

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Policy Committee**
held on Thursday, 6th February, 2025 in the Capesthorne Room, Macclesfield
Town Hall, SK10 1EA

PRESENT

Councillor N Mannion (Chair)
Councillor M Gorman (Vice-Chair)

Councillors C Bulman, D Clark, J Clowes, M Goldsmith, A Harrison,
C O'Leary, J Pearson, J Rhodes, S Gardiner, F Wilson and A Moran

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Rob Polkinghorne, Chief Executive
Janet Witkowski, Acting Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer
Philip Cresswell, Executive Director of Place
Adele Taylor, Interim Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer
Karen Wheeler, Interim Assistant Chief Executive
Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services
Gareth Pawlett, Director of Digital
Dan Coyne, Head of Integrated Commissioning
Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development
Sara Duncalf, Head of HR
Nikki Bishop, Democratic Services Officer

60 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Jos Saunders and Mick Warren.
Councillors Stewart Gardiner and Arthur Moran were present as substitutes.

61 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In the interests of openness and transparency, Councillor Stewart Gardiner declared, in relation to agenda item 8: Supporting Effective Engagement - Cheshire and Warrington Devolution, that he was the Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group.

62 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2024 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

63 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

64 THIRD FINANCIAL REVIEW 24/25

The committee considered the report which set out the forecast outturn position for the financial year 2024/25 based on income, expenditure and known commitments as at the end of October 2024. The Third Financial Review (FR3) position shown an adverse variance of £18.3m (prior to the application of any Exceptional Financial Support - EFS) this was a slight improvement of £1.8m from FR2. The committee noted that whilst there was an improvement from the last Financial Review, the forecast overspend of £18.3m remained a significant financial challenge for the council. FR3 forecast reserves, after agreed movements budgeted for in 2024/25, were currently £14.0m, being £4.5m of General Fund Reserves and £9.5m of Earmarked Reserves. The council's level of reserves was therefore insufficient to cover the current forecast revenue outturn for the year without further action.

Table 3 (paragraph 17) of the report set out the capital programme profiling changes from FR2. It was queried why the grants and contributions figures were estimated to rise so sharply between 2025/26 – 2027/28 and if this level of grants and contributions would likely be received. Officers committed to providing a detailed breakdown via a written response.

Cllr Bulman arrived at 10.07am.

The committee noted the proposed use of EFS and reserves and also queried when government would likely give approval for the use of EFS for 2025-26. Approval had been received for the use of EFS during 2023-24 and 2024-25 however the council had requested to combine the two-years, for use in 2024/25. No confirmation had yet been received however it was anticipated that this would be received before budget setting council, also including confirmation for the EFS required for the 2025/26 year. Should approval not be granted, it was likely that the Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer would need to consider issuing a S114 Notice.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Policy Committee

1. Note the factors leading to a forecast adverse Net Revenue financial pressure of £18.3m against a revised budget of £390.5m (4.7%).
2. Note the contents of Annex 1, Section 2 and review progress on the delivery of the MTFS approved budget policy change items, the RAG ratings and latest forecasts, and the actions to be taken to address any adverse variances from the approved budget.
3. Note the in-year forecast capital spending of £144.7m against an approved MTFS budget of £215.8m, due to slippage that has been re-profiled into future years.
4. Note the available reserves position as per Annex 1, Section 5.
5. Note the Capital Virements above £500,000 up to and including £5,000,000 as per Annex 1, Section 4, Table 4.

**65 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2025/26-2028/29
(CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE)**

The committee considered the report which presented the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the four years 2025-26 to 2028-29. It was highlighted that the officer report had been prepared prior to the receipt of the Final Local Government Finance Settlement, which was received on Monday 3 February 2025. The Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) provided clarity on a number of grant contributions which were as finance officers had anticipated. Therefore, there were no material changes arising from the LGFS that needed to be reflected in the MTFS. The request for the Council to consider increasing Council Tax above the referendum limit was declined by central government and recommendation f4 would not need to be considered by the committee.

The committee noted the S151 Officer's Section 25 report which advised members on the robustness of the estimates set out in the budget and the adequacy of the proposed reserves. The low level of reserves was highlighted within the report as a significant risk that needed to be addressed urgently. The reserves strategy sets out how the level of reserves could be built up over the life of the MTFS. Robust management of the budget was critical.

