

# **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Council**  
held on Wednesday, 20th October, 2021 at Macclesfield Leisure Centre,  
Priory Lane, Macclesfield, SK10 4AF

## **PRESENT**

Councillor S Pochin (Mayor/Chair)

Councillor D Marren (Deputy Mayor/Vice Chair)

Councillors Q Abel, S Akers Smith, Anderson, M Asquith, R Bailey, J Barber, M Beanland, M Benson, L Braithwaite, S Brookfield, D Brown, C Browne, J Buckley, C Bulman, B Burkhill, J Clowes, S Corcoran, L Crane, S Davies, T Dean, D Edwardes, S Edgar, H Faddes, A Farrall, JP Findlow, K Flavell, R Fletcher, A Gage, S Gardiner, L Gilbert, M Goldsmith, P Groves, S Handley, A Harewood, G Hayes, S Holland, M Houston, M Hunter, D Jefferay, L Jeuda, A Kolker, C Leach, N Mannion, A Moran, R Moreton, B Murphy, D Murphy, C Naismith, J Nicholas, K Parkinson, J Parry, P Redstone, L Roberts, J Saunders, M Sewart, M Simon, L Smetham, J Smith, L Smith, D Stockton, A Stott, R Vernon, L Wardlaw, M Warren, J Weatherill, P Williams, J Wray and N Wylie

The Mayor referred to the death of Sir David Amess, Member of Parliament for Southend West, and asked all present to observe a minute's silence. The Mayor then invited the Group Leaders – Cllr S Corcoran, Cllr C Browne, Cllr J Clowes, Cllr R Fletcher and Cllr B Murphy to say a few words in tribute.

## **25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors M Addison, J Bratherton, P Butterill, S Carter, B Evans, A Gregory, S Hogben, A Martin, I Macfarlane, B Puddicombe and J Rhodes.

## **26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor L Crane declared a potential interest in Item 13 and declared she would abstain from voting on this item.

## **27 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2021 be approved as a correct record.

## 28 **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor, summary

- 1 welcomed Councillor Lata Anderson to her first Council meeting as the recently elected representative for the Wilmslow Dean Row Ward.
- 2 welcomed the newly appointed Executive Director – Place – Jayne Traverse, and the Executive Director for Adults, Health, and Integration - Helen Charlesworth-May to the Council.
- 3 reported that she had been involved in the process to appoint the Head Boy and Head Girl at Oaks Academy in Crewe.
- 4 reported she had visited the Fermain Academy in Macclesfield and had been impressed to learn that all the children leave with either a college place or an apprenticeship.
- 5 reported that in her role as Mayor she was trying to facilitate finding premises for the YouthFed to set up a new youth club in Macclesfield, and new premises for the Welcome Café in Longridge Knutsford.
- 6 reported she had visited the New Life Church in Congleton and was humbled by the dedication of the volunteers working there to provide an invaluable space for the community across a wide range of services
- 7 congratulated Gary Johnson and the team at the Crewe Market Hall for the excellent work they are doing to make that space a vibrant community 'go to' location for events, business meetings, or just lunch or coffee with friends
- 8 reported that the next meeting of full Council on 18 November would be held at the Crewe Lifestyle Centre.
- 9 announced that a special meeting of Council would be held, along with the full Council meeting, on 15 December 2021 at Tatton Park to honour the Olympians and Para Olympians.
- 10 announced she would be holding a charity drinks party on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> December at Dorfold Hall in Nantwich to raise money for Hopes and Beams.

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

Mr Stuart Redgard stated he both wanted to praise and scold the Council. He reported he had received outstanding service from two officers of the Council – Helen Davies in Democratic Services and John Dean in Community Enforcement. However, he stated that he could not say the same for the service he had received from Highways and gave as an example the winter gritting routes information, which, he said, was full of errors and omissions and had not been put right despite being informed that it would be in July. He had provided the Council with a list of over 20 questions and requested that written responses be provided for each before the next Council meeting. Councillor C Browne, Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, undertook to respond to the submitted questions.

Mr Andrew Wood asked if the Council would support the proposal for a new farmers market on land in Chelford. Councillor N Mannion, Chair of Economy and Growth Committee, undertook to provide a written response to Mr Wood.

