

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council

held on Wednesday, 14th May, 2025 in the The Tenants' Hall, Tatton Park,
Knutsford WA16 6QN (postcode for Sat Nav WA16 6SG)

MAYOR MAKING

PRESENT

Councillors S Adams, L Anderson, M Beanland, S Bennett-Wake, J Bird, L Braithwaite, M Brooks, D Brown, C Browne, L Buchanan, C Bulman, A Burton, R Chadwick, D Clark, J Clowes, P Coan, A Coiley, N Cook, S Corcoran, L Crane, T Dean, S Edgar, D Edwardes, K Edwards, M Edwards, H Faddes, A Farrall, R Fletcher, A Gage, S Gardiner, E Gilman, M Goldsmith, M Gorman, K Hague, E Hall, A Harrison, G Hayes, A Heler, C Hilliard, S Holland, M Houston, T Jackson, D Jefferay, R Kain, A Kolker, N Mannion, G Marshall, A Moran, R Moreton, R Morris, H Moss, J Pearson, J Place, B Posnett, J Pratt, B Puddicombe, P Redstone, J Rhodes, J Saunders, H Seddon, M Sewart, M Simon, L Smetham, G Smith, J Smith, J Smith, J Snowball, R Vernon, L Wardlaw, M Warren, H Whitaker, F Wilson, J Wray and B Wye

Councillor M Houston in the Chair

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors R Bailey, J Bratherton, B Drake, M Muldoon, C O'Leary, J Priest and L Smith.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted the Councillors D Edwardes and J Snowball had a personal interest in the appointment of Mayor and of Deputy Mayor, respectively.

3 ELECTION OF MAYOR 2025/26

Council was requested to elect a Mayor for the Borough of Cheshire East for the 2025-26 Municipal Year, who would also act as Chair of the Council for that period.

It was proposed by Councillor R Kain and seconded by Councillor J Wray that Councillor David Edwardes be elected as Mayor for the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

The motion was put to the vote and declared carried.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor David Edwardes be elected Mayor of the Borough of Cheshire East for the 2025-26 Municipal Year and be appointed as Chair of the Council for that period.

The Mayor was invested with the chain of office and then completed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The Mayor thanked the Council for electing him to this office and informed Members that he would not be having a consort and instead would invite ward councillors to accompany him to events in the areas they represent. The Mayor reported that his chosen charities would be Windyway Animal Rescue and Macclesfield Roundtable.

Councillor D Edwardes, as Mayor, took the Chair.

4 APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY MAYOR 2025/26

Council was requested to appoint a Deputy Mayor of the Borough of Cheshire East for the 2025-26, who would also act as Vice-Chair of the Council for that period.

It was proposed by Councillor R Vernon and seconded by Councillor K Edwards that Councillor Judy Snowball be appointed as Deputy Mayor for the 2025-26 Municipal Year.

The motion was put to the vote and declared carried.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Judy Snowball be appointed as Deputy Mayor of the Borough of Cheshire East for the 2025-26 Municipal Year and as Vice Chair of the Council for that period.

The Deputy Mayor was invested with the chain of office and then completed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The Deputy Mayor thanked the Council for electing her to this office.

5 VOTE OF THANKS TO RETIRING MAYOR

Councillor A Moran paid tribute to the retiring Mayor, Councillor Marilyn Houston, for their dedicated work undertaken during their term of office.

The Mayor presented Councillor Houston with a Past Mayor's Medal.

Councillor Houston then addressed the Council, as outgoing Mayor.

6 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor thanked all those who had attended the Mayor Making Ceremony and stated that the meeting would be adjourned for the Special Meeting of Council to take place and would be reconvened, following lunch.

