

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 22nd July, 2010 at Congleton Town Hall, High Street, Congleton

PRESENT

Councillor G Baxendale (Chairman)

Councillor R West (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors E Alcock, C Andrew, Rhoda Bailey, A Barratt, G Barton, T Beard, D Bebbington, S Bentley, D Brickhill, S Broadhurst, D Brown, D Cannon, R Cartlidge, S Conquest, J Crockatt, M Davies, S Davies, R Domleo, B Dykes, P Edwards, P Findlow, W Fitzgerald, R Fletcher, D Flude, S Furlong, H Gaddum, L Gilbert, J Hammond, D Hough, T Jackson, J Jones, S Jones, A Knowles, A Kolker, W Livesley, J Macrae, A Martin, M Martin, P Mason, S McGrory, R Menlove, A Moran, B Moran, J Narraway, D Neilson, R Parker, M Parsons, A Ranfield, B Silvester, M Simon, L Smetham, D Stockton, D Thompson, C Thorley, A Thwaite, C Tomlinson, D Topping, R Walker, G M Walton, J Weatherill, R Westwood, P Whiteley, S Wilkinson and J Wray

Apologies

Councillors A Arnold, M Asquith, Rachel Bailey, C Beard, D Beckford, H Davenport, J Goddard, M Hardy, M Hollins, B Howell, O Hunter, G Merry and H Murray

34 PRAYERS

In the absence of the Mayor's Chaplain and at the request of the Mayor, Councillor Steve Wilkinson said prayers.

Councillor Liz Gilliland

The prayers included a prayer giving grateful thanks for the life of Councillor Liz Gilliland, who sadly had recently passed away. Members and Officers stood for one minute's silent tribute in memory of Councillor Gilliland.

Following prayers, Councillors Fitzgerald, Neilson, Flude and Edwards paid tribute to Councillor Gilliland and her contribution as a Councillor over many years.

35 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 27 MAY 2010

RESOLVED

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

36 **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1. The Mayor referred to the recent news reports concerning the frequent casualties from the 1st Battalion, The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire), who were under a lot of pressure on the frontline, in the fight against the Taliban in Helmand. His thoughts were with the families of the soldiers concerned, at this sad time. He reported that all the families of soldiers who had been killed would receive a letter, on behalf of all the residents of Cheshire East.

With this in mind he announced that :-

2. The Mayor's Charity Ball would take place, from 7pm on Friday 3 September, in the Tenants Hall, at Tatton Park, Knutsford. Tickets were priced at £35 and included a three course dinner and champagne reception. Any Member wishing to purchase tickets should contact Karen Bedford, in the Democratic Services Section. All proceeds would go towards the Soldiers' Charity. Members who were unable to attend could donate a raffle prize, if they wished to support the charity.
3. The Mayor also urged Members to support the hoedown and hog roast, which were to be held in a marquee at The Waggon and Horses pub, on Manchester Road, in Eaton, Congleton, on Saturday, August 21, at 7.30pm, to raise funds for the welfare of injured troops of the 1st Battalion. Tickets were priced at £10 and details of how they could be obtained were posted on the Council's website. Proceeds raised would be used to provide equipment and entertainment, such as computer consoles, games and DVDs, to help wounded troops, during their recovery and rehabilitation. If Members were unable to attend, they may wish to sponsor a ticket for a family of an injured soldier. Any donations of DVDs or Playstation games would also be much appreciated and the Mayor would be happy to pass them on to the soldiers.
4. The Mayor announced that he had attended the RHS Show, at Tatton Park, on the previous day and that the Authority's display had won a gold medal for an exhibit in the flowerbed competition, entitled 'Cheshire Cheese Please', which was a giant cheeseboard made entirely of flora and fauna. The Tatton gardens were also awarded a silver guilt medal for their garden. The Mayor congratulated all those staff involved in creating the displays.

