

## **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Adults and Health Committee**  
held on Monday, 20th January, 2025 in the Council Chamber, Municipal  
Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe CW1 2BJ

### **PRESENT**

Councillor J Rhodes (Chair)  
Councillor A Moran (Vice-Chair)

Councillors S Adams, J Clowes, S Gardiner, A Kolker, R Moreton, H Moss,  
J Place, J Snowball, L Wardlaw, B Wye and D Clark

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Helen Charlesworth-May, Executive Director Adults, Health, and Integration  
Jill Broomhall, Director of Adult Social Care  
Mark Lobban, Interim Director of Commissioning  
Nik Darwin, Acting Programme Lead, Thriving and Prevention/ Live Well for  
Longer  
Dr Matthew Atkinson, Public Health Consultant  
Nicola Wood-Hill, Lead Finance Business Partner  
Roisin Beressi, Legal Team Manager  
Samuel Jones, Democratic Services Officer

### **38 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rob Vernon.  
Councillor Dawn Clark was present as substitute.

### **39 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

During consideration of Item 9, Councillor Andrew Kolker declared that, in  
the interests of openness and transparency, he was a trustee of  
Everybody Health and Leisure.

### **40 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2024 be approved  
as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **41 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION**

Ms Beryl Chapman, a resident of Oakmere (Extra Care Housing), and  
Chair of the Oakmere Resident's Association, attended to speak on Item 6  
– Future Options for Extra Care Catering. Ms Chapman stated that no  
consultation had taken place with residents on the decision to close the

restaurant within the facility and stated that residents were unaware that the restaurant had been subsidised by Cheshire East Council, and that residents would have been happy to pay the full cost of the meals, had they been aware of the issues. Ms Chapman stated that the restaurant was an important community asset, and its closure would cause hardship for residents in the community who lived alone who made use of the facility for meals and social connections, and should the facility close permanently, residents may have to look elsewhere for accommodation. Ms Chapman stated that a café in Knutsford was providing meals for residents in the interim, but this was only for five days per week and due to the distance from Oakmere, the meals required reheating upon arrival. Ms Chapman stated that, should the decision be made to close the catering facility, that the kitchen and equipment was left in situ so that residents could find another provider to take over.

#### **42 THIRD FINANCIAL REVIEW 24/25**

The Committee considered a report and briefing on the current forecast outturn for the financial year 2024/25 based on income, expenditure and known commitments, from Nicola Wood-Hill, Lead Finance Business Partner.

Members thanked officers for their work to date on the budget and noted that work had been done to reduce spend in certain areas of the Adults and Health budget, but demand for services had seen an increase and subsequent additional costs.

The Committee were updated that the budget forecast had been made on predictions on the number of people who would likely be in receipt of care for the coming year. However, later, work had been undertaken to slow the number of people coming through the door, and the spend on individual care, which meant that the forecasted overspend was smaller than originally anticipated. The committee were updated that the last quarter of the year was traditionally the most difficult, due to winter pressures and demand on hospitals, but officers were analysing the data on a weekly basis, and work had been done to slow the growth in activity, reduce admissions, and transfers to long term care where possible.

It was noted that client contributions were in excess of the anticipated budget, which had also fed into the Council's MTFS.

#### **RESOLVED: (Unanimously)**

That the Adults and Health Committee:

1. Review the factors leading to a forecast adverse Net Revenue financial pressure of £18.3m against a revised budget of £390.5m (4.7%). To scrutinise 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 to understand the actions to be taken to address any adverse variances from the approved budget.

2. Review 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.
3. Note the available reserves position as per Annex 1, Section 5.
4. Note the Capital Virements above £500,000 up to and including £5,000,000 as per Annex 1, Section 4, Table 4 will be approved in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

#### **43 FUTURE OPTIONS FOR EXTRA CARE CATERING**

The Committee considered a report which updated the Adults and Health Committee on the actions taken in respect of the Extra Care catering provision, from Mark Lobban, Interim Director of Commissioning.

Members thanked the public speaker for attending and speaking on behalf of the Oakmere Resident's Association.

Members were updated that the review into the catering provision would be concluded by September 2025, and in the meantime communal spaces would not be closed, the 24/7 staff would continue to operate in the extra care housing schemes, and the Communities Team would continue working to secure alternative provisions in consultation with the residents.

Members acknowledged that a further review was required to be carried out and raised concerns surrounding the current interim lack of provision for hot meals at weekends, as reported by the public speaker, that residents were having to reheat meals which were being delivered from external premises, and that this was not a long-term solution. Members also raised concerns as to whether the existing kitchen equipment would be retained, and the impact on both physical and mental health of a nutritious hot meal in a communal environment, to those who were vulnerable in the community.

It was noted that the cost of providing an alternative provision at Oakmere and Willowmere would be in the region of £60,000/year, and the Council's subsidy would only cease if a long-term solution was found. Any interim service would provide the same service and volume of meals as previously received. Cheshire East Council would continue to ensure that meals were provided, but how it was done would be at the discretion of the Council.

It was noted that a further review of the catering provision, and investigation into the decisions made, would come back to the Adults and Health Committee in September 2025 for a final decision.