The committee noted the financial implications of the transformation programme. It was suggested that a separate line in the budget for the costs associated with the transformation programme would be more helpful for members. It was highlighted that the gross transformation savings were estimated to be in the region of £72m over the period of the MTFS and that the £10.8m for digital programmes would help support and deliver on some transformation savings. Officers commented that it was important to account for costs and savings from transformation in respective service areas, but that it was intended that there would be other supporting information reported, that would show the totality of transformation savings and the costs of achieving the changes.

The MTFS set out assumptions relating to likely capital receipts over the life of the MTFS from the sale of any assets via the Disposal Programme. The committee requested detail around the assets that might be sold. The committee noted that no capital schemes had been stopped but there had been a review of the capital programme to ensure that profiling of projects was right. The committee requested detail on all projects so that they could fully understand the impact. Officers committed to providing the committee with further information on capital projects and the assets being considered through the Disposal Programme as soon as possible.

The committee debated the impact that any increase in council tax would have on residents across the borough. Members agreed that work needed to continue to ensure that the impact on vulnerable individuals was fully understood.

The committee considered the recommendations in blocks, as set out below.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Policy Committee notes

1. The summary results of the Budget Engagement exercise undertaken by the Council, as set out in Appendix B and the implications for the MTFS.
2. The draft report of the Council's Section 151 Officer, contained within the MTFS report, regarding the robustness of estimates and level of reserves held by the Council based on these budget proposals (Appendix A, Section 2, Section 25 Statement). *This remains a draft report and will be finalised following a recommendation by the Corporate Policy Committee to Full Council.*
3. The Council's Finance Procedure Rules remain unchanged and will always apply to ensure proper approval should any changes in spending requirements be identified (Appendix A, Annex 9).
4. The report includes a change in MRP Accounting Policy, with effect from 1 April 2024 the effects for 2025/26 being reflected in the MTFS (Appendix A, Annex 5, Section 3, para 5.52).

That the Corporate Policy Committee recommends that Full Council notes:

5. The report of the Council's Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer), contained within the MTFS report, regarding the robustness of estimates and level of reserves held by the Council based on these budget proposals (Appendix A, Section 2, Section 25 Statement).

RESOLVED (by majority)

That the Corporate Policy Committee recommends that Full Council:

6. Approve the Revenue estimates for the 2025/26 budget (Appendix A, Section 2, Overview) and the medium-term Capital Programme estimates 2025-2029, as detailed in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy report (MTFS) 2025-2029 (Appendix A, Section 2, Capital budget).

RESOLVED (by majority)

That the Corporate Policy Committee recommends that Full Council:

7. Approve the setting of B and D Council Tax of £1,882.04 representing an increase of 4.99%. This is below the referendum limit (including 2% ringfenced for Adult Social Care) and arises from the provisional finance settlement (Appendix A, Section 1, Key Funding Assumptions).

RESOLVED (by majority)

That the Corporate Policy Committee recommends that Full Council:

8. Approve the utilisation of up to £25.3m conditional EFS (Capitalisation Direction) via borrowing to balance the 2025/26 budget shortfall (as reflected in Appendix A, Section 2, Balancing the Budget) and to delegate to the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) to review the basis of funding through the 2025/26 year and report to the appropriate committee any recommended change to the funding basis of the EFS. The 2024/25 planned use of Flexible Capital Receipts is increased to £1.518m, an increase of £0.518m from the £1m approved in the 2024-28 Medium-Term

Financial Strategy Report to fund transformational projects within the Council (Appendix A, Section 1, Key Funding Assumptions).