5. The Mayor announced that the meeting was the final Council meeting at which John Weeks, Strategic Director for People, would be present and he felt it fitting for John's hard work, over many years, to be publicly acknowledged. He thanked John, on behalf of the Council and presented him with a small token of the Council's appreciation.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Fitzgerald and Councillors Flude and Fletcher added their personal comments, together with comments on behalf of their respective groups.

37 URGENT ITEM OF BUSINESS - APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF ENVIRONMENT AND PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Mayor reported that, following the sad passing away of Councillor Gilliland, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 17, Council needed to elect a Vice-Chairman of the Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee. This item was not included on the agenda for the Council meeting, due to the timescale for the publication of the agenda papers and in light of the timing of the very recent funeral. The Mayor stated that he was, therefore, content to deal with this as an urgent item, under the provisions of Section 100(B)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, by reason of the special circumstances as indicated.

It was moved and seconded and :-

RESOLVED

That Councillor Andrew Martin be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee.

38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Fletcher declared a personal interest in the item relating to the Wilmslow Community Governance Review, as one of the people listed in the Petition in respect of the area of Styal was related to his wife.

39 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

Mrs Denise Roberts attended the meeting and used public speaking time to voice her concerns relating to the Council's decision to close Cypress House Community Support Centre, in Handforth. She stated that, for many years this excellent centre has provided respite and day care services to Cheshire East residents, from as far afield as Disley, Higher Poynton, Knutsford and High Legh and also Warrington. It also provided convalescent care for Wythenshawe, Stepping Hill and Macclesfield Hospitals. She had personal concerns regarding its closure, as her aunt, being sole carer for her elderly, disabled husband, had used it regularly for much needed respite care. Whilst she fully understood that the Council

needed to make savings, she could not agree with the decision to close down one, out of only two, Local Authority owned Care Centres in Cheshire East, which had the Quality Care Commission's (CQC) 3 Star excellence award; the other centre being Lincoln House in Crewe. Cypress House had retained this award for the past 3 years, after the Care Quality Commission had visited and inspected the Centre without notification. She stated that very few Private Care Homes in Cheshire, East had this award of excellence. On speaking with Social Workers, Hospital Bed Managers, residents and carers she had heard nothing but praise for the dedicated, happy and professional team of staff. After speaking with Cheshire East's Head of Adult Services, she had established that bed under occupancy at Cypress house was the reason for closure. All service users had received a letter, late in March, after rumours about the proposed closure of the Centre were printed in the local press. They were given a list of alternative Support Centres, all located in Macclesfield, Congleton and Crewe and, with the exception of Lincoln House, only held CQC's 2 star standard award. Prior to service users receiving this letter, bed occupancy at Cypress house in March was 30 clients per night, February 25-30 per night, January 23-28 per night and December 2009, 21 per night. She stated that the Centre had been closed in November, due to an outbreak of diarrhoea and Vomiting and an illness such as this and C-DIFF and flu pandemics could close Hospital wards, Care Homes, etc in a matter of hours. She questioned, with the closure of Cypress House, whether Cheshire East Care Services had the necessary emergency respite and day care services available to users, when such emergencies happened again. She noted that the Council's Cabinet agenda stated that Cheshire East had a higher than average number of elderly and residents with dementia. As people were living longer, more pressure would be put on care resources. She stated that, at the recent Cabinet meeting, Councillor Roland Domleo had given a verbal guarantee to Cabinet and herself on his decision to close Cypress house, that all alternative respite and day care services offered to service users would continue to receive the same high standard of care. She hoped, for the sake of Cheshire East Council's Head of Adult and Social Care Team, that his statement was correct and she also hoped that the Council would give her comments due consideration.

40 RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET MEETING ON 19 JULY 2010 - CORPORATE PLAN

Consideration was given to the recommendation from Cabinet in respect of the Corporate Plan, which was circulated at the meeting.

