

# **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Policy Committee**  
held on Thursday, 14th July, 2022 in the Committee Suite 1, 2 & 3,  
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

## **PRESENT**

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

Councillors C Browne, J Clowes, J P Findlow, K Flavell, S Gardiner,  
N Mannion, K Parkinson, J Rhodes, M Warren and P Williams

## **Officers in attendance**

Lorraine O'Donnell, Chief Executive  
Jane Burns, Executive Director of Corporate Services  
David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance  
Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services  
Sarah Bullock, Director of Policy and Change  
Josie Griffiths, Head of Audit and Risk  
Michael Moore, Head of Communications  
Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance  
Jo Wise, Development and Regeneration Manager  
Paul Mountford, Democratic Services

## **Apologies**

Councillor A Martin

## **12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **13 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION**

There were no public speakers.

## **14 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022 be approved as a correct record.

## **15 PERFORMANCE OUTTURN 2021/22**

The Committee considered a report providing an account of performance in 2021/22 against the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25.

Appendix A to the report provided further detail of the priorities and actions that were set to be achieved by 2025, and the progress that had been made against these actions during the last year.

The following comments were made in response to members' questions:

- The current issues with the recruitment and retention of staff reflected the situation nationally and internationally. Agency staff were being used flexibly to meet the demand for skills in areas where there were currently shortages. Market supplements were being used and this was reviewed annually.
- In addition to the Council aiming to be carbon neutral by 2025, the Council had pledged to join the UK100 Network which aimed to make the Borough carbon neutral by 2045.
- A grant application had been submitted to Government to provide an additional 30 electric vehicle charging points in Council car parks.
- The Council's unsuccessful bid for Bus Service Improvement Plan funding had been raised with local MPs who had been asked to discuss the matter with the Department of Transport.
- The responsibility for providing accommodation for asylum seekers varied from scheme to scheme, with responsibility resting either with the Council or the Home Office.
- Officers undertook to provide further details in relation to the figure of 57.2% waste collected and sent for recycling and re-use.
- Officers were developing a web-based database that would allow officers and members to drill down to further detailed information behind headline figures. This was to be rolled out to members in due course, and training would be provided. A significant amount of data was already available through the Council's Open Data portal.
- Some Covid-related funding had been carried forward and some of this had been used to pay for the recruitment of staff.
- A number of strands of work were underway to help the Council to understand the impact of the pandemic on the Borough.
- Where appropriate, relevant comparator data would be included in future reports.

Councillor S Gardiner asked a number of specific questions in relation to various aspects of the report, some of which had been answered above; others would require a written response. He undertook to provide the questions in writing.

Councillor N Mannion placed on record his appreciation of the Council's staff for their work in maintaining services throughout the pandemic.

### **RESOLVED (unanimously)**

That the Committee notes performance against the first year of delivery of the Corporate Plan.

## 16 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER ASSURANCE REPORT

The Committee considered a report which provided an overview of the Council's Strategic Risk Register for 2021/22 and set out the planned approach to reporting on the Strategic Risk Register for 2022/23.

In response to questions by members, officers commented as follows:

- The timing of the Quarter 1 report would be reviewed for future years with a view to reporting earlier to the Committee.
- Some high scoring risks were long-standing issues which would require some time to resolve.

### **RESOLVED (unanimously)**

That the Committee notes the position of the Strategic Risk Register 2021/22 and the planned approach to reporting for 2022/23, including the alignment of strategic risks to service committees as shown in Table 5 of the report.

## 17 APPROACH TO CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The Committee considered a report setting out a co-ordinated and collaborative approach to consultation and engagement.

Members commented as follows:

- There was a need to avoid consultation fatigue with the public.
- Different approaches to engagement were required for those residents who lacked IT skills or access to the Internet.

As an example of the Council's responsiveness to consultation feedback, the Chair referred to the Council's response to the Budget consultation which had resulted in additional resources being made available for road repairs.

### **RESOLVED (unanimously)**

That the Committee

1. approves the new approach to Consultation and Engagement; and
2. notes progress in developing actions to deliver the new approach and that a further update will be brought to the next meeting.

## 18 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY FOR RESIDENTS 2022-25

The Committee considered a draft communications strategy which set out the vision, aims, principles and priorities for the Council's communication with residents.

In response to questions by members, officers commented as follows:

- In addition to town and parish councils, messages could be sent to community groups. Information could also be provided to Borough councillors who would be able to target relevant groups within their communities.
- Diversity included rural and urban communities, and different socio-economic groups, in addition to ethnic and gender factors.

Members commented that there was a need to make residents more aware of the services the Council did and did not provide, so as to manage expectations and provide sign-posting to other agencies.

### **RESOLVED (unanimously)**

That the Committee

1. approves the Draft Communications Strategy for residents Cheshire East;
2. agrees to a formal consultation on the Draft Communications Strategy; and
3. agrees that the final communications strategy for residents be submitted to Corporate Policy Committee post-consultation.

## **19 UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND - CHESHIRE EAST ALLOCATION**

The Committee considered a report on the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the process required to secure a funding allocation for Cheshire East.