9. Approve the 2025/26 planned use of Flexible Capital Receipts as £1.0m (Appendix A, Annex 5, Section 3).
10. Approve the allocation of Revenue Grant Funding for 2025/26 of £397.080m (Appendix A, Annex 3), and delegates authority to the Chief Finance Officer, to approve supplementary estimates if the value of any named grant changes from the figures contained within Appendix A, Annex 3 (noting that all such variations will subsequently be reported to the appropriate committee, and that any new, previously unnamed, grants are subject to approval in-line with the Constitution).
11. Approve the allocation of Capital Grant Funding for 2025/26 of £99.122m (Appendix A, Annex 4), and delegates authority to the Chief Finance Officer, to approve supplementary estimates if the value of any named grant changes from the figures contained within Appendix A, Annex 4 (noting that all such variations will subsequently be reported to the appropriate committee, and that any new, previously unnamed, grants are subject to approval in-line with the Constitution).
12. Approve the Capital Strategy (Appendix A, Annex 5).
13. Approve the Prudential Indicators for Capital Financing (Appendix A, Annex 5).
14. Approve the Investment Strategy; including the financial limits for various classifications of investment, and the investment decision making process set out in the Strategy (Appendix A, Annex 6).
15. Approve the Treasury Management Strategy (Appendix A, Annex 7) and the Minimum Revenue Position (MRP) Statement for 2025/26 to 2028/29 (Appendix A, Annex 5) which includes a change in the MRP Policy, with effect from 1 April 2024.
16. Approve the Reserves Strategy (Appendix A, Annex 8), which includes proposed movements to and from reserves.

That Council recognises that Corporate Policy Committee considered:

17. The Budget Engagement exercise undertaken by the Council, as set out in the attached (Appendix B) and the results contained within that report.

The meeting adjourned for a short break at 11.05 and reconvened at 11.15 am

66 CHESHIRE EAST CORPORATE PLAN 2025-29

The committee considered the report on the Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2025-29. The Plan set out the council's overall vision and commitments for the borough and provided clarity of purpose and strategic direction for the organisation, residents and partners and aligned to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

The committee welcomed the draft plan and its aspiration to ensure effective and responsive governance, compliance and evidence-based decision-making across the council.

It was highlighted that Page 4 of the draft Plan referenced 500 plus services and it was suggested that this be removed until such a time a full list of services provided by council could be composed. It was confirmed that this page on the plan would be further developed. It was agreed that this page should also include reference to the Rail Industry in Crewe.

A friendly amendment in relation to recommendation 2 was proposed and accepted by the committee, as set out below.

‘That the Corporate Policy Committee delegates authority to make any final amendments to the Interim Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the council’s Group Leaders prior to submission to Full Council’

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Corporate Policy Committee

1. Agree the draft Cheshire East Plan 2025-29 at Appendix 1.
2. Delegate authority to make any final amendments to the interim Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Council’s Group Leaders prior to submission to Full Council.
3. Support the development of an annual delivery plan as part of a new corporate performance management framework.
4. Agree that the committee receives at least quarterly updates on progress with the Cheshire East Plan 2025-29 and delivery plan.
5. Recommends to Full Council the Cheshire East Plan 2025-29 as amended in accordance with the delegation set out in recommendation 2.

67 SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT: CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON DEVOLUTION

The committee considered the report which provided an update on Cheshire and Warrington Devolution. The report proposed that the membership of the Member Reference Group for Devolution be expanded to broaden the advice and guidance provided to officers, and also sought approval to proposed amendments to the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee terms of reference, to allow the arrangements for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Joint Committee to continue for a further year.

It was noted that the Member Reference Group had no Councillor representative from Crewe. The Leader, a member of both the Reference Group and Crewe Town Board, provided assurance that Crewe would continue to be key on the devolution agenda as a principal town for Cheshire East.

Some concerns were raised in relation to the decision-making functions of the Joint Committee and its role to approve capital expenditure. To date, no government transition funding had been announced and permission had been granted to transfer monies from Enterprise Zones to fund the devolution process. The committee sought assurance that monies identified for Enterprise Zone projects were not being inappropriately diverted. Concerns were raised at the last Finance Sub Committee in relation to the delivery programme of Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington (key projects/activities/timelines). It was agreed that a written response would be circulated to the committee. It was requested that any response be published on the council website and shared with members of the Economy and Growth Committee.

The committee discussed Mayoral Candidacy, and concerns were raised in relation to those who may have a conflict of interest should they decide to stand as a candidate for Mayor. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the issue was being monitored by the Monitoring Officer Governance Workstream and advice would be given as appropriate to individuals in due course.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Corporate Policy Committee recommends that Full Council

1. Approves the expansion of the membership of Member Reference Group (MRG) to include the Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group. This will increase its membership to seven.
2. To approve the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group to attend as a substitute to the MRG, in the event that the Leader of the Group cannot.
3. That the MRG continues to provide guidance and advice towards identifying a devolution proposal for Cheshire and Warrington, enabling officers to further progress opportunities and discussions with government officials.
4. Authority be delegated to the MRG, to make any further amendments to its membership, such amendments to be approved by a majority of the members of the MRG.
5. The Terms of Reference for the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee be amended to extend the rotation of the current Chair (Cheshire West and Chester Council) for a further 12 months to May 2026 and amend accordingly the dates for the following rotations by the same period, including the Vice Chair, as set out in the attached Appendix 1.