Cabinet had considered the final draft of the Corporate Plan, at its meeting on 19 July 2010 and had received a resume of the views and comments on the Plan, which had been considered by the Scrutiny Committees, at meetings throughout June and July. A number of drafting amendments/addition to the Corporate Plan arising from this consultation had been requested and these were agreed by the Cabinet as follows:-

1. The reference to household income at the end of the first paragraph on page 4 will be amended to read; "Household income also differs, ranging from £65,000 in parts of Macclesfield to £18,000 in parts of Crewe."
2. Section 10 on page 22 where it refers to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be amended so that the penultimate sentence reads; "Again, you are more than welcome to attend these meetings."
3. The final bullet point under "What we will do to achieve our ambition?" in Corporate Objective 4, in Appendix 1, will be amended to read "Improve our parks and green spaces across the Borough." This replaces "Achieve and increase existing level of Green Flags in our Greenspace sites." The related outcome under the column headed "How will we know if we have been successful?" which refers to Green Flags will be removed.
4. It is proposed to add an extra bullet point to Corporate Objective 4, in Appendix 1, under the column headed "What we will do to achieve our ambition?" stating that "Drive forward our work with local partners in the police and justice system to reduce the fear of crime and improve public safety in the borough." Likewise it is proposed to add a bullet point to the next column headed "How will we know if we have been successful? Stating that "The residents of Cheshire East will feel safer in their local communities."

RESOLVED

For the reasons set out in the report: -

That, subject to the inclusion of the amendments/addition detailed above, the Corporate Plan be approved and adopted.

41 RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET MEETING ON 19 JULY 2010 - CHESHIRE EAST SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Consideration was given to the recommendation from Cabinet in respect of the Sustainable Community Strategy, which was circulated at the meeting.

Cabinet had considered the final draft of the Sustainable Community Strategy, at its meeting on 19 July 2010. The Strategy had also been considered by the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 15 July and the following comments had been made: -

- The document was well written and clear.
- A clear definition of a town is needed – the Strategy should refer to the fact that the LDF process will address this.

- Members questioned whether or not producing such a strategy represented value for money.
- Members noted that the strategy was aspirational and not compulsory.
- Members were disappointed that the contribution of agriculture, rural economy and productiveness of land, had not been given sufficient emphasis or greater reference, throughout the strategy.
- That any reference to the PCT should be replaced with health services

In considering these comments Cabinet had agreed that the following words be inserted as an additional bullet point under the heading 'We have a strong, sustainable economy' on page 17 (Cheshire East in 2005, Our Vision):-

'Farming and agriculture are valued and supported for the contribution they make to Cheshire East's economy and the distinctiveness of our rural communities.'

RESOLVED

That, subject to the inclusion of the additional words detailed above, the Sustainable Community Strategy be approved and adopted.

42 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FORMER GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE. - COMMITTEE PROCEDURE RULES, RECORDED VOTES

Consideration was given to the recommendation from the former Governance and Constitution Committee in respect of Committee Procedure Rules, Recorded Votes.

RESOLVED

That the following provision and its incorporation into the Council's Committee Procedure Rules, be approved and adopted:

"At Committees, Sub-Committees or Special Committees, when a Member stands in his/her place and asks for a recorded vote to be taken and one other Member stands in his/her place to support the request, the vote will be recorded to show whether each Member present voted for or against the motion or abstained."

43 RECOMMENDATION FROM CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE - WILMSLOW COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW, FIRST STAGE CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to the recommendation from Constitution Committee relating to the Wilmslow Community Governance Review, First Stage Consultation.

RESOLVED

1. That :-

(1) pursuant to Section 87 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007; and having regard to the provisions of the Department for Communities and Local Government and Electoral Commission Guidance, issued in April 2008, for the conduct of Community Governance Reviews; and having received three valid petitions signed by the required number of electors calling for the constitution of new parishes for the three areas of (1) Handforth; (2) Wilmslow and Handforth; (3) Styal which triggered the Community Governance Review process:

Having taken into account

- the petitions;
- the results of the consultation with the electors in each of the areas concerned which show in each case that a majority of those who returned their ballot papers were in favour of a new parish council for their area;
- the results of the consultation exercise with stakeholders and the representations from other interested persons;
- the outcomes of the public meetings held in each of the review areas; and
- the information on existing community governance arrangements in the areas concerned and the alternative forms of community governance which might have been appropriate for the areas in question :-
 - a. that the interests of effective and convenient local government and community identities in these areas would be served by the creation of new parishes with a parish council for each of Handforth (not including polling district 8EE1 so as to recognise historic and traditional boundaries in the area), Wilmslow (including polling district 8EE1) and Styal, all as shown on the map appended to the minutes of the Constitution Committee held on 24 June 2010, with each parish comprising the polling districts indicated below; such parish councils to be called: Handforth Parish Council, Wilmslow Parish Council and Styal Parish Council respectively, and that Wilmslow Parish Council be advised to consider its designation as a Town Council;

Handforth Parish Polling districts:
8EF1, 8EG1, 8EH1, 8EJ1

Wilmslow Parish

Polling districts: 8EA1, 8EB1, 8EC1, 8ED1, 8EE1, 8EK1, 8FA1, 8FB1, 8FC1, 8FD1, 8FE1, 8FF1, 8FG1, 8FH1, 8FJ1

Styal Parish

Polling district:
8FK1

- b. that in Styal the election of parish councillors should be from the area of the parish as a whole;
- c. that given the substantial size of the proposed Wilmslow parish and in order to reflect longstanding community identities, the parish should be divided into wards for the purposes of election to the Parish Council;
- d. that the first year of elections to the new parish councils should be 2011; and
- e. that these proposals form the basis of a second stage of public consultations and that the Boundary Commission be informed of these proposals;

2. That :-

- (1) having regard to comparator information for Parish Councils in Cheshire East, and having regard to electoral equality, the number of Councillors to serve on each of the new Parish Councils should be as follows:
 - a. Handforth: 7 Councillors
 - b. Styal: 5 Councillors
 - c. Wilmslow: 15 Councillors
- (2) dependent upon the outcome of the Boundary Review, and bearing in mind the need to achieve overall electoral equality (i.e. the number of electors per councillor) as far as possible:
 - a. if no changes are made to the current Cheshire East Council Ward boundaries, five wards should be created for the Wilmslow Parish and named as follows:
 - i. Morley (comprising 3 Councillors: polling districts 8FH1, 8FJ1, 8FG1);
 - ii. Lacey Green (comprising 2 Councillors: polling district 8EK1);
 - iii. Dean Row (comprising 4 Councillors: polling districts 8EA1, 8EB1, 8EC1, 8ED1, 8EE1);

- iv. Hough (comprising 3 Councillors: polling districts 8FC1, 8FD1, 8FE1, 8FF1); and
 - v. Fulshaw (comprising 3 Councillors: polling districts 8FA1, 8FB1)
- b. if the anticipated final recommendations of the Boundary Committee in respect of Cheshire East Council boundaries are implemented, four wards should be created for the Wilmslow Parish and named as follows, to provide coterminous boundaries for electoral purposes:
- i. Wilmslow West (comprising 5 Councillors: polling districts 8FH1, 8FJ1, 8FG1, 8FC1, 8FA1(part), 8FB1(part), 8FD1(part);
 - ii. Lacey Green (comprising 2 Councillors: polling districts 8EK1, 8EA1(part), 8FD1(part);
 - iii. Dean Row (comprising 4 Councillors: polling districts 8EA1(part), 8EB1, 8EC1, 8ED1, 8EE1); and
 - iv. Hough (comprising 4 Councillors: polling districts 8FD1(part), 8FA1(part), 8FB1(part), 8FE1, 8FF1)

(3) three wards should be created for the Handforth Parish and named as follows:

- i. Handforth West (comprising 3 Councillors: polling districts 8EG1, 8EJ1)
- ii. Handforth East (comprising 2 Councillors: polling district 8EH1); and
- iii. Handforth South (comprising 2 Councillors: polling district 8EF1)

and accordingly, the previous recommendation by the Sub-Committee and the Constitution Committee in relation to this matter should be disregarded; and

- (4) subject to consultation initially with the Chairman of the Wilmslow Community Governance Review Sub-Committee, the Borough Solicitor be authorised, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any amendments required to electorate figures, polling district boundaries, or the proposed Wilmslow Parish ward boundaries, should this be required as a result of the final outcome of the Boundary review.

