

Public Document Pack

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee**
held on Thursday, 11th February, 2010 at Meeting Room B, Macclesfield
Library, Jordangate, Macclesfield, SK10 1EE

PRESENT

Councillor H Murray (Chairman)
Councillor S Wilkinson (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors J Hammond, D Flude, E Gilliland, D Hough, J Jones, A Thwaite,
R Walker, M Davies and C Beard

Substitutes: Councillors M Davies and C Beard

Apologies

Councillors E Alcock, A Barratt, S McGrory and R Parker

1 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN

In accordance with the Constitution Mr M Homer, a resident of Macclesfield, addressed the Committee with a view to gaining their support regarding anti social behaviour by a neighbour. The Chairman informed Mr Homer that whilst he had sympathy for Mr Homer's situation the Committee was not able to provide a remedy. The remit of the Committee did however cover systemic failure of policy and processes or the failure to discharge those policies effectively by officers of the council. As the situation is ongoing and Council officers were dealing with the situation it was therefore not appropriate for the Committee to take any positive actions. However, the Chairman asked that he be kept informed of progress in order as that would help identify if there had been any such failings.

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

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

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

None

4 BUDGET 2010/2011

The Committee considered a report of the Borough Treasurer containing the formal consultation by Cabinet of the Budget for 2010/2011.

The report set out in detail the spending plans and income targets for the Council for the financial year starting on 1 April 2010.

Members were informed by Cllr Thwaite, Chairman of the Scrutiny Chairs Panel that the Corporate Scrutiny Committee had set up a Budget Consultation Group in December 2009 to oversee the consultation process for 2010/2011 budget. The group had met two times during January 2010, during which details of the officer/portfolio budget challenge sessions held in the run up to the consultation process had been discussed. In addition, dates for the budget cycle of Scrutiny meetings had been agreed. The group had been given an opportunity to question some key officers within the Council to seek clarity on critical aspects of the budget, and as a result, there were no outstanding matters that required action by that Committee.

Nonetheless, the Panel had concluded that it needed to reconvene in April to make early preparations for the 2011/2012 budget consultation process to ensure that a clear timetable existed for all internal stakeholders to ensure that Overview and Scrutiny members played a more active part in the budget formulation and consultation processes during 2010/2011.

In view of the limited time between the series of budget Scrutiny meetings to be held over the 11 and 12 February and the Cabinet meeting on 16 February, the Chairman sought authority to allow him to formally respond to the consultation after conferring with the Scrutiny Chairs group at its meeting prior to Cabinet on the 16 February with a composite response encompassing the comments of all five Committees.

With regard to the Regulatory Services, it was noted that one of the challenges facing the service was to ensure the provision of the Community Warden Service is prioritised effectively. Further, it was noted that wardens were to be recruited and that all wardens were to be given additional training and authorisations to the same level in basic enforcement. The Committee agreed that it would set up a Task and Finish Panel to review the Warden Service. Members questioned the relationship, deployment, funding and whether double taxation applied to PCSO's. It was agreed that a report on the Service Level Agreements and the deployment of Borough funded PCSOs would be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.

With regard to Libraries, it was noted that that the Customer Contact Strategy and Library Services Strategy had been rationalised and that in several areas both services would be brought together. This was to happen in the coming year. The Committee agreed that this be reviewed six months after implementation.

With regard to Leisure and Cultural Services, the Committee raised strong concerns that the discretionary services would be outsourced. The Committee did not accept the £230,000 cut in the budget had been justified and resolved to recommend to Cabinet that it should not be removed from the budget until the planned review had been completed and the Committee had been consulted.

With regard to CCTV it was noted that a review had been undertaken on the rationalisation of the service. The Committee agreed that because the review was not an agenda item it could not comment upon it. However, the Committee accepted the proposed budget saving pro tem. It was agreed to receive the detailed report justifying the rationalisation of the service and the operational impact of the proposed rationalisation in order to consider the validity of the proposed savings and expenditure at the next meeting of the Committee.

With regard to the increase in fees and charges for the Registration Service, Members questioned the need for the size of the increase. It was agreed that a breakdown of costs and further details including comparisons with other Authorities be circulated to the Committee in the near future. Following a review of that report members would then decide if further scrutiny of the decision was required.

RESOLVED

1. That a representative of the Scrutiny Chairs group present to Cabinet, on the 16 February 2010, a composite response encompassing the comments of all five Committees.
2. That the comments relating to Leisure and Cultural Services be reported directly to Cabinet
3. That the work programme be amended to reflect the issues highlighted above

5 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE

In view of the lack of time, and noting that there were no pressing issues relating to this item, the Committee agreed that this item be deferred until a future meeting of the Committee.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.35 pm

Councillor H Murray (Chairman)

This page is intentionally left blank