

# CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee**  
held on Monday, 6th December, 2021 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,  
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

## PRESENT

Councillor L Wardlaw (Chair)  
Councillor D Murphy (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Anderson, R Bailey, D Brown, C Naismith, M Simon, L Smetham,  
R Vernon and S Hogben

## OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Charlesworth-May- Executive Director of Adults, Health and Integration  
Helen Davies- Democratic Services Officer  
Brian Reed- Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Superintendent Peter Crowcroft- Eastern Area Commander, Cheshire Police  
James Sumner, Chief Executive, Mid Cheshire Hospital NHS Foundation  
Trust

## 16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies of absence were received from Councillors Joy Bratherton  
(Councillor Steve Hogben was substituting), Councillor Lloyd Roberts,  
Councillor Brendan Murphy and Councillor Sarah Pochin.

## 17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

## 18 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee noted that in the minutes dated 6.9.21 on page 6, the  
penultimate paragraph should read:

*“The Committee was advised there had been six deaths from house fires  
in the borough during 2020-21, when previously there had been none.”*

On page 7, the paragraph that read:

“The Committee noted there was no focus on rural communities and that  
the borough was 52% rural or any animal welfare focus. This was noted by  
officers for future work planning.”

Did not accurately reflect that the focus was on road safety and road traffic  
collisions (RTC) in rural areas and that this is statutory work conducted by

the Safer Cheshire East Partnership (SCEP). The Committee noted that RTC incidents had been reported to and investigated by SCEP.

The reference to animal welfare related to domestic pets and the number of people who had purchased an animal in lockdown and given the restrictions had now lifted, were struggling to cope with the responsibility. The Committee noted the council had a statutory duty towards animal health and wellbeing. This would not necessarily be reported back to SCEP and would be a standalone issue.

**RESOLVED:**

That subject to the changes above, the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2021 be approved as a correct and accurate record and be signed by the Chair.

## **19 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION**

Sue Helliwell attended the Committee and spoke against agenda item 5 on the subject of drink spiking.

Sue spoke about the dangers of drink spiking with one in ten people (both male and female) having been victim to this crime and asked for a multi-agency approach to dealing with this crime in Cheshire with investment in testing kits or straws for licensed premises.

Councillor Denis Murphy gave some reassurances to the Committee that he was aware Cheshire Police were actively working together with the licensed premises and licensing authority.

Councillor Rachel Bailey noted the impact and subsequent cost of hospitalisation for young people.

Councillor Sally Holland attended the Committee and spoke against agenda item 6 on the subject of Congleton War Memorial Hospital, she asked the Committee directly to investigate the future of the hospital in the context of current service provision within an Integrated Care System (ICS).

Councillor Holland advised the Committee that the hospital was opened in 1924 and paid for by public subscription, as a memorial to those who died during World War One.

Currently the X-Ray department was underutilised and the Minor Injuries Unit was temporarily closed due to staff shortages. There was a 28-bed unit to treat those receiving rehabilitation, palliative and sub-acute care for periods of between 1-6 weeks.

The Committee were advised that the population of Congleton is set to rise over the coming years and should Congleton War Memorial Hospital become fully operational this would lessen the impacts to neighbouring A&E facilities.

RESOLVED:

That Sue Helliwell and Councillor Holland be thanked for their attendance and participation at the Committee meeting.

## 20 UPDATE FROM CHESHIRE POLICE

Superintendent Peter Crowcroft, the Eastern Area Commander within Cheshire Police attended the Committee and gave a verbal update on key pieces of work currently being carried out by the Police.

The Committee were advised that given the national and local concerns of drink spiking Cheshire Police had undertaken three weekends of intensive action in the areas of Congleton, Sanbach, Crewe, Nantwich, Macclesfield and Wilmslow. This included Police in plain clothes, drugs dogs and a high visibility Police presence.

To date across Halton and Cheshire East, there has been one confirmed case of a person being spiked with a hypodermic needle.

Resources were being deployed to target crime and fear of crime. The Safer Cheshire East Partnership (SCEP) have purchased bottle tops to help within licensed premises.

The Police are working collaborative with partner agencies such as My Cheshire Without Abuse (My CWA) in instances where there could be reports of Domestic Abuse. This has led to referrals by the Police for perpetrators of DA into rehabilitation programmes.