3. That :-

the stage two consultation will now take place between 11 August and 15 September 2010.

44 **RECOMMENDATION FROM CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORKING ARRANGEMENTS**

Consideration was given to the recommendation from Constitution Committee relating to Overview and Scrutiny Working Arrangements, which sought amendments to the Constitution to reflect the realignment of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees with the new Portfolio responsibilities, reported at Council on 13 May 2010 and to make appropriate reference to the role of the Scrutiny Chairmen's Group.

RESOLVED

1. That the new Overview and Scrutiny remits, as set out below be approved, subject to the Performance and Capacity Portfolio being added to the list of Portfolios for the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, in relation to the Corporate Plan and risk management responsibilities of that Portfolio and that the Borough Solicitor be authorised to make any necessary amendments to the Constitution.

COMMITTEE	PORTFOLIOS	PORTFOLIO HOLDER
Corporate	Resources	Cllr F Keegan
	Procurement, Assets and Shared Services	Cllr P Mason
	Health and Wellbeing	Cllr A Knowles
Children and Families	Children and Family Services	Cllr H Gaddum
Health and Adult Social Care	Health and Wellbeing	Cllr A Knowles
	Adult Services	Cllr R Domleo
Sustainable Communities	Safer and Stronger Communities	Cllr R Bailey
	Performance and Capacity	Cllr D Brown
Environment and Prosperity	Environmental Services	Cllr R Menlove
	Prosperity	Cllr J Macrae

2. That the role of the Scrutiny Chairmen's Group, in resolving cross-cutting issues and reviewing work programmes and workloads, be

recognised and that the Borough Solicitor be authorised to make appropriate reference to the Group's role, in the Constitution.

45 SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES APPROVALS

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Treasurer and Head of Assets, which requested that the Council approve the following requests for Supplementary Revenue Estimates, previously approved as subject to outturn, which required funding from balances :-

£2,291,000 for Adults Social Care Redesign

£125,000 for Economic Development

RESOLVED

That the requests for Supplementary Capital Estimates be approved and that these be funded from capital reserves, as set out above and as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

46 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2009/2010

Consideration was given to the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/2010.

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/2010 be received.

47 LOCAL ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHESHIRE EAST

Consideration was given to the independent Local Government Boundary Commission for England's final recommendations for new local government electoral arrangements in Cheshire East, which had been published on 13 July 2010. An additional covering report relating to the recommendations was circulated at the meeting.

The following motion was proposed and seconded:-

That taking into account :-

- a) That the final recommendations of the Boundary Commission are unreasonable in that they fail effectively to take into account and give due weight to the submissions of this Council and other representatives of the local community.
- b) The final recommendations would be complex and very costly to introduce at a time when this Council is being urged to make budgetary savings.

- c) The final recommendations of the Boundary Commission having just been published will not be laid until October.
- d) If objections to the order are received, it will be at least a further 40 days from October before the proposals can be considered by Parliament and the outcome known.
- e) The proposals involve an increase in the number of Wards for Cheshire East from 27 at present to a total of 52 Wards, involving a mixture of 3, 2 and Single Member Wards, thereby making the administration of elections much more complex.
- f) That the next elections for both Cheshire East Council and the Town & Parish Councils in the area are to be held in May 2011, together with the proposed national referendum on electoral reform.
- g) The above uncertainties over the parliamentary timescale, which indicate it will not be possible to make boundary changes to the electoral registers in time for the annual canvass in the early autumn, meaning that the work would have to be repeated subsequently to enable new electoral registers to be produced based on the new electoral arrangements thereby creating more work and additional administrative cost.
- h) The proposals also involve consequential changes to the warding arrangements for the Parishes of Congleton, Gawsorth, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach, Weston & Willaston.

