

# **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Policy Committee**  
held on Thursday, 21st March, 2024 in Committee Suite 1, 2 & 3, Westfields,  
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

## **PRESENT**

Councillor S Corcoran (Chair)  
Councillor M Gorman (Vice-Chair)

Councillors C Bulman, D Clark, J Clowes, M Goldsmith, A Harrison,  
C O'Leary, J Pearson, J Rhodes, M Warren, L Crane (for Cllr Mannion) and  
L Wardlaw (for Cllr Saunders)

## **OFFICERS**

David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance  
Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services  
Paul Mountford, Democratic Services  
Janet Witkowski, Head of Legal Services  
Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance  
Phil Christian, Acting Head of Business Change  
Michael Todd, Acting Internal Audit Manager

## **APOLOGIES**

Councillors N Mannion and J Saunders

## **91 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **92 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024 be approved  
as a correct record.

## **93 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION**

There were no public speakers.

## **94 OFFICER BOARDS, PEER CHALLENGE AND DECISION-MAKING REVIEW UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report which set out the preliminary activities  
required to enable the development of the future transformation  
programme: the creation and implementation of Council-wide officer  
boards; a Local Government Association (LGA) review of decision-making  
accountability; and an LGA peer challenge.

Prior to the meeting, a briefing note was circulated to members of the Committee which provided clarification of certain aspects of the recommendations in the report.

Officers confirmed that there would be opportunities for member involvement with, and scrutiny of, the outcomes of the reviews and the actions arising.

**RESOLVED** (by majority)

That

1. the Committee authorises the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, to take all necessary steps to respond to any recommendation of the Decision-Making Accountability review, and the Committee notes the commencement of the Review;
2. the Committee authorises the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, to take all necessary steps in preparation for the Peer Challenge and to take all necessary steps to respond to any recommendation of the Challenge, and the Committee notes the progress of the Council's submission to the Local Government Association; and
3. the Committee notes the creation and operation of the Officer Boards.

**95 CHESHIRE EAST APPROACH TO TRANSFORMATION**

The Committee considered a report which set out the proposed transformational approach the Council would take to deliver the Cheshire East Council Plan, support the Medium-Term Financial Strategy budget savings of £100m over the next 4 years, and implement the overarching Policy and Strategy Framework.

Officers gave a presentation on the transformation programme at the meeting.

The Chair commented that he would expect there to be extensive briefing of members on the progress of the transformation programme, with members being involved in any major changes. Any significant matters would be taken to the relevant scrutiny committee, with the Corporate Policy Committee having oversight of the process as a whole.

In response to questions from members, the Director of Finance and Customer Services advised that:

- Zero-based budgeting would be undertaken within specific service areas where this was judged to be appropriate. Benchmarking would

be undertaken to identify those areas which were potentially suitable for a zero-based budgeting approach.

- With regard to the overspend on Dedicated Schools Grant, the interest payments on the total deficit were factored into the forecast budget deficit but not the outstanding DSG deficit itself, which would continue to be treated separately. No assumptions were being made regarding the possible mitigation of the interest payments.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

That the Committee

1. approves the transformation approach for the Council;
2. delegates to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, authority to take all necessary steps to implement a whole organisation transformation programme as outlined in sections 11-19, 24-30 of the report;
3. agrees that committee and all-member briefings be provided on progress against key milestones of the programme;
4. notes the S151 Officer's section 25 report which states that the Council must transform to create sustainable services;
5. notes the acceptance of the Exceptional Financial Support and recognises the conditions of that support, namely a transformation plan to be provided to DLUHC by 27<sup>th</sup> August 2024;
6. notes the acceptance of an LGA (Local Government Association) grant by the Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer in accordance with the rules on Supplementary Revenue Estimates set out within the Council's constitution;
7. notes the progress to date on the formation of the transformation programme by the Chief Executive and approves the procurement of Phase 1 and Phase 2 required to facilitate the programme; and
8. notes the progress of the other activities that are underway that are needed in support of the transformation programme, which include the Decision-Making Accountability work and the LGA's Corporate Peer Challenge review.

**96 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on progress with delivering the MTFS saving to reduce the cost of democracy, and which proposed a number of recommendations to Council to improve the future functionality of the committee system.

Members expressed support for the retention of the Scrutiny Committee.

It was felt that the chair of a committee should have discretion to allow a report for noting if they felt there was something about which the committee needed to be informed.

The Head of Democratic Services and Governance undertook to provide a written response to a question from members on how much of the planned budget savings of £135,000 in relation to the cost of Democracy had been achieved to date.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

That Council be recommended that

1. the Scrutiny Committee be retained;
2. the functions of the School Governor Nomination Panel be delegated to the Executive Director of Children and Families in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Children and Families Committee;
3. the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee remain in place;
4. the General Appeals Sub-Committee remain in place;
5. the General Licensing Sub-Committee and Licensing Act Sub-Committee be amalgamated to form one sub-committee;
6. normally, only Directors, Regulatory or Statutory Officers (as required by good practice) should attend committee meetings;
7. working Groups and Boards be supported by the relevant service area and not Democratic Services;
8. reports “for noting” should not normally be placed on agendas, unless there is a statutory requirement to do so, or where they relate to Performance Monitoring, Finance, Risk or LGO complaints. Instead, they be placed on the Members’ Bulletin, stored on the Councillors hub and made available to the public on the Council’s Open Data and Transparency Webpage; and
9. the Director of Governance and Compliance be empowered to make any necessary changes to the Constitution to reflect the resolutions of full Council.