The report sought recommendations to Council on 20<sup>th</sup> July to provide delegated authorities to approve a UKSPF Investment Plan for 2022-25 for submission to Government, accept the Cheshire East UKSPF allocation of up to £13,121,309 and approve any amendments to the Investment Plan as required to deliver the programme. The funding was not currently reflected in the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-26 and would require Supplementary Revenue and Capital Estimates to incorporate it, which the report sought authority to do.

The Government had stated that the amount of funding that the Council will have received by the end of the third year would be equivalent to the funding it would have received under the former European Structural Fund allocations.

Members commented as follows:

- It was important to ensure that the Local Investment Plan aligned with as many of the Council's priorities as possible.
- It was hoped that the timescale for submitting the Local Investment Plan allowed sufficient time to bring forward a number of quality projects.

## **RESOLVED (unanimously)**

That the Corporate Policy Committee

1. notes the Local Investment Plan for the Multiply (Adult Numeracy Programme) element of UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation for Cheshire East which was submitted to the government Department for Education on 30 June 2022; and
2. recommends to Council that
  - (a) authority is delegated to the Executive Director Adults, Health and Integration to:
    - (i) make any amendments to the Local Investment Plan for the Multiply element of the Shared Prosperity allocation for Cheshire East as are required by government in order to release Multiply funding or as required during the plan period to enable the effective management of the fund; and
    - (ii) accept the Multiply funding allocation for Cheshire East and approve a Supplementary Revenue Estimate of up to £1,535,547, and to allocate that funding as set out within the Local Investment Plan over the years 2022-23 to 2024-25;
  - (b) Council note the emerging Local Investment Plan for the core element of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation for Cheshire East;
  - (c) Council note that the Chief Executive, S151 Officer and Leader are required to approve the core UKSPF Investment Plan once completed to comply with the requirements of the UKSPF government Prospectus;
  - (d) authority is delegated to the Executive Director Place to:
    - (i) submit the approved completed Investment Plan for the core UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation for Cheshire East to the government Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for the deadline of 1 August 2022;
    - (ii) make any amendments to the Investment Plan for the core UK Shared Prosperity allocation for Cheshire East as required by government in order to release the funding or as required during the plan period to enable the effective spend of the fund;
    - (iii) accept the core UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation for Cheshire East and approve a Supplementary

Revenue/Capital Estimate of up to £11,585,762, (split to be confirmed on approval of the Investment Plan) and to allocate the funding as set out within the Local Investment Plan over the years 2022-23 to 2024-25; and

- (iv) manage the Cheshire East UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2022-25 programme, taking all necessary actions in the interests of maximising the impacts of the fund aligned to the fund parameters and local priorities aligned to the core UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan; and

- (e) Council note that Cheshire East Council will act as accountable body for the Shared Prosperity Fund where funds are allocated to third party organisations, for the duration of the funding.

## **20 UPDATE ON SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE AND BEST FOR BUSINESS**

The Committee considered a report on the recent work of the Shared Services Joint Committee.

The report summarised key updates from the most recent meeting, held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

Officers advised that the Best4Business programme had involved a major system change, and challenges had been expected. The system itself was stable and all remaining issues were being prioritised and worked through. The system was being kept under regular review and constructive engagement was taking place with schools over the transactional services element.

A Member-led 'lessons learned' review would be undertaken by the Shared Services Joint Committee and the Joint Scrutiny Working Group in August. The results of the review would be reported to the Committee in October.

Councillor N Mannion, a member of the Joint Scrutiny Working Group, offered to raise any member-related issues at the review.

### **RESOLVED (unanimously)**

That the Committee notes the progress in the delivery of shared services, the shared services review, and the Best for Business Programme.

## **21 REVIEW OF APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

The Committee considered a report setting out a mechanism to review the Council's outside organisation arrangements.

The report proposed that the Constitution Working Group review the Council's outside organisations appointments process and report its findings and recommendations to the Committee. The report included proposed terms of reference for the review.

At the meeting, Councillor A Stott proposed revised terms of reference to those set out in the report. Copies were provided at the meeting and had been circulated electronically to members of the Committee before the meeting.

Councillor M Warren, the Chair of the Working Group, welcomed members' views and input into the review.

## **RESOLVED**

That

1. the Constitution Working Group conduct a review of the Council's outside organisations appointments process;
2. the revised terms of reference circulated at the meeting be accepted as the terms of reference for the review; and
3. the Constitution Working Group report its findings and recommendations back to the Corporate Policy Committee.

## **22 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered its work programme for 2022/23.

With regard to the items for the October meeting, the Executive Director of Corporate Services advised that the Mid-Year Review of the Corporate Plan would be combined with the Performance Outturn 2022/23 Report Quarter1.

Given the amount of business currently planned for the meetings in October and December, members asked that, if a longer meeting were required, they be given advance notice. They also asked if consideration could be given to providing the agenda papers for these two meetings a few days earlier.

## **RESOLVED**

That the work programme be noted.

**23 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES**

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Finance Sub-Committee on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022 be received.

**24 REPORTING OF URGENT DECISIONS**

There were no urgent decisions to report.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 12.45 pm

Councillor S Corcoran (Chair)