This Council resolves:

To ask Parliament to reject the Order containing the final recommendations of the Boundary Commission and requests the Leader of the Council to write to the local MP's and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government accordingly, so that a complete revision of the boundaries can take place at the same time as the Parliamentary Boundary Review in 2014. This would enable the Boundary Commission to take a holistic view of the impact that the radical changes, that are likely in the design of the Parliamentary constituency boundaries, will have on the local authority ward structure and town and parish boundaries.

A requisition for a named vote was submitted and duly supported with the following results :-

For

The Mayor, Councillor G Baxendle, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor R West, Councillors C Andrew, Rhoda Bailey, A Barratt, G Barton, D Bebbington, S Bentley, D Brickhill, D Brown, J Crockatt,, M Davies, S Davies, R Domleo, B Dykes, J P Findlow, R W J Fitzgerald, S Furlong, H Gaddum, L Gilbert, J

Hammond, T Jackson, J Jones, A J Knowles, A Kolker, W Livesley, J Macrae, A Martin, P Mason, R Menlove, A Moran, B Moran, R Parker, A Ranfield, B Silvester, M Simon, L Smetham, D Stockton, D Thompson A Thwaite, D Topping, R C Walker, G Walton, J Weatherill, R Westwood, P Whiteley, S Wilkinson and J V Wray.

Against

Councillors E Alcock, T Beard, S Broadhurst, D J Cannon, R Cartlidge, S Conquest, P Edwards, R Fletcher, D Flude, D Hough, S Jones, M Martin, S McGrory, J Narraway, D Neilson, M Parsons, C Thorley and C Tomlinson.

The motion was declared carried, with 48 voting for and 18 against.

The following motion was also moved and seconded and declared carried:-

That the final recommendations and report of the Boundary Commission in respect of the new local government electoral arrangements in Cheshire East be noted.

RESOLVED

1. That the final recommendations and report of the Boundary Commission in respect of the new local government electoral arrangements in Cheshire East be noted.
2. That taking into account :—
 - a) That the final recommendations of the Boundary Commission are unreasonable in that they fail effectively to take into account and give due weight to the submissions of this Council and other representatives of the local community.
 - b) The final recommendations would be complex and very costly to introduce at a time when this Council is being urged to make budgetary savings.
 - c) The final recommendations of the Boundary Commission having just been published will not be laid until October.
 - d) If objections to the order are received, it will be at least a further 40 days from October before the proposals can be considered by Parliament and the outcome known.
 - e) The proposals involve an increase in the number of Wards for Cheshire East from 27 at present to a total of 52 Wards, involving a mixture of 3, 2 and Single Member Wards, thereby making the administration of elections much more complex.

- f) That the next elections for both Cheshire East Council and the Town & Parish Councils in the area are to be held in May 2011, together with the proposed national referendum on electoral reform.
- g) The above uncertainties over the parliamentary timescale, which indicate it will not be possible to make boundary changes to the electoral registers in time for the annual canvass in the early autumn, meaning that the work would have to be repeated subsequently to enable new electoral registers to be produced based on the new electoral arrangements thereby creating more work and additional administrative cost.
- h) The proposals also involve consequential changes to the warding arrangements for the Parishes of Congleton, Gawsorth, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach, Weston & Willaston.

This Council resolves:

To ask Parliament to reject the Order containing the final recommendations of the Boundary Commission and requests the Leader of the Council to write to the local MP's and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government accordingly, so that a complete revision of the boundaries can take place at the same time as the Parliamentary Boundary Review in 2014. This would enable the Boundary Commission to take a holistic view of the impact that the radical changes, that are likely in the design of the Parliamentary constituency boundaries, will have on the local authority ward structure and town and parish boundaries.