Mr Alek Adamski referred to the changes made to the winter gritting routes programme and asked for an immediate review of the programme to take place and that councillor be allowed a free vote to show how many supported the policy of cutting the number of winter gritting routes. He asked who was responsible for the scoring which had removed the road he lived on from the winter gritting route programme. Mr Adamski referred to a Facebook Group that had been set up on this matter which had growing support, along with support of councillors and Town and Parish Councils. Councillor C Browne, Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, responded that no individual member was responsible for determining which roads were either included or excluded from the programme. A common assessment framework was used consistently across all roads, which has showed that some roads had been included in the programme without rationale. Following the introduction of the assessment framework some roads had been added and others removed but if severe or extreme weather conditions occurred roads not covered by the regular programme would be included. The Council's revenue budget for highways maintenance was £9.5m a year with winter gritting costing just over £2m. The Council had a fixed income and the additional costs of adding back in route to the winter gritting programme would have to be met by reductions elsewhere. A review of the winter gritting routes would be carried out annually and a report was due to come to the Highways and Transport Committee in March 2022.

### 30 LEADER'S AND DEPUTY LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader, in summary

- 1 re-iterated the welcome to the Executive Director of Place – Jayne Traverse, and new Executive Director of Adults Health & Integration – Helen Charlesworth-May.
- 2 reported that the overall covid infection rate in Cheshire East was at a record high of over 700 per 100,000 and the number of people in hospital due to covid-19 remained low, which he credited to the effectiveness of the vaccinations.
- 3 encouraged all residents to get vaccinated, including the booster covid vaccination and flu vaccination, to help reduce pressures on the NHS over the winter period.
- 4 reminded all of the 'hands, face, space and fresh air' message to reduce the spread of coughs, colds, flu, Covid-19, and winter vomiting.
- 5 referred to the challenges faced by politicians and that they must not allow those who use hate and division to further their personal aims to take over public debate.
- 6 referred to the challenges of climate change and the action being taken by the Council

- 7 invited Cllr A Farrall, Armed Forces Champion, to say a few words due to the fast-approaching Remembrance Day.

Councillor A Farrell, in summary

- 1 reported that 2021 marked 100 years of the Royal British Legion and asked all to support their local branch.
- 2 asked those attending remembrance services with older veterans in attendance to give them space as they were still vulnerable to COVID.
- 3 provided an update on the Council's work to achieve the Gold Standard as an armed forces covenant employer
- 4 reported that the Council had created a new role of Armed Forces Community Liaison Officer, who had already been involved with accommodation for Afghan interpreter families.
- 5 reported on the plans to open a veteran's hub early next year.

Deputy Leader, in summary

- 1 praised the efforts by the Council's workforce over the last 12 months and reported that the waste and recycling services had been voted best service team for waste management and recycling by the Association for Public Sector Excellence and the Congleton link road project team had won the Civil Engineering Contractors' North West award for 'social value', which recognised exceptional partnership work delivering local community initiatives.
- 2 reported that the new 'on demand' rural bus services had been launched with the new 'go-too' pilot scheme covering a wide area south of Nantwich, taking in Bunbury, Wrenbury and Audlem and other villages, where no commercial services were available.
- 3 informed that he had joined the Mayor of Macclesfield and Ward Members for the official re-opening of Castle Street in Macclesfield following the completion of the regeneration scheme.
- 4 declared that it was the Council's intention to bid for headquarters of the newly formed Great British Railways
- 5 reported the launch of the recovery and growth grant scheme, which was a discretionary scheme, aimed at helping businesses to grow, adapt and diversify and was open until 17 December 2021.

### 31 **RECOMMENDATION FROM FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE: ALIGNING THE MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO THE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

The Finance Sub Committee, at its meeting on 1 July 2021, had considered the aligning of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to the Committee Structure and made a recommendation to full Council to approve fully funded supplementary estimates above £1,000,000 in accordance with the Financial Procedural Rules, as detailed in Appendix D – Table B to the report.

**RESOLVED:**

That, in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules, the fully funded supplementary estimates above £1,000,000, as detailed in Appendix D – Table B, be approved.

**32 RECOMMENDATION FROM FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE: GROUP OUTTURN 2020-21**

The Finance Sub Committee, at its meeting on 22 September 2021, had considered the Group Outturn 2020-21 report and made recommendations to full Council to approve the supplementary capital estimates over £1,000,000, as detailed in Appendix 3, Annex D to the report, and approve the fully funded supplementary revenue estimates over £1,000,000, as detailed in Appendix 2, Table 1 to the report.

