

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Policy Committee**
held on Tuesday, 8th June, 2021 at The Assembly Room - Town Hall,
Macclesfield SK10 1EA

PRESENT

Councillor S Corcoran (Chair)
Councillor A Stott (Vice-Chair)

Councillors J Clowes, D Edwardes (in place of Cllr Browne), JP Findlow,
K Flavell, R Fletcher, S Gardiner, N Mannion, A Martin, K Parkinson,
J Rhodes and M Warren

Other Members Present

Councillor J Nicholas

Officers

Lorraine O'Donnell, Chief Executive
Jane Burns, Executive Director Corporate Services
Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services
David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance
Sara Barker, Head of HR
Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance
Michael Moore, Interim Communications Manager
Julie Gregory, Acting Legal Team Manager
Paul Mountford, Democratic Services

Apologies

Councillor C Browne

The Chair welcomed everyone to what was the first decision-making meeting of the Council's new committee system.

At the Chairman's request, members of the Committee and officers introduced themselves.

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors R Fletcher and S Gardiner declared non-prejudicial interests in the report on Members' Allowances as they were each personally known to a member of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

2 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

Sue Helliwell referred to item 10 on the agenda relating to the proposed senior management restructure and asked if the current holder of the post of Executive Director People was being made redundant or leaving the

Council. She also asked how many members of the Corporate Leadership Team had left the Council since May 2019.

At the Chair's request, the Chief Executive responded that the former holder of the post of Executive Director People had left the Council in January 2021 to take up a role in another organisation. Since May 2019, three members of the Corporate Leadership Team had left the Council.

3 COVID-19 UPDATE

The Committee received a report summarising developments since May in relation to infection rates in Cheshire East, and progress with the vaccination programme and the test, trace, contain and enable strategy. Officers gave a further oral update at the meeting on the most recent developments, including increases in infection rates in the Borough.

The report also outlined the implications for Council services of the move to Step 3 of the Government's roadmap for easing restrictions in England. It also provided an update on support for businesses and on recovery planning and reported the latest position on the financial implications of the pandemic.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

4 CONSTITUTION UPDATE

The Committee considered a report which sought a recommendation to Council to approve further changes to the constitution and grant delegated authority to the Monitoring Officer to amend the constitution.

The proposed changes comprised editorial amendments which fell directly to the Monitoring Officer but must be reported to Council; changes reserved to Council such as amendments to committee terms of reference; and substantive insertions, such as member remuneration, which were awaiting approval by Council. Further details were set out in the Council report at Appendix 1 and were highlighted in the attached sections of the constitution.

It was intended that this version of the constitution would remain operative until a review by Council in November 2021.

At its meeting, the Corporate Policy Committee accepted a tabled amendment to provide for editorial consistency at Chapter 3, Part 4, paragraph 6.23 (authority for Directors to submit applications for grant funding without commitment); and a minor rewording to Chapter 2, Part 2, paragraph 8 for clarity (that significant decisions likely to be taken by committees will appear on the Council's Forward Plan).

RESOLVED

That the report at Appendix 1 and the proposed changes to the constitution referred to therein be recommended to Council subject to the inclusion of the two additional minor amendments accepted at the meeting.

5 APPOINTMENTS TO SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS, PANELS, BOARDS AND JOINT COMMITTEES

The Committee considered its appointments to a number of bodies.

Where necessary, the names of appointees would be notified to the Head of Democratic Services and Governance by the Group Whips.

With regard to the Constitution Working Group, it was noted that whilst the current version of the constitution provided for the Working Group to consist of 8 members, the Committee had just agreed to recommend to Council a change to the constitution to provide that the Working Group should consist of no more than 8 members. This would allow a smaller Working Group to be appointed if considered appropriate.

Where members of bodies meeting on an ad hoc basis were drawn from a pool of members appointed for this purpose, the Head of Democratic Services and Governance advised that such members were selected according to their availability but that the availability and attendance of such members could be monitored to ensure that all were able to participate.

RESOLVED

That the following appointments be made to the bodies indicated:

A. Bodies which report to the Corporate Policy Committee

Constitution Working Group

Whilst the report recommended that the Working Group should comprise 8 members, the Committee resolved that it should comprise 6 members with the following composition: 2 Conservative: 2 Labour: 2 Independent Group.

Community Governance Review Sub-Committee

The Sub-Committee comprise 7 members with the following composition: 3 Conservative: 2 Labour: 2 Independent Group. In addition, 1 member of the Liberal Democrat Group and 1 member of the Real Independent Group be invited to attend and participate in meetings of the Sub-Committee in a non-voting capacity.

Staffing Appeals Sub-Committee

3 members appointed on an ad hoc basis, drawn from a pool of 10 selected on a politically proportionate basis (4 Conservative: 3 Labour: 2 Independent Group: 1 Liberal Democrat).

General Appeals Sub-Committee

5 members appointed on an ad hoc basis, drawn from a pool of 10 selected on a politically proportionate basis (4 Conservative: 3 Labour: 2 Independent Group: 1 Liberal Democrat).

Shared Services Joint Committee

Whilst the report recommended a membership comprising one member of the Labour Group and two members of the Independent Group, the Committee resolved that it should have the following composition: 3 members: 1 Conservative: 1 Labour: 1 Independent Group.