48 **QUESTIONS**

Councillors Flude and Thorley had submitted the following questions to Council. They requested and Council agreed, that written responses be circulated to all Members of the Council, after the meeting, rather than the questions being answered at the meeting :-

(1) Boundary Committee Report

Question to the Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, submitted by Cllr Flude :-

The Local Government Boundary Commission has completed and published its review of Electoral Arrangements for the Borough of Cheshire East. The Commission recommends that there should be 82 members representing 28 single member wards, 18 two member wards and 6 3 member wards.

When accepted by Parliament, the Borough will be expected to put in place electoral arrangements to carry out the Borough elections of May 2011, based on the new wards.

Given the short time span to introduce these changes will the Cabinet Member;

1. Outline the expected time scale for the introduction of the new electoral system?
2. Exert all legitimate pressure for the Parliamentary Order to be laid and accepted as quickly as possible?
3. Assure the Council and the public that the resources are available to organise the changes?
4. Arrange to publicise the new arrangements to the electorate and all interested parties such as political parties and Town and Parish councils?
5. Ensure there is an appropriate induction process in place for prospective candidates in the 82 wards?
6. Run a campaign to encourage participation in the local elections?

(2) Affordable Housing

Question to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for strategic planning, submitted by Cllr Flude :-

Eric Pickles Secretary of State for Local Government announced that house building targets set by central government are to be scrapped.

There apparently has been established the need for 1200 houses per year to be provided in Cheshire East Borough to satisfy the need for affordable homes in urban and rural areas. Will the Cabinet member responsible.

1. Provide estimated figures for the affordable homes required in each of the 7 LAP areas divided into an urban category and a rural category for the next 5 years?
2. State how many affordable homes have been provided in Cheshire East in 2009/10 and where they have been provided?
3. State the planned provision of affordable homes in the LAP urban and rural areas for 2010/11 to 2014/15?
4. State what is being done by the Borough in partnership with other organisations to close the gap between estimated need and provision?
5. State how the newly formed service run by the Borough for the allocation of social housing will help those in need for that provision?

6. What encouragement is being given to Town and Parish Councils to work with housing associations to meet the need for affordable housing in rural areas of the Borough?

(3) Secondary Education in Macclesfield

Question to the Cabinet Member responsible for Children and Families, submitted by Cllr Flude :-

Parents and teachers are deeply concerned about the state of secondary education in the Macclesfield area of Cheshire East. One week the local newspaper highlights the shortcomings of a particular school, the next week describes how two schools will amalgamate and the following week announces the amalgamation is cancelled and there will be a long and complicated review lasting until October 8th. 2010 considering a wide variety of options many of which have never been heard of before a further 6 weeks of review. All this at the time when parents of Year 6 pupils need to be choosing their secondary school.

Will the Cabinet member ensure?

1. A clear timetable is set out for decision taking so uncertainty can be brought to an end as soon as possible?
2. Require officers and schools to reorganise to provide a fair and stable system of secondary education in Macclesfield by September 2011.
3. Ensure that the admission system to Macclesfield secondary school is fair to all parents in the area and that it does not require parents to move pupils during their primary schooling in order to exercise choice of secondary school as happens at present?
4. Ensure that whatever secondary school is chosen by parents in the Macclesfield area the education provided will be of the highest quality to meet the need to realise the full potential of our children?

And more controversially

5. Ensure that the admissions system offers parents with children with special needs and/or receive free school meals have the first choice of secondary school?
6. Ensure that children in the care of the local authority have their first choice of secondary school?