The top priority for the Police was violence and intimidation to women and girls, continued partnership work was the strategy to combat it. There had been significant educational work done to challenge behavioural signal type behaviours especially drunken males who have had a drink or feel emboldened because they are in large numbers. This extended to working with local employers to educate them on signal crimes if potentially this involved their member of staff.

Antisocial behaviour (ASB) had moved post-lockdown out of covid related ASB and back to traditional ASB.

Finally Superintendent Crowcroft advised the Committee that following the murder of David Ames MP, the government had enacted Operation Bridger a national plan for providing MPs with security advice.

The Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions, there was some discussion on domestic abuse cases during lockdown, forensic testing in relation to drink spiking, and advice to men who wish to be allies to vulnerable women in an appropriate way.

RESOLVED:

That Superintendent Crowcroft be thanked for his attendance and contribution to the Committee meeting.

**21 UPDATE FROM MID CHESHIRE HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**

James Sumner, Chief Executive of the Mid Cheshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust attended the Committee and gave a verbal update on building at Leighton that followed on from a previous presentation to this Committee in April 2021.

The Committee heard how Leighton Hospital was built in the 1970s, and 85% of the building materials used contained asbestos and reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete panels that were now recognised as unstable materials. There was no research on how long those materials would last but by 2035 it would all need to be replaced.

Following consultation with external architects, three options had been identified for the future of the hospital:

- 1) The option to remove roof planks, recover and build new roof. This would take ten years and cost £660million;
- 2) The option to create new wards would cost £800million; and
- 3) The option to completely rebuild the hospital and future proof it would cost £660 Million and take 3-4 years to complete the works.

A business case has been drafted on each option.

The hospital has been submitted as part of a bid for eight national places that included retention of the critical care and theatres, but for a new build. Regional NHS teams have selected Leighton, but this doesn't indicate the bid will be successful nationally.

£15 million of national funds had been received to extend Accident and Emergency (A&E), and this will open mid-January.

The Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions, and there was some discussion that included the 30-year future proofing of Leighton Hospital alongside major expansion schemes such as HS2, ambulance delays being at the highest rate they have ever been at however Leighton had the shortest ambulance hand over time despite being one of the busiest hospitals. Leighton and Macc have lowest number of patients waiting twelve hours or longer in A&E.

RESOLVED:

That the Chief Executive of the Mid Cheshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust be thanked for his attendance and contribution to the Committee meeting.

## **22 UPDATE FROM THE CHESHIRE EAST PLACE PARTNERSHIP BOARD**

Helen Charlesworth-May, Executive Director of Adults, Health and Integration attended the meeting and gave a presentation to the Committee on the current work of the Cheshire East Place Partnership Board. Following the presentation, there was the opportunity for the Committee to ask questions. There was discussion that included:

- The work of the Cheshire East Place Partnership Board being a consideration for this Committees Work Programme;
- The expectation for variation across Place given legislation was expected to be passed by the end of January 2022/beginning of February 2022, there was not a lot of time for implementation of Place. That being said there was no expectation that this will have detrimental impact on the delivery of services for residents;
- A review of the Cheshire/Merseyside footprint was planned for 2-years after implementation;
- what joint scrutiny might look like, acknowledging that scrutiny arrangements were unchanged by the legislation;
- Executives were currently meeting weekly because this was a significant development issue, any decision points would be for the Children and Policy Committees;
- It was noted that the scrutiny of the ICS was in a process of development both jointly and/or working sequentially;
- The CCG had consulted with its staff from the perspective of being a statutory reorganisation consultation; and
- It was noted that Yorkshire and Humber were further advanced with the same process because of mature voluntary partnerships, Cheshire and Merseyside were having conversations with officers in Yorkshire to understand lessons that had been learned.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Executive Director of Adults, Health and Integration be thanked for her attendance and presentation to the Committee; and  
That the presentation be received and noted.

## **23 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered its Work Programme and noted the items scheduled for March.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) The Democratic Services Officer schedule a Microsoft Teams meeting for the whole Committee in January to discuss future items for the Work Programme; and
- b) The Work Programme be received and noted.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 1.56 pm

Councillor L Wardlaw (Chair)