**RESOLVED:** That, in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules,

- 1 the supplementary capital estimates over £1,000,000, as detailed in Appendix 3, Annex D, be approved, and
- 2 the fully funded supplementary revenue estimates over £1,000,000, as detailed in Appendix 2, Table 1, be approved.

**33 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR TO THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

At the Council at its meeting on 4 May 2021, it was agreed that the position of Vice Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee be allocated to the Independent Group and it approved the appointment of Councillor T Fox to this position. Following the resignation of Councillor Fox, Council was requested to appoint a Vice Chair to the Audit and Governance Committee.

It was moved and seconded that Councillor David Marren be appointed as the Vice Chair to the Audit and Governance Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

That Councillor David Marren be appointed as the Vice Chair to the Audit and Governance Committee.

**34 NOTICES OF MOTION**

Consideration was given to the following Notices of Motion, which had been submitted in accordance with the Council's Procedure Rules.

## **1. Protect the Right of Communities to Object to Individual Planning Applications**

Proposed by Councillor R Vernon and Seconded by Councillor C Bulman

*This Council believes planning works best when developers and the local community work together to shape local areas and deliver necessary new homes; and therefore, calls on the Government to protect the right of communities to object to individual planning applications.*

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Motion be referred to the appropriate Committee.

## **2. 'Fire and Re-Hire'**

Proposed by Councillor L Smith and Seconded by Councillor C Naismith

*This Council notes;*

- 1 1 in 10 workers have experienced 'fire and rehire' - told to reapply for their jobs on worse pay, terms and conditions or face the sack, with BME workers facing this at twice the rate of white workers, since March 2020 (TUC research, January 2021). A quarter of all workers have experienced a worsening of their terms and conditions – including a cut in their pay - since the pandemic began.*
- 2 That while the prime minister has called the practice “unacceptable” he has continually refused to take action to outlaw the practice, raising concerns that he will not intervene in this race to the bottom as an escalating number of employers across all sectors using our weak employment protections employers as they force their staff to accept worse terms and conditions, leaving many having to work longer hours and for lower pay, with what can be devastating consequences for workers and their families.*
- 3 Even before the pandemic, 1 in 9 workers – 3.8 million people – were already 'insecure', meaning they did not have access to basic rights at work and could be dismissed at will; including those on zero-hour contracts and agency workers.*

*This Council therefore resolves to:*

- Seek to ensure local residents are protected against such employers and agrees to ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Prime Minister demanding he outlaw fire and rehire and act now to keep his promise to local residents to protect their employment terms and conditions.*
- Not use fire and rehire itself as an employer and to prevent its use by council contractors, and to ensure the Council has a procurement practice that ensures we are working with contractors that have good employment, trade union, equality and environmental records.*

- *Promote the increasing number of progressive local employers prioritising their employees' standard of living and their wellbeing, work with our anchor institutions and key partners to bring forward plans to ensure all have best practice employment and to work with recognised trade unions on this.*
- *Support the TUC campaign for a 'New Deal for Working People'.*

**RESOLVED:**

That the Motion be referred to the appropriate Committee.

**3. Headquarters for Great British Railways**

**Proposed by Councillor J Clowes and Seconded by Councillor D Browne**

*This Council engages directly with the Transport Secretary Grant Schapps and prioritises the submission of a competitive bid for Crewe to host the new headquarters for Great British Railways.*

*Cheshire East Council engages proactively with Crewe & Nantwich MP Dr Kieran Mullan, together with our regional and subregional transport partners, to enhance and strengthen this unique and iconic bid.*

Following debate on the Motion, a requisition for a named vote was submitted, with the following results:

**FOR**

Councillors Q Abel, S Akers Smith, L Anderson, M Asquith, R Bailey, J Barber, M Beanland, M Benson, L Brathwaite, S Brookfield, D Brown, C Browne, J Buckley, C Bulman, B Burkhill, J Clowes, S Corcoran, L Crane, S Davies, T Dean, S Edgar, D Edwardes, H Faddes, A Farrall, JP Findlow, K Flavell, R Fletcher, A Gage, S Gardiner, L Gilbert, M Goldsmith, P Groves, S Handley, A Harewood, G Hayes, S Holland, M Houston, M Hunter, D Jefferay, L Jeuda, A Kolker, C Leach, N Mannion, D Marren, A Moran, R Moreton, B Murphy, D Murphy, C Naismith, J Nicolas, K Parkinson, J Parry, S Pochin, P Redstone, L Roberts, J Saunders, M Sewart, M Simon, L Smetham, J Smith, L Smith, D Stockton, A Stott, R Vernon, L Wardlaw, M Warren, J Weatherill, P Williams, J Wray and N Wylie.

