

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
held on Thursday, 8th September, 2016 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor M Simon (Chairman)
Councillor M Grant (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Rhoda Bailey, G Baxendale, S Corcoran, S Edgar, D Flude,
A Moran, S Pochin, J Saunders, B Walmsley, H Wells-Bradshaw, J Weston
and J Wray

Apologies

Councillors (none)

10 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2016 be confirmed
as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

11 ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Chris Andrew – Deputy Cabinet Member
Peter Bates – Chief Operating Officer
Frank Jordan - Executive Director – Place
Alex Thompson - Corporate Manager Strategy & Reporting
Paul Fox - Solicitor

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

13 DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of the existence of a party whip.

14 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

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

15 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The committee considered a report of the Chief Operating Officer relating to the
first quarter review of performance 2016/17. The report highlighted financial and
non-financial pressures and performance in connection with the outcomes of the
Corporate Plan 2016 to 2020.

A potential overspend of £1.5 million was being forecast, which was attributed largely to an increase in caseloads and costs associated with children in care.

Appendix 1 of the report set out details of how the Council was performing. The appendix was divided into 3 sections:

- Section 1- Summary of Council Performance brought together the positive impact that service performance and financial performance had had on six residents first outcomes during the first year:
- Section 2 – Financial Stability provided an update on the Council’s overall financial position. It demonstrated how spending in 2016/17 had been funded including service budgets, grants, council tax and business rates, treasury management, centrally held budgets and reserves.
- Section 3 Workforce Development - provided a summary of the key issues relating to the Council’s workforce development plan.

Members then questioned at length the Chief Operating Officer, Executive Director of People and Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Place on the contents of the report and sought additional information on the following matters which would be reported back to Members outside of the meeting:

- Details of the amount of grant approved for the 523 home adaptations for older and/or disabled residents to support independent living;
- The annual target for affordable homes having delivered 145 to date;
- Whether the figure of 57 fixed penalty notices issued in the first quarter was higher or lower than previous years?
- The level of funding provided by Town/Parish Councils for CCTV;
- An explanation as to why a town centre manager for Macclesfield would be retained for 2016/17

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report be received;
- (b) That Cabinet be informed that this Committee acknowledges the significant financial pressures facing the Council at the moment, the work going on to alleviate those pressures and the challenges ahead to manage the projected budgetary deficits in future years. The committee is pleased to note however, that in spite of the difficult climate, the Council continues to maintain a strong financial position and therefore wishes to place on record its thanks to all involved in achieving this;
- (c) That The Committee request that Cabinet formally acknowledge these comments in the minutes of the meeting.

16 **ALTERNATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY VEHICLE (ASDV) GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE**

Peter Bates and Paul Fox gave a brief outline of the ASDV governance structure.

Since the committee had last received a report on the governance arrangements for ASDVs, the number of ASDVs had grown. The committee was particularly interested in better understanding the role of the holding company - Cheshire East resident First (CERF). In addition Members sought guidance on the future role of Overview and Scrutiny Committees in the future governance of ASDVs in order to ensure that Overview and Scrutiny continued to play its part in monitoring the performance of the arms length companies.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Chief Operating Officer be requested to arrange an ‘all Member’ briefing on the current governance arrangements for ASDVs;
- (b) That the chief Operating Officer be requested also to arrange a specific briefing session for Overview and Scrutiny Members in consultation with Chairman and Vice Chairman of this committee.

17 BUDGET CONSULTATION

Alex Thompson gave a presentation on the budget consultation process for the forthcoming financial year 2017/18.

Alex explained that the Council was currently had a strong base budget but that would face a challenging financial position over the next 4 years culminating in a reduction in Government Grant to nil by 2019/20. In addition, there were additional pressures resulting from the financial challenges facing Health Partners. Added to that, there were a number of unknown factors such as Brexit and inflation. The specific demographics within Cheshire East also added to these pressures bearing in mind the high level spending in the Borough on people based services.

The Council was therefore preparing for an overall potential ‘cash deficit’ of over £90m over 3 years if no action was taken.

Consequently, even if Council Tax was increased up to the referendum threshold of 2% + 1.99%, this would close only half of the potential deficit.

The next stage in the process as far as this committee was concerned would be to consider the pre –budget report which was expected to be available in November 2016.

The Chief Operating Officer indicated that it was hoped that an efficiency plan would be presented to this committee at an informal meeting in October 2016.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the presentation be noted;
- (b) That the Chief Operating Officer be requested to submit an efficiency plan to this committee informally in October followed by a pre-budget report to the 3 November 2016 meeting.

18 WORK PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee reviewed its work programme.

RESOLVED –

That subject to an item being added to review the results of the staff survey, the report work programme be approved.

19 **FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee reviewed the forward plan.

RESOLVED – that the forward plan be received and noted.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.16 pm

Councillor M Simon (Chairman)