

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the **Cabinet**
held on Tuesday, 10th November 2020

PRESENT

Councillor S Corcoran (Chairman)
Councillor C Browne (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors L Crane, K Flavell, T Fox, L Jeuda, N Mannion, J Rhodes, A Stott and M Warren

Councillors in attendance

Councillors R Bailey, M Beanland, M Benson, C Bulman, J Clowes, A Critchley, H Faddes, J P Findlow, R Fletcher, S Gardiner, L Gilbert, S Hogben, S Holland, M Houston, A Moran, J Parry, S Pochin, P Redstone, M Sewart, M Simon, L Smetham, L Wardlaw and J Wray

Officers in attendance

Lorraine O'Donnell, Chief Executive
Frank Jordan, Executive Director Place
Mark Palethorpe, Executive Director People
Jane Burns, Executive Director Corporate Services
Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services
David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance
Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance
Paul Mountford, Executive Democratic Services Officer

The Chairman announced that today was 'Councils Can Day': an annual campaign organised by the Local Government Association to showcase the good work of councillors. He encouraged all councillors to highlight the good work they were doing.

The Chairman welcomed David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance and Monitoring Officer, to his first Cabinet meeting. Mr Brown introduced himself.

46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

47 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION - VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Sue Helliwell referred to the Covid infection rate in Alsager and asked if the Council was working with neighbouring authorities in Staffordshire. She also referred to the numbers of infections in schools in Alsager where pupils travelled from North Staffordshire or Crewe. The Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Corporate Services responded that the Council worked

closely with schools to support their response to Covid-19 and also worked collaboratively with Stoke City Council and Staffordshire County Council.

Robert Douglas referred to the Council's plastic recycling tonnages which he said had dropped substantially. He also asked when all plastics that were placed in domestic recycling bins could also be recycled at recycling centres. The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste responded that due to manufacturers reducing the use of plastics, to legislation, and to the public responding by reducing plastic usage, it was unlikely that the tonnage of plastics would return to previous levels. While the Council had some recycle banks for plastics at its household waste centres, it encouraged people where possible to recycle using the silver bin.

48 QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS - VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Councillor M Beanland referred to town and parish council income loss and asked if the Council could provide financial support. The Portfolio Holder for Finance, IT and Communication responded that the Council was not receiving sufficient funding to cover its own costs and was unable to claim funding from central government on behalf of town and parish councils. Such councils were able to draw on their reserves and set precepts to recover lost income and support local services. It was suggested that they seek advice from ChALC and consider lobbying for direct support.

Councillor J Clowes asked about the funding for school meals vouchers during the school half term. The Portfolio Holder for Finance, IT and Communication responded that the vouchers were not funded from previous funding from central government but from the Council's own resources. She could provide a written answer if further information was needed. The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration reported that the Council had now received guidance on the business support grants available during the second lockdown. Further details, including how to apply for grants, would be published on the Council's website.

Councillor A Critchley asked what plans were in place to tackle fly tipping in Crewe. The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste referred to a new waste management and fly tipping policy which would enable the Council to deal with fly tipping more effectively.

Councillor H Faddes asked if the Council would be seeking funding to help rough sleepers over the winter months, particularly in view of the health risk from Covid. The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration responded that the Government had not as yet instigated the same arrangements as were in place during the previous lockdown. The Government had made available a Cold Weather Fund to assist homelessness but the Council had already committed resources well in excess of the amount provided to it under this scheme. The Council continued to work with its partners and the private and voluntary sectors to assist rough sleepers.

Councillor R Fletcher asked about the criteria used to determine the location of temporary speed restrictions in Cheshire East. The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste explained the basis for the decisions made to date and hoped that more funding would become available to enable temporary speed restrictions to be introduced in more locations around the Borough.

Councillor S Gardiner referred to an increase in the level of missed bin collections in the last civic year. The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste responded that there had been a significant change of routes at the end of last year which may have had an impact on the level of missed bin collections in the short term.

Councillor L Gilbert referred to problems experienced by town and parish councils in obtaining responses from the Council's Highways Service. The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste responded that the Highways Service dealt with a high volume of enquiries compared with other departments of the Council. She invited Councillor Gilbert to provide specific details so that the matter could be investigated further. She also encouraged Borough Councillors to make use of the Member Enquiries Service.

Councillor J Parry sought an assurance that, given the current focus on the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change had not been forgotten. The Leader responded that he was passionate about tackling climate change and wanted a green thread to run through all of the Council's actions. He outlined some of the initiatives the Council was pursuing. The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration added that a progress report on the Carbon Action Plan would be submitted to Cabinet and the relevant scrutiny committee in the new year.

Councillor P Redstone thanked the Council for its support of Disability History Month this year but he was still waiting to hear about what the Council was doing to promote disabled people's rights and their struggle for equality, having raised the matter at the October Council meeting. The Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Corporate Services apologised that Councillor Redstone did not appear to have received a written reply to his previous question and she undertook to ensure that a written reply would be provided.

Councillor L Smetham referred to bus service provision, particularly in rural areas, and asked if further Active Travel funding had been received. The Deputy Leader outlined the funding arrangements that were in place to support local bus services during the pandemic, including the Covid bus service support grant, funding for bus services on key routes for students, and the Flexilink service. The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste added that the Council had applied for a second tranche of funding for the Active Travel scheme.

Councillor L Wardlaw referred to the numbers of senior officers leaving the Council and asked what the impact would be on service delivery and the morale of staff, and what was being done to retain the talents of senior officers. The Leader responded that the Council now had a permanent Chief Executive and a permanent Deputy Chief Executive. Whilst he was pleased for those senior officers who were leaving in order to further their careers elsewhere, he agreed that staff morale was important and that the Council's staff should be valued.