**AGAINST**

None

**NOT VOTING**

None

The motion was declared carried with 70 votes for, 0 against and 0 not voting.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Motion be adopted.

**4 Starter Units**

**Proposed by Councillor A Kolker and Seconded by Councillor P Groves**

*This Council, in order to support the Borough's post-pandemic recovery, commits to providing a wide range of affordable rental units for small and micro business start-ups.*

**RESOLVED:**

That the Motion be referred to the appropriate Committee.

**5 UK100 Pledge**

Proposed by Councillor Q Abel and Seconded by Councillor R Fletcher

*This Council makes the UK100 pledge and asks the relevant committee to determine whether Cheshire East Council should join the UK100 Network.*

Following debate on the Motion, a requisition for a named vote was submitted, with the following results:

**FOR**

Councillor Q Abel, S Akers Smith, L Anderson, M Asquith, J Barber, M Benson, L Braithwaite, C Browne, J Buckley, C Bulman, B Burkhill, J Clowes, S Corcoran, L Crane, T Dean, S Edgar, H Faddes, A Farrall, JP Findlow, R Fletcher, L Gilbert, P Groves, A Harewood, S Holland, M Houston, D Jefferay, L Jeuda, A Kolker, C Leach, N Mannion, D Murphy, J Parry, S Pochin, M Sewart, L Smetham, J Smith, M Warren, J Weatherill, P Williams and J Wray.

**AGAINST**

Councillor, S Brookfield, D Brown, D Edwardes, M Goldsmith, S Handley, G Hayes, J Nicholas, L Roberts, D Stockton and L Wardlaw.

**NOT VOTING**

Councillors R Bailey, M Beanland, S Davies, K Flavell, A Gage, S Gardiner, M Hunter, D Marren, A Moran, R Moreton, C Naismith, K Parkinson, P Redstone, J Saunders, M Simon, L Smith, A Stott, R Vernon and N Wylie.

The motion was declared carried with 40 votes for, 10 against and 19 not voting.



## **RESOLVED:**

That the Motion be adopted and referred to the relevant Committee.

## **35 QUESTIONS**

Cllr A Farrall referred to sink hole in Hobson Street, Macclesfield and asked when the hole would be fixed. Cllr C Browne, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, responded that it was complex issue as it involved multiple agencies and landowners and that negotiations and discussion were on-going with all involved but unfortunately local authorities did not have the powers to oblige them to work with the Council to solve the matter. Information was available on the Council's website and affected residents kept informed by direct correspondence.

Cllr S Akers Smith referred to the removed of roads from the winter gritting route programme and asked when would the volume of complaints received trigger a review of the policy. Cllr C Browne, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, responded that the policy was to have a common assessment framework which treated all roads, in all wards, fairly and assessed all roads using the same criteria. A report was due to come to the Highways and Transport Committee in March 2022.

Cllr S Gardiner asked when day-services and day centres would re-opening following closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic as he had inquiries from Knutsford residents and the Knutsford Lions. Cllr A Moran, Vice Chair Adult and Health Committee, undertook to provide a written answer.

Cllr L Smetham referred to the quality of highways maintenance carried out, the Top Up pilot for Town and Parish Councils and that highway maintenance was a matter for the Brough Council and asked what sensible ideas the administration had to access better value for highways work. Cllr C Browne, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, responded that the contract did not provide for a quality assurance process on highways maintenance work carried out and that it was proposed to bring forward a process of checking of the quality of maintenance work by engineers not employed by the contractor.

Cllr R Bailey sought clarity on when grit bins would be provided in her Ward. She indicated that in February 2020 the Portfolio Holder had committed to this. Cllr D Browne, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, agreed to provide clarification in writing.

Cllr D Brown sought clarification over electric charging points which he understood were to be removed from Congleton and re-installed in Wilmslow. Cllr S Corcoran, Leader of the Council, agreed to provide a written response.

Cllr S Holland expressed concern about the charges faced by Travelling Fairs to operate in Congleton and asked if these could come to Congleton at no cost. Cllr Mannion, Chair of Economy and Growth Committee undertook to provide a written response if further information was provided to him by Cllr Holland.