68 UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND TRANSITION YEAR 25/26

The committee considered the report which provided an update on the allocation of an additional year of funding under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for 2025-26.

The committee queried the proposed split of the UKSPF 25/26 funding which proposed to allocate £151,067 for Fund Management and Administration and sought assurances on how this would be spent. It was confirmed that the costs

would cover a wide range of administrative roles including the employment of independent appraisals of projects and evaluations, accountants, lawyers and other officers across the corporate team.

The committee noted that no announcement had yet been made regarding the separately allocated Rural England Prosperity Fund and queried what impact this could have on the projects that the council managed. It was confirmed that officers continued to work with MHCLG and the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs on this matter.

It was acknowledged the difficulties that government parameters caused when allocating and spending funding, particularly for Town and Parish Councils. It was agreed that this should be raised with colleagues in MHCLG where possible.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Corporate Policy Committee

1. Approve the split of the UKSPF 25/26 allocation as follows: £151,067 for Fund Management and Administration, £1,771,000 for Communities and Place Initiatives, £1,302,000 for Supporting Local Business Initiatives and £566,170 for People and Skills Interventions.
2. Approve the use of £566,170 of the People and Skills allocation for the continuation of employment support for economically inactive people, and the use of £500,000 of the Communities and Place allocation for the continuation of Macclesfield Market Refurbishment, such allocations to be embedded into the MTFS.
3. Delegate authority to the Director of Growth & Enterprise to manage the Cheshire East UKSPF programme, taking all necessary actions in the interests of maximising the impacts of the fund aligned to the fund parameters and local priorities, including but not limited to allocation of remaining funds to specific interventions, and reallocation of funds and movement of revenue funds to capital if required

69 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2025-26

The committee considered the report which outlined the Pay Policy Statement 2025-26 which would be recommended to Full Council for approval. The committee noted the changes to the Pay Policy Statement as set out within Section 11 of the officer report.

The committee thanked officers for their work on this matter.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That Corporate Policy Committee

1. Note the changes to the Pay Policy Statement as outlined in section 11 of the report.

2. Recommend to Full Council on 26 February 2025 that Council approve:

- a) the Pay Policy Statement for 2025/26.
- b) for the Pay Policy Statement 2025/26, any in-year changes are approved by the Council's Monitoring Officer and published accordingly.

70 ABSENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The committee considered the report which outlined changes to the council's Absence Management Policy and Procedure. The changes to the policy and procedure would allow better support to those suffering with long term health conditions, be easier to follow and provide more flexibility.

The committee welcomed the revisions to the policy however agreed that communication with individuals who were suffering with mental health problems should be considered very carefully as to ensure that the wellbeing of the individual is not worsened.

It was highlighted that the amended policy did not refer to Veterans within the scope of 'Special Cases'. It was confirmed that whilst it was not explicit in the policy, the background of these individuals would be captured under the revisions of the revised policy which would provide more flexibility to individual circumstances. Officers agreed to ensure this aspect was picked up as part of the roll-out of training and guidance documents with managers across the organisation to ensure that the Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award standards was maintained.

It was queried if the list of special cases should also include the issue of menopause given the impact that menopause can have on a women's working life. Officers committed to providing a written response but confirmed that there was a separate policy on this issue.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Corporate Policy Committee

- 1. Approve the changes to the Absence Management Policy and Procedure.

71 NOTICE OF MOTION - COUNCIL DECISION MAKING AND GOVERNANCE

The committee considered the report, prepared in response to a Notice of Motion submitted to Full Council on 16 October 2024 relating to the governance and decision-making of the council. The report also provided background information upon the recommendations of the LGA Peer Challenge report which proposed that the council 'urgently review its decision-making framework'.

Councillor Mannion addressed the committee as the Proposer of the Motion and stated that this was an area raised by LGA Corporate Peer Challenge and something that the LGA would continue to closely monitor. Councillor Mannion

proposed the recommendations in the report, subject to an amendment to Recommendation 1, which was supported by the committee, as set out below.