49 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

That subject to the following amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 6th October 2020 be approved as a correct record:

Minute 38 – Mid-Year Review (Finance) 2020/21

The sentence:

“Councillor J Clowes, as Chairman of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, reported the Committee's comments on the report and referred to a number of matters on which the Committee had sought further clarification.”

is amended to:

“Councillor J Clowes, as Chairman of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, reported the Committee's comments on the report.”

50 COVID-19 - UPDATE ON RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Cabinet considered a further update report on the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration commented that the Council had been successful in its application for funding under the Government's Next Steps programme. He also clarified that the funding under the Discretionary Business Grant scheme had come from central government.

In response to a question from Councillor R Fletcher, the Leader clarified that the areas used to report infections were not ward boundaries but middle super output areas. He undertook to provide Councillor Fletcher with a link to a map of the areas.

In response to a question from Councillor S Gardiner, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, IT and Communication provided a breakdown of the estimated potential gross financial pressure of £70m referred to in paragraph 7.2.4 of the report. She could provide further details in writing if needed.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet notes the issues outlined in the report.

51 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2021/22 - 2024/25

Cabinet considered a report on the arrangements and timescale for consultation on the 2021/22 to 2024/25 Medium Term Financial Strategy.

It was noted that the date of the Cabinet meeting referred to in the Appendix should be 1st December.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. notes the Pre-COVID financial assumptions, contained within the financial implications of the report, that were originally included as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (Council - February 2020) and identified potential financial deficits beyond 2020/21;
2. notes the approach to consultation; and
3. approves the timescales for consultation on the 2021/22 to 2024/25 Medium Term Financial Strategy as identified in Appendix 1 to the report.

52 CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN CONSULTATION

Cabinet considered a report on the arrangements for public consultation on the Council's draft Corporate Plan 2020-2024.

In response to a question from Councillor S Gardiner, the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Corporate Services undertook to discuss with officers a possible extension to the consultation period.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. notes the content of the report, including the timeline and activities to be undertaken as part of a public consultation on the Council's draft Corporate Plan 2020-2024; and
2. notes the content of Appendix 1.

53 CREWE REGENERATION AND INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

Cabinet considered a report setting out a programme of interventions to support the regeneration of Crewe.

Councillor S Gardiner asked whether a supplementary planning document should be drawn up to revitalise Crewe, based on more residential and less commercial development, which in turn would require less green field release at the next stage of the Local Plan. The Portfolio Holder for Planning undertook to provide a written response.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. notes that the Council is the Accountable Body for the Crewe Town Board with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration being the Council's representative on it;
2. delegates authority to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Director Place and with the approval of the Crewe Town Board, to:
 - (a) submit a Town Investment Plan to Government; and
 - (b) submit a bid for the Towns Fund to Government;
3. delegates authority to the Executive Director Place, in consultation with the Director of Governance and Compliance, the Director of Finance and Customer Service, the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration and the Portfolio Holder for Finance, IT and Communication to:
 - (a) accept a government grant (Towns Fund – Accelerated project funding) and the associated conditions, to support the proposed Ly² project;
 - (b) accept a government grant (Future High Streets Fund), and the associated conditions, to support a range of measures to support the regeneration of Crewe town centre;
 - (c) approve Supplementary Capital Estimates up to the value of the grants accepted under (a) and (b) above, to facilitate expenditure within the associated conditions;
 - (d) approve capital and revenue budgets associated with co-funding delivery of the measures proposed; and
 - (e) take all necessary actions to implement the proposals;
4. notes that the review has been undertaken for the Crewe hub station scheme taking account of the impact of Covid-19;
5. approves the proposed revisions to the Crewe hub station scheme;

6. authorises the Executive Director Place to:

- (a) commission the detailed design for Crewe Hub Station;
- (b) agree terms with Network Rail and Avanti West Coast for the release of land necessary to deliver the scheme; and
- (c) negotiate and agree a funding deal with Government and Avanti West Coast to secure the necessary funding to deliver the Revised Initial Scheme; and

7. notes that further approvals will be sought from Cabinet to approve a preferred Crewe Hub Station scheme and seek any powers of compulsory purchase required to deliver the preferred scheme.

54 HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE NEW CONTRACT SERVICE PROVISION

Cabinet considered a report on proposed consultation to inform the future provision of Household Waste Recycling Centres.

A briefing for all members had been held on the morning of the Cabinet meeting.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. notes the contents of the report and authorises the Executive Director Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste, to take all necessary actions to consult on the future service provision of household waste recycling centres, including the four options outlined in the appended report; and
2. notes that a further report will be presented to Cabinet to outline the results of the consultation and to seek approval for the preferred model, and also to seek approval to commence procurement for a new contract.

55 CHESHIRE EAST SOCIAL VALUE POLICY

Cabinet considered a draft Social Value policy.

Councillor L Wardlaw, as Chairman of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, reported the Committee's comments on the report.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. adopts the draft Social Value Policy as outlined at Appendix 1 to the report; and
2. agrees that all future executive decisions relating to the commissioning and procurement of goods and services should outline the contribution they will make to the delivery of social value.

56 CROWD FUNDING

Cabinet considered a draft policy on Crowd Funding.

Councillor J Clowes, as Chairman of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, spoke in relation to the Committee's comments as set out in the report.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. approves the draft Crowd Funding Policy as a sub-policy document to the Grant Policy as set out in appendix A to the report; and
2. delegates authority to the Executive Director People to procure a platform provider to enable the authority to implement a crowd funding solution.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 3.27 pm

Councillor S Corcoran (Chairman)