(The meeting was adjourned at 12.06 pm and reconvened at 1.45 pm)

ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING

PRESENT

Councillor D Edwardes (Mayor/Chair)

Councillor J Snowball (Deputy Mayor/Vice-Chair)

Councillors S Adams, L Anderson, R Bailey, M Beanland, S Bennett-Wake, J Bird, L Braithwaite, J Bratherton, M Brooks, D Brown, C Browne, L Buchanan, C Bulman, A Burton, R Chadwick, C Chapman, D Clark, J Clowes, A Coiley, N Cook, S Corcoran, L Crane, T Dean, B Drake, S Edgar, K Edwards, M Edwards, H Faddes, R Fletcher, A Gage, S Gardiner, E Gilman, M Goldsmith, M Gorman, K Hague, E Hall, A Harrison, G Hayes, A Heler, C Hilliard, S Holland, M Houston, T Jackson, D Jefferay, R Kain, A Kolker, N Mannion, G Marshall, A Moran, R Moreton, R Morris, H Moss, C O'Leary, J Pearson, J Place, B Posnett, J Pratt, B Puddicombe, P Redstone, J Rhodes, J Saunders, H Seddon, M Sewart, M Simon, L Smetham, G Smith, J Smith, J Smith, R Vernon, L Wardlaw, M Warren, H Whitaker, F Wilson, J Wray and B Wye

7 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors P Coan, M Muldoon, J Priest and L Smith.

8 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

9 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2025 be approved as a correct record.

10 ELECTION OF A LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FOR 2025/26

Leader of the Council

Nominations were invited for the election of the Leader of the Council.

It was proposed by Councillor L Crane and seconded by Councillor M Gorman that Councillor Nick Mannion be elected as the Leader of the Council for the 2025-26 Municipal Year.

The motion was put to the vote and a recorded vote was carried out with the following results:

FOR

Councillors L Anderson, S Bennett-Wake, J Bird, L Braithwaite, J Bratherton, M Brooks, L Buchanan, C Bulman, A Burton, C Chapman, D Clark, A Coiley, N Cook, S Corcoran, L Crane, B Drake, D Edwardes, K Edwards, M Edwards, H Faddes, R Fletcher, E Gilman, M Goldsmith, M Gorman, C Hilliard, M Houston, D Jefferay, N Mannion, G Marshall, A Moran, R Moreton, J Place, B Puddicombe, J Rhodes, H Seddon, G Smith, J Snowball, R Vernon, M Warren, F Wilson and B Wye.

AGAINST

Councillors S Adams, R Bailey, M Beanland, D Brown, R Chadwick, J Clowes, T Dean, S Edgar, A Gage, S Gardiner, K Hague, E Hall, A Harrison, G Hayes, A Heler, S Holland, T Jackson, R Kain, A Kolker, R Morris, H Moss, C O'Leary, J Pearson, B Posnett, J Pratt, P Redstone, J Saunders, M Sewart, M Simon, L Smetham, L Wardlaw, H Whitaker and J Wray.

NOT VOTING

Councillors C Browne, John Smith and Julie Smith.

The motion was declared carried with 41 votes for, 33 votes against and 3 not voting.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Nick Mannion be elected as Leader of the Council for the 2025-26 Municipal Year.

Deputy Leader of the Council

Nominations were invited for the election of the Deputy Leader of the Council.

It was proposed by Councillor M Warren and seconded by Councillor N Mannion that Councillor Michael Gorman be elected as the Deputy Leader of the Council for the 2025-26 Municipal Year

The motion was put to the vote and a recorded vote was carried out with the following results:

FOR

Councillors L Anderson, S Bennett-Wake, J Bird, L Braithwaite, J Bratherton, M Brooks, C Browne, L Buchanan, C Bulman, A Burton, C Chapman, D Clark, A Coiley, N Cook, S Corcoran, L Crane, B Drake, D Edwardes, K Edwards, M Edwards, H Faddes, R Fletcher, E Gilman, M Goldsmith, M Gorman, C Hilliard, M Houston, D Jefferay, N Mannion, G Marshall, A Moran, R Moreton, J Place, B Puddicombe, J Rhodes, H Seddon, G Smith, John Smith, Julie Smith, J Snowball, R Vernon, M Warren, F Wilson and B Wye.

