

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee

held on Tuesday, 19th September, 2017 at Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe CW1 2BJ

PRESENT

Councillor H Davenport (Chairman)
Councillor H Wells-Bradshaw (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors D Bailey, T Dean, M Hardy, O Hunter, N Mannion, B Roberts, C Browne, G M Walton, M J Weatherill and S Hogben (substitute)

In attendance:

Councillors S Brookfield and J Rhodes

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors O Hunter, N Mannion and M Parsons.

12 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2017.

RESOLVED

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

13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

14 WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

There were no whipping declarations

15 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

Carol Jones and Parish Councillor S Halliwell attended the meeting to speak on minute 17 – Supported Bus Service Review. They raised concerns that any cuts to services would have a detrimental effect on the elderly, shift workers, those with mental health issues and would cause isolation within the community. It was suggested that the cuts would not encourage residents to use public transport causing an increase in CO2 emissions.

16 AIR QUALITY

Consideration was given to a presentation on air quality monitoring. The Chairman reminded the Committee that officers should not be named or discussed during consideration of the item. The Council had clear procedures, to deal with matters relating to officers and without prejudging matters it was important that the Committee did nothing to hinder any potential procedures. Frank Jordan informed the Committee that this matter was now under Police investigation.

The Presentation informed the Committee that when preparing the 2016 Annual Status Report (ASR) data errors were identified by the Air Quality Team. An internal audit investigation was carried out to:

1. Review all air quality data that had been reported to Defra in 2014 and the data which was due to be reported for 2015 to identify potential inaccuracies, by comparison with original laboratory data.
2. Review the process to determine how these inaccuracies occurred and recommendations to ensure it does not happen again.
3. Report any other area of concern that comes to light during the audit.

An external investigation was also carried out and given the nature of the investigation and the technical subject matter, the investigation was delivered by external agencies in three distinct phases:

- **Phase 1:** To identify the rationale for the data errors and where responsibility for the errors lies –North West Employers
- **Phase 2:** To determine the full impact and implications of the data errors and the actions required to ensure that the Council is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities with regards to air quality – Bureau Veritas
- **Phase 3:** To consider the findings from Phase 1 and Phase 2 and take the investigation to its conclusion –North West Employers.

The high level findings of the external investigation concluded that:

- Serious errors had been made in the Council's air quality data for 2012, 2013 and 2014. It was clear that these errors were the result of deliberate and systematic manipulation of data from a number of diffusion tubes.
- The Council had been exposed to unacceptable risks to the security of its air quality data as a result of failings within the service, to ensure that adequate processes, procedures and systems were in place to manage this data effectively.
- The data from diffusion tubes that had been altered were spread over a wide geographical area, which implied that the manipulation was not motivated by a wish to favour specific sites.
- Phase 2 included a review of planning applications for which the publication of revised air quality data may have affected the planning decisions.

The Committee considered the recommendations from the external investigator and the action taken by the Council. It was agreed that the Committee would review the Air Quality Data annually how the Council complies with legislation.

RESOLVED

1. That the presentation be received.
2. That the Committee scrutinise the Air Quality Data annually how the Council complies with legislation.

17 SUPPORTED BUS SERVICE REVIEW

Consideration was given to an update presentation on the review of supported bus services. The review included all Cheshire East Supported local bus and flexible transport services, with a target saving of £1.576m from an existing budget of 3.5m. A 10 week public consultation had taken place, which targeted both bus users and non users and received 3900 responses, the results of the consultation were outlined to the Committee. However as the results had not yet been fully analysed, it was agreed that an additional meeting of the Committee would be held at the end of October to give consideration to the refined proposals prior to a Cabinet decision in November 2017. Network changes would then start to be implemented from April 2018.

RESOLVED

That an additional meeting of the Committee be arranged for October 2017 to give consideration to the proposals prior to Cabinet.

18 HS2 - CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to a presentation on the DfT consultation relating to the Crewe Hub: options for building on the existing connectivity. The presentation detailed the HS2 route line, consultation process and the Councils proposed response to a series of questions. Members supported the proposed response and highlighted the following points:

- That only the third Train Service Scenario, providing a rail hub capable of serving 7 stopping HS2 trains per hour would provide the required infrastructure.
- That freight services need to be considered as additional capacity is required.
- That MPs should be lobbied to ensure that they are fully supportive of the proposals.
- That any proposals should not result in a reduced classic rail service.

RESOLVED

1. That the presentation be received.
2. That the proposed response as outlined in the presentation be supported.
3. That Cabinet give consideration to the additional comments outlined above.

19 CEC PARKING CHARGES AND OFF-STREET PARKING ORDER

Consideration was given to a draft Cabinet report on car parking charges and Off Street Parking Order. Statements were read out on behalf of Councillors Pochin and Brookfield outlining their concerns over proposed increases to parking charges, as well as a response from Councillor D Brown in response to Councillor Pochin. J Rhodes attended the meeting and spoke as a visiting Councillor in relation to parking charges in Crewe being the highest in Borough. Following detailed consideration of the recommendations, the Committee agreed that it was unable to support increasing the parking charges on the current pay and display car parks until a full Car Parking Strategy had been implemented and a Task and Finish Group be set up to develop future proposals. The Committee had no further comment on the additional recommendations contained within the report.

RESOLUTION

That Cabinet give consideration to the following recommendations:

1. That in the interest of fairness to Cheshire East residents, a high level car parking strategy should be implemented prior to any increase in parking charges.
2. That a Task and Finish Group to develop future proposals be established

20 TRANSPORT SERVICE SOLUTIONS (TSS) – PERFORMANCE

The Committee received a presentation on the performance of Transport Service Solutions (TSS), which included an overview of the contract, governance, areas for improvement, performance framework, key achievements, commercial business and corporate social responsibility. It was agreed that the results of the customer satisfaction survey would be brought back to the Committee in due course.

RESOLVED

That the results of the customer satisfaction survey be brought back to the Committee in due course.

21 FORWARD PLAN

Consideration was given to the areas of the forward plan which fell within the remit of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the forward plan be received.

22 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the work programme, The Scrutiny Officer agreed to check on the status of the Fly Tipping Task and Finish Group and report back to the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the Scrutiny Officer check on the status of the Fly Tipping Task and Finish Group and report back to the Committee.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 5.30 pm

Councillor H Davenport (Chairman)