARK, CREWE

The Committee reviewed the Cabinet Member decision of 9 July 2009 regarding the introduction of parking charges on Thomas Street Car Park, Crewe.

Councillor Flude attended the meeting to explain the reasons for the Call In. The Portfolio Holder and Parking Manager attended the meeting to explain the background to the decision and to answer any questions.

Councillors T Beard, S Conquest and A Moran also attended the meeting to speak in respect of this item.

Members raised questions and commented in respect of the detrimental effect on the income of the shop and office workers employed within the town centre, the current economic climate, the location of the car park in relation to the town centre, the effect on the use of the sports ground, displacement of parking, the number of car parking spaces and occupancy, the Car Parking Policy, the viability of the market, the development of Lyceum square and the charging being contrary to the local strategy.

Due to having a personal and prejudicial interest the Portfolio Holder withdrew from the room once he had explained the reasons for the decision and answered any questions.

Following detailed consideration of the explanations and reasons for the decisions the Committee decided to offer no advice to Cabinet.

RESOLVED

That no advice be offered to Cabinet

Councillors R Menlove and L Smetham arrived at the meeting following consideration of the above item

18 STRATEGIC HOUSING REVIEW

The Committee received a presentation on the Strategic Housing Review, which outlined the aim and role of strategic housing and the purpose and priorities for strategic housing and development, homelessness and housing options and private sector housing.

It was noted that some of the key priorities for 2009/10 would be to develop the following strategies:

- Affordable Warmth Strategy
- Empty Homes Strategy
- Affordable Housing Strategy
- Older Persons Housing Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy.

The Committee agreed that where possible it would like to give consideration to the above strategies prior to them being considered by Cabinet.

The Committee raised the issue of the provision of affordable housing in rural areas, the impact caused by the recession and the need for good schemes to be developed. It was reported that there was now a Rural Housing Enabler in post who would be looking at this issue as well as the promotion of schemes. The Committee felt that it could be beneficial for Members to visit examples of good practice.

RESOLVED

1. That the strategies highlighted above be considered by the Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee prior to them being submitted to Cabinet.
2. That the possibility of Members visiting successful rural affordable housing schemes be investigated.

19 RESIDENTIAL PARKING SCHEMES

Members were advised that Residents Parking Schemes had been in operation for over a year and that while officers had gained experience in establishing schemes and dealing with displacement etc, no two schemes were the same.

A draft policy, which had been formulated from local and national experience, had been adopted by the former County Council, which would be submitted to Cabinet for approval in the near future. The Committee agreed that it would like to give consideration to this policy, prior to Cabinet, at its meeting scheduled to be held on 23 September 2009.

It was noted that residents parking schemes in Wilmslow and more recently Macclesfield were going through the consultation process and that all schemes had both advantages and disadvantages. It was highlighted that residents would not be guaranteed a space and that there would be an annual charge for a permit.

The Committee felt that a press release highlighting the details and advantages and disadvantages of Residents Parking Schemes should be issued to members of public.

RESOLVED

1. That the Residents Parking Policy be considered by the Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee at its meeting scheduled to be held on 23 September 2009.
2. That a press release highlighting the details and advantages and disadvantages of Residents Parking Schemes be issued to Members of public

20 HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

The Committee received a presentation on highway maintenance, which outlined the Corporate Plan core aims, the road network, the size of the asset, areas of operation, statutory duties, routine maintenance, operations, delivery, number of service requests, potholes, defect trends, work programme, challenges and investment.

It was agreed that the challenges for the Highway Authority had escalated due to utility works, maintaining a declining network, perception, increased defects and climate change. The estimated maintenance backlog for carriageways was £88million and footways £22million, which would take around 10 years to be rectified.

It was noted that the methods for dealing with potholes were constantly being developed due to new technology and processes. However potholes continued to be a major problem.

Member raised questions relating to the structure for the service and it was agreed that a copy of the full structure would be circulated to the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the structure for the Highway Service be circulated to the Committee for information.

21 WASTE MANAGEMENT

The Committee gave consideration to a presentation on waste management, which highlighted the statutory responsibilities, EU Landfill Directive, National Waste Strategy, developing a preferred approach, sustainability appraisal, immediate challenges, major waste contracts, waste treatment procurement, waste policy, waste minimisation and the best collection and recycling scheme for Cheshire East.

It was noted that waste was now seen as an opportunity by the private sector and that a private plant was being proposed in Middlewich.

Members discussed the harmonisation of the collection and recycling service in detail and agreed that this issue should be considered by the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the harmonisation of the collection and recycling service be considered by the Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee.

22 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee gave consideration to the work programme. It was agreed that the Residents Parking Policy would be considered at the meeting scheduled to be held on 23 September 2009.

RESOLVED

That the Residents Parking Policy be included in the work programme for 23 September 2009.

23 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee gave consideration to the extracts of the forward plan, which fall within the remit of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the extracts be noted.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 3.40 pm

Councillor G M Walton (Chairman)

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