An amendment to recommendation 2 was proposed by Councillor Gardiner and seconded by Councillor Clowes:

2. *Agree the interim arrangements that have been put in place, subject to a review of the weekend and Bank Holiday arrangements, whilst a full review of the EC catering provision is carried out.*

**RESOLVED: (Unanimously)**

That the Adults and Health Committee:

1. Acknowledge the actions taken since the decision to close the school meals service.
2. Agree the interim arrangements that have been put in place, subject to a review of the weekend and Bank Holiday arrangements, whilst a full review of the EC catering provision is carried out.

**44 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY CONSULTATION 2025/26 - 2028/29 PROVISIONAL SETTLEMENT UPDATE (ADULTS & HEALTH COMMITTEE)**

The Committee considered a report which detailed the proposals within the budget consultation relating to the Committee's responsibilities, from Nicola Wood-Hill, Lead Finance Business Partner.

The Committee were updated that the figures within the report assumed a 4.99% Council Tax increase, with 2% ringfenced for Adults Social Care. There was currently no capital programmes detailed for Adult Social Care as the Service would not know the capital requirement until the Transformation Plan was further developed.

Members were updated that Cheshire East Council was responding to several national surveys which were asking for responses from local councils on the pressures which rises to the National Living Wage and National Insurance contributions were causing. Members were updated that if this led to an increase on commissioned care costs, this would be dealt with from a central contingency.

Members were informed that any grants awarded to Cheshire East Council from the government for historically not raising Council Tax were detailed in the appendices.

Members noted that decisions made by other Service Committees within the Council were at risk of undermining those decisions taken by this committee and asked that this was looked at by officers. Members queried whether there had been any increased in Council Tax Support payments, and whether there had been an impact on Adults Social Care as a result of Council Tax rises.

A named vote was proposed by Councillor Clowes and seconded by Councillor Moss with the following results:

**FOR**

Councillors Arthur Moran, John Place, Jill Rhodes, Judy Snowball, Dawn Clark and Ben Wye.

**AGAINST**

Councillors Sue Adams, Janet Clowes, Stewart Gardiner, Andrew Kolker and Liz Wardlaw.

**NOT VOTING**

Councillors Rob Moreton and Hannah Moss.

The motion was declared carried with 6 votes for, 5 votes against, and 2 not voting.

**RESOLVED: (by majority)**

That the Adults and Health Committee:

1. Recommend to the Corporate Policy Committee, for their meeting on 6 February 2025, all proposals within Appendix A, as related to the Committee's responsibilities, for inclusion on the Council's budget for 2025/26.
2. Identify any further budget change proposals, as related to the Committee's responsibilities, that could assist Corporate Policy Committee in presenting an overall balanced budget to Council for 2025/26.
3. Note the capital growth items listed in Appendix B and the revenue implications noted in paragraph 23. These will be reviewed by the Capital Review Programme Board in January before a final list is brought to Corporate Policy committee in February.
4. Note the contents of Appendix C – Provisional Local Government Settlement 2025/26 (Finance Sub Committee).
5. Note the contents of Appendix D – Council Tax benchmarking and scenarios (Finance Sub Committee) and consider what the impact of any requests for a change of Council Tax policy would be.

**45 ADULT SOCIAL CARE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME**

The Committee received a report which provided members with detail on how the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme would contribute to

the savings proposed in the MTFS 2025/29, from Jill Broomhall, Director of Adult Social Care, and Mark Lobban, Interim Director of Commissioning.

The Committee were updated that the service's aim was to enable residents to live more fulfilled lives via reducing social isolation and ensuring that their social, emotional and physical needs were met, and that the Council would change the way it assessed, supported and delivered Adult Social Care in the future by working with families in innovative ways, to gain trust and enable them to make the best decisions for relatives.

Members were updated that Cheshire East Council works with 44 supported living care providers, but over 80% of the care is delivered by just 10 providers. The Service needed to learn from examples of best practice from within and outside Cheshire East to provide the best model of care, at the right price, for residents and providers. Nationally, Adults Social Care places a strain on Local Government budgets, and the priority of a Council was to set a balanced budget.

Members remarked on the innovative and creative ways which younger people in social care were using their Direct Payments to enhance their lived experiences, and the freedom which Direct Payments could give older people to remain in their own home was noted.

Members raised concerns surrounding the demand on the voluntary sector and the unintended consequences of savings initiatives outside of this committee.

Officers committed to providing a written answer to the value of the deferred debt from the end of October 2024.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the Adults and Health Committee:

1. Note the content of the report and that further papers will be brought to Adults and Health Committee when there are significant decisions to be made.

#### **46 SUBSTANCE MISUSE RECOMMISSION**

The Committee considered a report which sought approval to award the All-Age Drugs and Alcohol Service through the Provider Selection Regime, Dr Matt Atkinson, Consultant in Public Health and Nik Darwin, Senior Commissioning Manager.

The Committee were updated that service users could access a nearby rehabilitation facilities in Stoke-On-Trent, amongst others, and that the current provider was achieving success rates higher than the national average in several areas.