'that a politically proportionate Task and Finish Group be established to drive forward the council's review of its decision-making and governance arrangements, comprising nine members (4 Conservative: 3 Labour: 2 Independent with a standing invitation to a representative of the Liberal Democratic Group to attend on a non-voting basis)'.

Cllr Mannion stated that the key challenges for the Task and Finish Group would be to ensure that the council was making good decisions, timely decisions and undertaking effective scrutiny.

It was agreed that appointing members to the Task and Finish Group would be a matter for each political group to consider however the committee agreed that it would be advantageous for the Task and Finish Group to comprise of some members of the Constitution Working Group who would be able to offer guidance and experience on any constitutional changes that may arise.

Councillor Gorman addressed the committee as the Seconder of the Motion and spoke in relation to the recommendations of the LGA Corporate Peer Review Report and the importance of progressing this work as soon as possible to improve the current governance framework model.

The committee agreed that the work of the Task and Finish Group needed to progress quickly to identify improvements that could be made to the current system to address the issues raised by the LGA Peer Review, with updates scheduled as a standing item on future Corporate Policy Committee agendas. Members raised concerns around the length of time it would take to approve and implement any constitutional change. It was suggested that the first set of improvements identified be considered formally by the Corporate Policy Committee in June 2025, to enable a decision to be made at Full Council in July.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Corporate Policy Committee

1. That a politically proportionate Task and Finish Group be established to drive forward the council's review of its decision-making and governance arrangements, comprising nine members (4 Conservative: 3 Labour: 2 Independent with a standing invitation to a representative of the Liberal Democratic Group to attend on a non-voting basis).
2. Approve the terms of reference the Task and Finish Group as set out in Appendix 9 to this report.
3. Agree the Scope of the review, as set out in Appendix 8 to this report.
4. Agree adapted Design Principles as set out in part 2 of Appendix 3 to this report.
5. Note the progress made so far to improve existing arrangements, including changes to scrutiny work programming, scrutiny training and officer reporting, and call for officers to identify and report to the Working

Group upon further immediate improvements which might be made, where these can be identified (paragraphs 3.17 onwards refer).

6. Note the indicative review process, as set out in Appendix 5 to this report.
7. Agree that reports will be brought back to the Committee upon such improvements as are referred to in Recommendation 5, as well as upon the progress of the review.

72 NOTICE OF MOTION – BROADCASTING AND RECORDING EQUIPMENT

The committee considered the report, prepared in response to a Notice of Motion submitted to Full Council on 16 October 2024 relating to the broadcasting and recording equipment used at committee meetings.

Councillor J Clowes read out a statement on behalf of Councillor L Wardlaw, the Proposer of the Motion, who was unable to attend the meeting. Councillor Wardlaw raised concerns in relation to the financial quotations relating to improvements to the council's broadcasting and recording equipment and suggested that there were a number of simple, low/no cost options available to improve the council's audio/recording offer. Other options not mentioned in report included offering instructions on effective microphone techniques, methods of improving sound in rooms including reducing echo. It was felt that there were a lot of options that could be considered and implemented without the need to spend vast amounts of monies.

The committee discussed the various options set out within the report and agreed that further work was needed in order to make a decision. The committee agreed to defer the report and asked that officers consider the comments provided by the committee, as summarised below.

- The quotes provided within the report seemed significant, and members were unsure what the quotes included. It was agreed that a review of the quotes provided was needed and that 'less expensive' options should be sourced for members to consider.
- It was felt that a Committee Suite should be developed in the North of the Borough and that this should be the Capesthorne Room.
- AI options to be considered.
- Archiving facilities to be reviewed to ensure that these were accessible and could be easily located by members of the public and councillors.
- Consultation and engagement with Elected Members was needed to provide clarity on what facilities members wanted to see implemented (including the types of technology and the preferred venue for meetings).
- Options for portable equipment to be explored to allow council meetings to be held in community buildings across the borough.
- Consider the options for leasing equipment – in light of changing technology.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Corporate Policy Committee

1. Note the content of the report and ask officers to undertake further consultation and engagement with members and report back to a future meeting.