Cllr L Wardlaw asked that, in the light of tragic death of an MP, was it an opportune moment to re-energise and refresh the Brighter Future programme. Cllr S Corcoran responded that the Members Forum would be the correct place to take body to deal with this question.

Cllr L Gilbert referred to the Highways Top Up Scheme and asked about the approval process for this policy. Cllr C Browne, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, responded that grant for highways maintenance received from the Department of Transport was not sufficient and that the Top Up Scheme provided an opportunity for Town and Parish Council, where they wish to do so, to buy in extra work, over and above that which have been programmed.

Cllr M Simon referred to the winter gritting routes and concerns about road safety in rural areas asked that a review be carried out before the onset of any severe winter weather. Cllr C Browne, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, responded that it was difficult to review something which had not yet commenced and that a report would be coming to Committee in March 2022.

Cllr R Fletcher referred to the provision of bus timetables in bus stops and asked that the bus companies include more information on them rather than referring people to look on-line or ring for further information as not all have access to a mobile phone at a bus stop. Councillor C Browne, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, responded that the Bus Advisory Group (a subgroup of the Highways and Transport Committee) was looking into this issue as part of the development of an improvement plan.

Cllr J Saunders referred to the planting of trees as part of the Corporate Plan to achieve carbon neutrality but stated there was no point in doing this if they were not going to be maintained. She referred to trees in her ward which had been identified as requiring urgent attention but had been told that there was no budget for maintenance, this was despite there being a budget for tree risk management and the carbon neutral action delivery plan. She asked the Chair of Environment and Communities Committee to commit to working with relevant officers and Members to resolve this issue using the budget allocated. Cllr M Warren, Chair of Environment and Communities Committee undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr J Barber referred to 'unapproved activity' by developers at a Chelford Road development. Cllr M Warren, Chair of Environment and Communities Committee, responded that he was aware of discussions with the developer and would provide a written response.

Cllr P Redstone raised concerns about the planning enforcement process and asked for it to be reviewed by the relevant service committee. Cllr M Warren, Chair of Environment and Communities Committee, responded to the effect that a plan was in place to address these matters and undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr M Beanland referred to current confusion over policy decisions being made in Cheshire East, citing examples of car parking charges and charging for assisted technology and said there was confusion over policy and consultation and which came first and would consultation be ignored. He stated that this was not pertinent to good decision making. Cllr S Corcoran responded that in relation to car parking charges the committee made a decision not to go to consultation, and for assistive technology consultation was undertaken and the results taken in account when the committee made its decision.

Cllr M Hunter referred to the date of implementation for the winter gritting routes as the original report had stated 2022/23 but now appears to be 2021/22 and if correct, why had it been brought forward by 12 months. Cllr C Browne, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, responded that he was under the impression that it has always been 2021/22.

Cllr M Asquith raised a point of order in relation to the response provided by Cllr C Browne to Cllr L Gilbert's question. In response the Monitoring Officer suggested that there might have been a misunderstanding of the statutory provision which needed further research, and that the recording of the meeting needed to be listened-to.

### **36 REPORTING OF URGENT DECISION TAKEN BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Council received a schedule of urgent decisions taken by the Chief Executive on behalf of Council, which was reported for information in accordance with Appendix 4 of the Council procedure rules.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the schedule of urgent decisions be noted.

### **37 HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND GRANT**

*In accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Mayor had agreed that this report should be considered as a matter of urgent business to enable approval of a supplementary revenue estimate to allow for the distribution of vouchers as soon as possible on behalf of the Department of Works and Pensions, to support the most vulnerable households in Cheshire East with food, utilities, and other essentials over the winter period.*

Consideration was given to a report relating to the Household Support Grant.

The Council had been awarded £2,203,892.10 and approval of a supplementary revenue estimate for this amount was required as the grant would lead to an increase in the Council's approved budget for 2021/22.

The funding was expected to be used to support households in Cheshire East Borough with food, utilities, housing costs and other essentials over the winter period.

**RESOLVED:**

That a supplementary revenue estimate for £2,203,892.10 be approved and authority be delegated to the Executive Director Children's Services to incur expenditure in line with the conditions of the Household Support Grant.

The meeting commenced at 11 am and concluded at 2.30 pm

Councillor S Pochin  
MAYOR/CHAIR