Members queried how success was assessed across Cheshire East, and what was being delivered to children in schools.

Members were updated that the results were scrutinised by officers, and the service was delivered via a “hub and spoke” model to increase outreach and access across the Cheshire East.

Officers committed to provide a written response on the substance misuse work being undertaken within schools.

Officers committed to provide a written answer on what could be done to provide a holistic treatment journey for recovering users, to provide details of the grants which have been awarded, and details on what is in place for relapse prevention.

**RESOLVED: (Unanimously)**

That the Adults and Health Committee:

1. Approve the procurement of the Cheshire East Substance Misuse Service through the Provider Selection Regime.
2. Delegate authority to the Executive Director – Adults, Health and Integration to award the contract.

**47 SMOKING CESSATION INCENTIVE SCHEME - UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report which updated members on the pilot smoking cessation incentive scheme for pregnant women, from Dr Matt Atkinson, Consultant in Public Health and Nik Darwin, Senior Commissioning Manager.

Members noted the low uptake of the scheme to date and questioned whether the scheme was being adequately advertised.

The Committee were updated that the cost to the scheme was on a “per person” basis, so even though the uptake to date had been low, it was not leading to a budgetary pressure, and that officers were due to carry out a full evaluation of the scheme which would result in a further report being brought back to committee later in the year.

Members stated that although the uptake was low, the scheme was a success if it improved the health of anybody, and acknowledged the challenges individuals face when trying to stop smoking.

**RESOLVED: (By majority)**

That the Adults and Health Committee:

1. Approve continuation of the incentive scheme for household members.

#### **48 ADULTS SERVICE SCORE CARD - NOVEMBER 24**

The Committee received a briefing report which provided the Adults and Health Committee members with an overview of key activity and performance in Adults Social Care Services, from Jill Broomhall, Director of Adult Social Care Operations.

The Committee were updated that Cheshire East were admitting fewer people into long term care, however, the number of self-funders who come to Cheshire East for assistance were counted as an admission, and they were arriving more frequently, as fee increases were depleting personal resources more quickly.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the updates be considered and noted.

#### **49 RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION – WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCE**

The Committee considered a response to the Notice Of Motion which was raised at Full Council on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024 regarding changes to the Winter Fuel Payment for 2024/2025. At the meeting of the body to which the motion has been referred for consideration, the proposer of the motion if present shall be invited to speak first, followed by the seconder. The matter will then be opened up to wider discussion. At the Council meeting on the 16 October 2024 the notice of motion was proposed by Councillor A Kolker and Seconded by Councillor A Gage.

Members stated that keeping warm was essential for physical and mental wellbeing and maintaining good health, and that Cheshire East Council had a duty of care to residents for their health, and to the NHS for reducing the number of patients presenting at hospitals with cold-related illnesses, where the cost of treatment would likely be greater than the cost of heating. Members questioned what the impact on the NHS had been as a result of this decision.

Members noted the action which Cheshire East Council had taken to advertise the grants and opportunities open to pensioners who were in need of support, and who were on the cusp of requiring support, and hoped that this would continue.

It was noted that ahead of the report coming to committee, the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council had already written to parliament explaining the Council's concerns and to request their support in raising them in Westminster, in support of Cheshire East pensioners.

A request for named vote was proposed by Councillor Adams and seconded by Councillor Moss with the following results:



## **FOR**

Councillors Sue Adams, Janet Clowes, Stewart Gardiner, Andrew Kolker, Rob Moreton, Arthur Moran, Hannah Moss and Liz Wardlaw.

## **AGAINST**

Councillors John Place, Jill Rhodes, Judy Snowball, Dawn Clark and Ben Wye.

The motion was declared carried with 8 votes for and 5 votes against.

## **RESOLVED: (by majority)**

That the Adults and Health Committee:

1. Ask group leaders, to write jointly to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, expressing this Council's concerns regarding the impact of this decision on Cheshire East residents and asking that the Winter Fuel Allowance is reinstated with immediate effect.
2. Note the Council's local awareness campaign, to support all those eligible, to apply for Pension Credit, before 21st December 2024 so they are able to receive the Winter Fuel Allowance this Winter.
3. Ask the Leader and Deputy Leader of Council write to all Members of Parliament representing Cheshire East constituencies, explaining this Council's concerns and to request their support in raising them in Westminster, on behalf of Cheshire East pensioners.

## **50 MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE EAST HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board held on 19 November 2024 be received and noted and signed by the Chair.

## **51 WORK PROGRAMME**

The committee considered the Work Programme.

Members were asked to review the work programme and contact the Chair or Democratic Services with any suggestions of scrutiny items that they would like to put forward for the Committee.

### **RESOLVED:**

The following was noted:

- There was further work to do on the transformation programme and the timelines for implementation; when these were known a timetable of reports would be produced for the committee in March 2025.
- A 12-month update on Smoking Cessation Incentive Scheme would be added to the Work Programme.
- A report would be brought to Committee in September 2025 regarding Options For Extra Care Catering.
- Quarterly Performance Update reports would be added to the Work Programme.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 1.50 pm

Councillor J Rhodes (Chair)