Subject to confirmation from the Group Whip as regards the Independent Group nomination, the following members be appointed to the Joint Committee:

Councillor J P Findlow

Councillor J Rhodes

Councillor A Moran

Councillor A Stott to be the reserve member for the Independent Group.

B. Other Bodies to which the Corporate Policy Committee is required to make appointments

Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board

Councillor S Corcoran be appointed as one of the Council's three voting members on the Board.

Joint Extra Care Housing Management Board

Councillor N Mannion be appointed as one of the Council's three members on the Board.

6 MEMBER ALLOWANCES

The Committee considered the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on members' allowances.

A working group of members had been appointed to consider the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel and had met on 26th May 2021. The Chair of the working group was Councillor M

Warren. Councillor Warren circulated a set of his recommendations at the Committee's meeting.

With regard to a recommendation that there be no uprating of the basic allowance in 2021/22, the working group had agreed that in future years, starting in 2022/23, member allowances should continue to be uprated in line with the NJC officers pay award.

RESOLVED

That the Committee recommends to Council that the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel be adopted to take effect from the start of the 2021/22 municipal year subject to the following:

1. there be no uprating of basic allowance in 2021/22;
2. in future years, starting in 2022/23, member allowances continue to be uprated in line with the NJC officers pay award;
3. the allowance for vice-chairs of service committees be increased to £6,000;
4. the whips' allowances be replaced with a group administrator allowance paid at £3,825 to the administrator of any group with at least 10 members and £1,766 to the administrator of any group with at least 4 members but fewer than 10;
5. no allowance be paid for opposition spokespersons;
6. the following allowances be continued as recommended for 2021/22 but be reviewed for 2022/23:
 - a. the Scrutiny Committee chair's allowance, which should be reviewed in the light of the workload of that committee and this be reported back to Council in November as part of the constitution review; and
 - b. the civic allowances for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

7 MEDIA RELATIONS PROTOCOL

The Committee considered an updated draft media relations protocol for Cheshire East Council which set out the policy and principles that defined how public and media relations activity would be undertaken. The protocol defined the roles and responsibilities with regard to public relations, and specifically media relations activity, including the approvals process, identifying spokespersons and the distribution/publication protocol. The Committee welcomed reference to local members being quoted on ward issues.

RESOLVED

That the updated media relations protocol be approved.

8 PERFORMANCE REPORTING

The Committee's views were sought on future performance reporting arrangements.

The Committee's terms of reference included a co-ordinating role across all other committees and exercising a corporate view of outcomes, performance, budget monitoring and risk management. It also included oversight and scrutiny of the performance of the Corporate Services Directorate. The new committee arrangements provided an opportunity to look afresh at Members' requirements to fulfil their responsibilities for oversight, scrutiny and holding to account.

Members were keen to see easier to read and timely reports, presenting a balanced view of performance, with more analysis and commentary and the development of proxy measures.

RESOLVED

That the Executive Director of Corporate Services design a balanced scorecard for consideration at a future meeting.

9 PROPOSED SENIOR MANAGEMENT RESTRUCTURE

The Committee considered a report which outlined the final proposals for the senior management structure following formal staff consultation. Approval was sought from the Committee to recommend these changes to full Council.

Draft proposals had been approved by the Staffing Committee on 22nd April 2021 and approval had been given to undertake formal consultation with the affected staff. The outcome of the consultation was detailed in the report. The final proposed changes to the senior management structure had now been formulated, together with a timeline for the proposed recruitment process.

The Corporate Policy Committee noted that within the Corporate Services Directorate, the repurposing of the currently vacant Director of Transformation to the Director of Policy and Change had also been undertaken. The arrangements for the recruitment to that post were set out in the report.

The Corporate Policy Committee was also informed of the resignation of the Executive Director Place and agreed to recruit on a like-for-like basis on the same timescale as the other three senior posts.

RESOLVED

That the Committee

1. recommends to full Council the adoption of the Senior Management Structure at Appendix 1 to the report;
2. recommends to full Council the deletion of the Executive Director People and the Strategic Director Adult Social Care and Health roles and the creation of 2 new posts: the Executive Director of Children's Services and the Executive Director of Adults, Health and Integration (Appendix 2) which include the statutory responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and Director of Adults Social Services;
3. recommends to full Council the salaries in respect of the Executive Director of Children's Services and the Executive Director of Adults, Health and Integration which will be in excess of £100,000 (up to £136,313 / Grade CX2);
4. recommends to full Council that it delegate all constitutional changes, including the scheme of delegation, to the Monitoring Officer;
5. notes the summary of the consultation and progress since the Staffing Committee meeting on 22nd April 2021;
6. notes that following a formal procurement exercise, Tile Hill Executive Recruitment has been appointed as the executive search partner for the recruitment and selection processes;
7. notes the timeline for the recruitment and selection process, subject to approval by full Council; and
8. agrees to recruit to the post of Executive Director Place on a like-for-like basis on the same timescale as the other three senior posts referred to in the report.

10 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its work programme.

It was noted that the Constitution Committee at its meeting on 29th April 2021 had agreed the basis of a public and member engagement protocol and had referred the basis for the development of a non-administration group role in a committee to the Corporate Policy Committee. Both matters would now be referred to the Constitution Working Group for further consideration with a view to a report coming back to the Committee in due course.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be approved.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 1.35 pm

Councillor S Corcoran (Chair)