

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Economy and Growth Committee**
held on Tuesday, 14th January, 2025 in the Council Chamber, Municipal
Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe CW1 2BJ

PRESENT

Councillor M Gorman (Chair)
Councillor F Wilson (Vice-Chair)

Councillors D Brown, L Buchanan, J Clowes, B Drake, S Gardiner, A Heler,
G Marshall, C O'Leary, B Puddicombe, P Redstone and J Snowball

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Peter Skates, Director of Growth and Enterprise
Carol Hyde, Head of Rural and Cultural Economy
Karen Carsberg, Head of Housing
Helen Paton, Cultural Economy Manager
Nic Abbott, Housing Options Manager
Joanne Jones, Interim Head of Estates
Julie Gregory, Acting Head of Legal
Steve Reading, Finance Officer
Rachel Graves, Democratic Services Officer

36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors A Burton, P Coan and
R Vernon. Councillors S Gardiner, B Puddicombe and J Snowball
attended as substitutes.

37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In relation to Item 6 – Housing Related Support Contracts, Councillor
C O'Leary declared a non-pecuniary and non-registerable interest as he
had published research relevant to housing related support.

38 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2024 be approved
as a correct record.

39 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no public speakers.

40 FUTURE OF WEST PARK MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

The Committee considered the report which summarised the current position concerning West Park Museum and its associated collections and sought approval to permanently relocate the collections from West Park Museum to Macclesfield Silk Museum and Macclesfield Town Hall.

It was asked if the legal covenants relating to the collections would be met if they were permanently relocated. In response it was stated that they would be, the items would remain accessible to Macclesfield residents which fulfilled the original benefactor's intent. The management of the collections by the Silk Museum would ensure the proper care and conservation requirements whilst providing continued access to the public.

The Committee noted the historical significance and contribution of the Brocklehurst family to Macclesfield and stated that there should be publicity on the new locations of the collections to inform local residents, and also suggested that opportunities should be explored for collaboration with academic institutions on the Egyptology collection to enhance research opportunities.

It was noted that a report would be brought to the Committee in due course on the future of the West Park Museum building.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Committee endorse the recommendation to permanently relocate collections from West Park Museum to Macclesfield Silk Museum and Macclesfield Town Hall.

41 HOUSING RELATED SUPPORT CONTRACTS - UPDATE

The Committee considered the update report on the recommissioning of Housing Related Support contracts.

The Economy and Growth Committee in July 2023 had approved the re-commissioning of the Housing Related Support contracts, and the tendering exercise commenced in September 2023. Authority had been delegated to the Director of Growth and Enterprise to award the contracts following the procurement process. However following evaluation of the tenders, not all contracts were awarded, and further approval had been sought in March 2024 to retender a number of lots.

A further tendering exercise commenced in September 2024 and contracts were awarded for the South Rough Sleeping Prevention Service, but no qualifying interest in the North Rough Sleeping Prevention Service were received. The existing contract will end on 31st March 2025 and the existing Provider had indicated that they would be prepared to extend the contract on a short-term basis whilst the Council undertook a further tendering exercise.

In response to questions from the Committee, officers confirmed that the services provided included support for drugs and alcohol, mental health care, domestic abuse and tenancy readiness training. It was also confirmed that provision existed for individuals with pets, though there was limited availability of pet-friendly accommodation.

It was asked if Councillors could be provided with a briefing on the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 and any implications for the service.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Committee

- 1 approve the recommissioning of Rough Sleeping Prevention Service - North using an open procurement process for an initial term of 42 months (equating to 3.5 years), with the option to extend for up to a further 2 years.
- 2 delegate authority to the Director of Growth and Enterprise to:
 - a) modification of the existing contract in order to extend the term until 30 September 2025.
 - b) award the contract to the successful bidder following the procurement process.

42 THIRD FINANCIAL REVIEW 24/25

The Committee considered the report which provided the forecast outturn for the financial year 2024/25 based on income, expenditure, and known commitments as at the end of October 2024. It also identified actions that were being taken to address adverse variances to urgently address the Council's financial sustainability.

It was requested that future reports include both the original budget and subsequent changes to aid transparency and scrutiny.

Concern was expressed about the long-term sustainability and the impact on service delivery of the savings being made by vacancy management.

RESOLVED (by majority):

That the Economy and Growth 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%) and note the contents of Annex 1, Section 2 of the report and the progress on 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.

- 2 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.
- 3 note the available reserves position as per Annex 1, Section 5 of the report.
- 4 recommend to Council the approval of the Supplementary Revenue Estimate Request for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £1,000,000 as per Annex 1, Section 3, Table 1 of the report.
- 5 note the Capital Virements above £500,000 up to and including £5,000,000 as per Annex 1, Section 4, Table 4 of the report will be approved in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

43 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY CONSULTATION 2025/26 - 2028/29 PROVISIONAL SETTLEMENT UPDATE

The Committee considered a report which sought feedback on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2025/26 – 2028/29 for the Corporate Policy Committee to consider at its meeting on 6 February 2025 ahead of the final approval of the 2025/26 budget at full Council on 26 February 2025.

The Committee commented that there should be better integration and communication amongst committees to avoid silo decision making as the actions of one committee could impact on another and that there should be avoidance of over-reliance on some committees to make budget savings. The provision of a list of services which the Council had to provide would help with financial decisions to be made by the committees.

RESOLVED (by majority):

That the Economy and Growth 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 in the Council's budget for 2025/26.
- 2 no further budget changes identified 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 content of Appendix C – Provisional Local Government Settlement 2025/26
- 5 note the contents of Appendix D – Council Tax benchmarking and scenarios and consider what the impact of any requests for a change of Council Tax policy would be.

44 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme.

It was noted that the next meeting in March 2025 would receive a detailed progress report on Handforth Garden Village, a report on the progress against the Rural Action Plan and consider the Notice of Motion referred by Council on Protecting Family Farms and Preserving Rural Communities across Cheshire East.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Plan be noted.

45 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended on the grounds that it involves the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

46 WESTFIELDS - PROGRESS UPDATE

The Committee received an update on the future use of Westfields.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Committee note the recommendations as set out in the report.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.50 pm

Councillor M Gorman (Chair)