**97 PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION**

The Committee considered a report which proposed changes to the Constitution, as recommended by the Constitution Working Group, for

recommendation to Council, and reported certain other amendments made by the Monitoring Officer under delegated powers. The proposed changes related to notices of motion, committee terms of reference and delegations to the Executive Director Place.

**RESOLVED** (by majority)

That the Committee

1. recommends that Council approve:
  - (a) the amendments to the provisions regarding notices of motion in Chapter 3 Part 1 Section 1 of the Council's Constitution as set out in paragraph 9 of the report.
  - (b) the amendments to the provisions regarding rescission of earlier resolution in Chapter 3 Part 1 Section 1 of the Council's Constitution as set out in paragraph 9 of the report.
  - (c) the amendments to committee terms of reference for matters that cover more than one committee in Chapter 2 Part 2 of the Council's Constitution as set out in paragraph 10 of the report.
  - (d) the amendments to the Rules of Debate for Motions and Amendments in Chapter 3 Part 1 Section 1 of the Council's Constitution as set out in paragraph 11 of the report.
  - (e) the amendments to the application of the 3 day rule for notices of motion of in Chapter 3 Part 1 Section 2 the Council's Constitution as set out in paragraph 12 of the report.
2. notes the proposed amendments to be made by the Monitoring Officer to the delegations to the Executive Director Place in Chapter 2 Part 5 of the Council's Constitution as set out in paragraph 13 of the report.

**98 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

The Committee considered appointments to a number of outside organisations from which Councillor Craig Browne was standing down.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

That

- 1 Councillor M Gorman be appointed as the Council's representative on Alderley Park Holdings Ltd;
- 2 Councillor M Gorman be appointed as the Council's representative on Transport for the North Partnership Board;

- 3 Councillor S Corcoran be nominated for the sub-regional representative on Transport for the North Rail Committee; and
- 4 Councillor M Warren be appointed as a Council's representative on the County Councils Network.

99 **COUNCIL NOMINATIONS TO THE BOARD OF PEAK AND PLAINS HOUSING TRUST**

The Committee considered a request from Peaks and Plains Housing Trust to remove the Council's opportunity to nominate a Member to sit on the Peaks and Plains Housing Trust Board.

**RESOLVED** (by majority)

That the Committee

1. approves the removal from the Stock Transfer Agreement dated 17<sup>th</sup> July 2006 of the clause giving Cheshire East Borough Council the opportunity to nominate a member to sit on the Board of Peaks and Plains Housing Trust, via a Deed of Variation; and
2. delegates authority to the Executive Director Place, in consultation with the Chair of the Corporate Policy Committee, to deal with other such requests from any remaining Stock Transfer Organisations.

100 **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION - ANNUAL REVIEW**

The Committee considered an update on progress with the delivery of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2025.

Councillor J Clowes commented that Councillor S Gardiner as the Council's Diversity Champion had expressed the wish to be more actively involved with the Strategy in future.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

That the Committee

1. notes the progress in delivering the equality, diversity and inclusion strategy 2021-2025; and
2. notes that an updated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy will be received following the update to the Cheshire East Plan.

101      **PERFORMANCE REPORT - Q3 2023/24**

The Committee considered a report which provided an oversight of organisational performance against the priorities and vision set out within the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25.

In response to a question by members, the Acting Head of Business Change undertook to provide a written response on the following:

- An apparent discrepancy between paragraphs 15 and 16 of the report in relation to the number of staff vacancies, the response to include the whole numbers behind the percentages quoted in the report; and
- The cost per unit of installing new electric charging points.

Officers were also asked to consider bringing a report to a future meeting which focussed on staffing issues.

**RESOLVED** (by majority)

That the Committee notes the organisational performance in Q3 of 2023/24.

102      **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted the items currently scheduled for its next meeting in June.

The Director of Governance and Compliance commented that, in light of discussions earlier in the meeting, items would be added to the work programme on transformation, staffing issues and MTFS savings proposals.

The work programme for 2024-25 would be presented for approval to the Committee's first meeting of the new municipal year.

**RESOLVED**

That the work programme be noted.

103      **MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES**

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the following sub-committee meetings be received and noted:

Finance Sub-Committee – 31st January 2024  
General Appeals Sub-Committee – 5th March 2024

104      **STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER - ASSURANCE REPORT Q3  
2023/24**

The Committee considered an update report on the activity of the Council's Strategic Risk Register for Quarter 3 2023/24. The report now included the equivalent level risk registers for the Council's wholly-owned companies: Orbitas, Tatton Park Enterprises and ANSA.

**RESOLVED** (by majority)

That the Committee notes the position with the Council's Strategic Risk Register, and those of the wholly-owned companies, for Quarter 3 2023/24 in respect of the content, description, scoring and risk management activity outlined.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 12.20 pm

Councillor S Corcoran (Chair)