

## **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
held on Thursday, 28th January, 2021 at Virtual Meeting

### **PRESENT**

Councillor J Clowes (Chairman)  
Councillor B Murphy (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors C Bulman, JP Findlow, R Fletcher, M Hunter, A Moran,  
J Saunders, M Simon, R Vernon and S Gardiner

### **PORTFOLIO HOLDERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Councillor L Crane, Portfolio for Highways and Waste  
Councillor K Flavell, Portfolio for Children and Families  
Councillor L Jeuda, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health; Deputy  
Leader of the Labour Group  
Councillor J Rhodes, Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Corporate  
Services  
Councillor A Stott, Portfolio Holder for Finance, ICT and Communication

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance  
Jane Burns, Executive Director of Corporate Services  
Alex Thompson, Director of Financial and Customer Services

### **51 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Q Abel and L  
Wardlaw (substituted for by Councillor S Gardiner).

### **52 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

#### **RESOLVED –**

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 January 2021, be  
approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **53 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **54 DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIP**

There were no declarations of a party whip.

## **55 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION**

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

## **56 THIRD QUARTER REVIEW (FINANCE) 2020/21**

The committee agreed to bring this item forward on the agenda so that it could review the council's present financial position before looking at the longer-term financial plans in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Consideration was given to the Third Quarter Review (Finance) for the 2020/21 municipal year. Members asked questions and put comments in relation to;

- the underspend of £600k in Early Help (due to held vacancies) and whether this correlated to the rise in cared for children and/or referrals to Early Help;
- concern about the overall spend on the Best4Business Programme, in light of further one-off spends committed to it; and
- how flexible the council would be when managing its Council Tax Support Scheme, and how residents who continued to struggle due to the impacts of Covid-19 would be supported.

### **RESOLVED –**

- 1 That the report be received and noted.
- 2 That the committee's comments and feedback be reported to Cabinet to consider, prior to its meeting on 2 February 2021.

## **57 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2021-2025**

The committee considered the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-25 and the various strategies and plans it comprised. In respect of the Corporate Plan 2021-25, members asked questions and put comments in relation to;

- the highly ambitious nature of the plan and that it had been well put together;
- it brought the council more in-line with what it should be – a public-focused and public-serving organisation, rather than a business operation;
- it was positive to see such ambitious 'green' targets within the plan and hope that these would be achieved; and
- the response rate to the public consultation held.

Following an introduction to the report by the Director of Finance and Customer Services (s151 Officer) members put comments and asked questions in relation to;

- the need for the council to increase its council tax precept to ensure it received the additional £6.9m of ringfenced funding for adult social care services;
- the council's total estimated spend in response to Covid-19; and
- that there could have been greater or more detailed reference to invest-to-save strategies through the council's proposed Capital Strategy.

The committee then considered in detail the changes that had been made to the budgetary proposals following the Pre-Budget Consultation 2021/22 period, with further questions asked on each of these changes.

**RESOLVED –**

- 1 That the report be received and its recommendations noted.
- 2 That the committee's comments and feedback be reported to Cabinet to consider, prior to its meeting on 2 February 2021.

**58 FORWARD PLAN**

The committee reviewed the council's Forward Plan of key decisions.

**RESOLVED –**

That the Forward Plan be noted.

**59 WORK PROGRAMME**

The committee considered its work programme.

**RESOLVED –**

That the work programme be agreed.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 1.20 pm

Councillor J Clowes (Chairman)