(4) Highways Contract October 2011 onwards

Question to the Cabinet Member responsible for Environmental Services and Transport, submitted by Cllr Flude :-

1. The maintenance of our Highways in East Cheshire is of top concern to those Council tax payers who live and work in Cheshire East. We have a vital responsibility in providing an effective and efficient and responsive maintenance and renewal service to encourage economic development as well as to serve our electors.
2. Will the Cabinet Member explain in detail the arrangements proposed for letting the new Highways Contract commencing in October 2011 and in particular describe:-
 - a) The expected cost savings to be achieved by the new contract outsourcing all Highways responsibilities?
 - b) The impact on the employment of highways staff by the Council proposed outsourcing?
 - c) How many staff are employed in the highways division/department?
 - d) How many staff will be asked to take voluntary severance be made redundant or be offered redeployment?
 - e) How many staff will move from the Borough into proposed new employer /contractor?
 - f) The full range of services that will be included in the contract to be outsourced to the private sector?
 - g) The arrangements for ensuring that the contract will be monitored effectively by Council staff including the costs of such monitoring?
 - h) The reporting system on highways maintenance to relevant responsible committees?
 - i) The way in which local Members will be able to monitor highway maintenance in their local areas?
 - j) How local Councils will be informed of road maintenance in their areas, road cleaning in their areas, gritting schedules in their areas and pothole repair in their areas?
 - k) How local Councils and local Members will be able to hold the contractors to account for work done?
 - l) The expected benefits of such a completely outsourced contract to Cheshire East residents?
 - m) What role will the contractors play, if any, in the Councils strategic planning of the road network?
 - n) How will the Council provide for traffic management requirements throughout Cheshire East as residents parking is introduced?

- o) What is the cost to the Council for the legal advice to be given by Bevan Britten?
- p) How much will be paid to Happold Consulting for their advice?
- q) Has consideration been given to an alliance with other authorities?

Does he agree with me that it is vitally important that the Council retains the expertise to monitor standards of Highways maintenance to ensure that the service is of the highest standard and that there is a serious risk of a loss of control and accountability in the model of a fully outsourced highways Contract that he has chosen to recommend?

Question's to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Environmental Health, submitted by Cllr Thorley

(5) Wasp nests

What is the cost to a resident for the removal of a wasp's nest?

Does the Council offer a free service to pensioners and other residents who have a low income?

(6) Noise Nuisance

What services are offered to residents, by the Environmental Health Department, in relation to excessive noise from nuisance neighbours Department?

How many staff are employed in this department whose responsibilities are for noise abatement?

What assistance is available from this department for residents at weekends, evenings and during the night?

Is there full cover for staff holidays?

Question to the Cabinet Member for Highways, submitted by Cllr Flude :-

(7) Highways Contract

On the Thursday the 8th of July, at 10.24, I emailed Mr John Dodd, Highway Repairs Crew to request the replacement of a kerbstone, which had been removed by children [they had gone prepared with a shopping trolley!]

On Tuesday the 13th July at 2pm Mr Dodd e-mailed to inform me that the repair had been completed.

The work had been completed in less than 4 working days and I received a polite response from Mr Dodd.

Can the Cabinet Member assure this Council that when the Highways Department has been contracted out, this Council will receive the same excellent standard of service from the new contractors as we at this time receive from our outstanding highways staff?

Questions to the Leader of the Council, submitted by Cllr Flude

(8) One County

Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Local Government, is encouraging local authorities to consider sharing one Chief Executive with their neighbour authorities. He also called on authorities to save money by merging planning, lawyers and other teams across boundaries.

Are there any plans to put Cheshire back to one County?

(9) Outsourcing of Council Services

When the Schools are Trusts or Academies, the highways are privatised and the residents who need social care have a direct payment or an individual budget to spend in the community and if the rumours are right, many other Council services will be outsourced, will there be any need for a Council?

Question for the Cabinet Member with responsibilities for Personnel , submitted by Cllr Thorley

(10) Redundancies and Severance

How many staff have been made redundant or have taken voluntary severance from 1st April 2009 to the 22nd July 2010?

What is the total cost of those redundancies and severances?

How many staff who have been made redundant or who took voluntary severance have been re-employed on temporary contracts?

Question to the Cabinet member Children and Families, submitted by Cllr Flude :-

(11) Educational Psychologists

How many Educational Psychologists are employed by Cheshire East?

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and concluded at 8.30 pm

Councillor G Baxendale (Chairman)
CHAIRMAN