73 NOTICE OF MOTION - AGREED FRAMEWORK FOR DELIVERY OF SERVICES AT A LOCAL LEVEL

The committee considered the report, prepared in response to a Notice of Motion submitted to Full Council on 16 October 2024 which proposed that the council developed an agreed framework for delivery of services at a local level.

The committee queried the capacity of the Cheshire Association of Local Councils (ChALC) to support and co-produce the framework. The council had a positive long-standing relationship with ChALC, and assurance was provided that ChALC had both the capacity and expertise to help develop the framework.

The committee agreed that planning and early conversations with Town and Parish Council's was essential to ensure that any additional responsibilities could be factored into the budget setting process, and to enable a proper assessment of the wider impacts and local needs.

The committee noted the difficulties faced by rural Town and Parishes and agreed that it would be beneficial for these parishes to consider coming together to work collaboratively as a consortium.

It was agreed that the Association of Town Clerks should be involved in the development of the framework.

RESOLVED (by majority):

That the Corporate Policy Committee.

1. Agree the development of a framework for delivery of services at a local level, as set out within the report.
2. Agree the proposed approach to develop the framework utilising the toolkit outlined.
3. Agree that support and capacity be provided by Cheshire Association of Local Council to coproduce and implement the framework.

74 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2025-2026

The committee considered the draft calendar of meetings for the council municipal year 2025-26 and a draft calendar of dates of meetings for the period June – October 2026.

A friendly amendment was proposed, and supported by the committee, in relation to recommendation 3. As set out below.

'That each committee determine whether their committee meetings during the 2025-26 municipal year should include twilight meetings, which should start no earlier than 5.30pm'.

It was agreed that there needed to be consistency around the start-time of twilight meetings and that such meetings would be vital to assisting working members and members with caring commitments.

Members referred to the proposed dates for Full Council meetings and requested that under no circumstances were these dates changed as changes to these meetings caused working members great difficulty in attending and ensuring they maintained their councillor attendance record.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Corporate Policy Committee recommend to Full Council

1. The approval of the draft calendar of meetings for Cheshire East Council for the municipal year 2025-26 and that the draft calendar for June to October 2026 be noted.
2. That the start time for morning meetings, excluding Full Council, be 10.30am.
3. That each committee determine whether their committee meetings during the 2025-36 municipal year should include twilight meetings, which should start no earlier than 5.30pm.

75 WORK PROGRAMME

The committee considered the Work Programme, the following was noted:

1. Governance Task and Finish Group Feedback to be included as a standing item on future Corporate Policy Committee agendas.
2. Governance Task and Finish Group: immediate changes to be presented to the Corporate Policy Committee on 12 June, to ensure any changes could be considered by Full Council in July.
3. Framework for Delivery of Local Services: Update on the implementation of the framework to be added to the Corporate Policy Committee Work Programme (approx. 3 months).

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be received and noted.

76 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Finance Sub Committee held on 7 November 2024 be received and noted.

77 ICT SHARED SERVICE - HYBRID OPERATING MODEL UPDATE

The committee considered the report which set out progress on the mobilisation and designs for a new hybrid model for ICT Shared Services and to seek approval to proceed to formal consultation with staff.

The committee queried the links between the workstream and the transformation programme. It was confirmed that InnerCircle colleagues had been engaged throughout the process and had undertaken a deep dive into ICT and service designs ensuring there would be the right capacity, in the right organisation, minimising any impact on the delivery of transformation during the redesign process.

The committee agreed that this was a significant piece of shared services work, and that whilst updates were provided to the Shared Services Joint Committee, it would be beneficial to engage and re-establish the ICT Joint Scrutiny Working Group which had not met for a significant time. Officers committed to taking this away and providing a written response.

The Chair proposed an amendment to the recommendations, to request that an update report be added to the committee Work Programme during Q1 of 2025-26. This was supported by the committee.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Corporate Policy Committee

1. Note the progress made by the programme, in delivering the new hybrid model for ICT.
2. Approve that the programme moves into formal consultation with trade unions and staff on the disaggregation process and proposed new structure for Cheshire East Council.
3. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer to implement the revised structure following consultation.
4. Note the potential financial impact of the new service designs and the existing commitment to a shared liability for all costs.
5. A further update report be added to the Work Programme during Q1 2025-26.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 2.23 pm

Councillor N Mannion (Chair)