AGAINST

Councillors S Adams, R Bailey, M Beanland, D Brown, R Chadwick, J Clowes, T Dean, S Edgar, A Gage, S Gardiner, K Hague, E Hall, A Harrison, G Hayes, A Heler, S Holland, T Jackson, R Kain, A Kolker, R Morris, H Moss, C O'Leary, J Pearson, B Posnett, J Pratt, P Redstone, J Saunders, M Sewart, M Simon, L Smetham, L Wardlaw, H Whitaker and J Wray.

The motion was declared carried with 44 votes for and 33 votes against.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Michael Gorman be elected as Deputy Leader of the Council for the 2025-26 Municipal Year.

The Mayor invited the Leader and Deputy Leader to speak.

The Leader, in summary: -

- 1 congratulated the newly elected Mayor and Deputy Mayor.
- 2 stated that the receipt of Non-Statutory Best Value Notice was unexpected and disappointing as the Council had made steady progress since March 2023 following recommendations from the LGA Peer Review.
- 3 reported that a balanced budget for 2025-26 had been set, supported by exceptional financial assistance and new financial reporting tools would be used to monitor and control spending effectively.
- 4 reported that the Care Quality Commission had rated the Council's adult social care services as 'Good' with a 75% score, which placed the Council amongst the top in England under the new framework.
- 5 stressed the importance of cross-party cooperation to maintain the momentum in cultural and operational transformation within the Council, and reaffirmed commitment to delivering high-quality services and continuing the Council's improvement journey.

The Deputy Leader, in summary: -

- 1 congratulated the newly elected Mayor and Deputy Mayor and thanked the outgoing Mayor for their service.
- 2 committed to working constructively with all council members to develop and deliver effective policies, particularly around the budget.
- 3 referred to the abuse and intimidation faced by councillors, which had been highlighted by the Task and Finish Group, and called for improved training, facilities, and security to support elected officials.
- 4 reported that a Task and Finish Group was looking at the governance system and changes required to address the concerns in the Peer Review.

- 5 reported that the Council would be hosting a round table at the UKREiiF Conference with government ministers and major investors to promote local investment and regeneration in Cheshire East.
- 6 referred to the negative impact of social media and misinformation which often undermines public trust in local government and emphasised the need for balanced reporting that highlights the Council's positive contributions.

11 POLITICAL REPRESENTATION ON THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

Consideration was given to a report relating to the political representation on the Council's committees.

The recommendations were moved and seconded and put to the vote.

RESOLVED:

- 1 that the Committees, as set out in the Appendix to the report, be appointed with the same functions, roles and responsibilities as are currently set out in the Constitution.
- 2 that the political groups and other representation, as set out in the Appendix to the report, and the methods, calculations and conventions used in determining this, as outlined in the report, be adopted and the allocation of places to Committees be approved.

12 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRS AND VICE CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

Consideration was given to the appointment of Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Council's Committees.

The Appendix to the report set out the nominated persons for Chair and Vice Chair for each committee.

The appointments for Chairs and Vice Chairs were moved and seconded and put to the vote.

RESOLVED:

That the offices of Chair and Vice Chair be allocated as detailed in the Appendix to the report.

13 RECOMMENDATION FROM FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE: APPROVAL OF VIREMENT

Consideration was given to the recommendation from the Finance Sub Committee held on 10 March 2025 in relation to the approval of a virement

of up to £8m from the central Contingency budget to the Adults and Health budget to cover inflationary pressures in 2025-26.

RESOLVED:

That Council approve a virement of up to £8m from the central Contingency budget to the Adults and Health budget to cover inflationary pressures in 2025-26.

14 APPOINTMENTS TO CHESHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL AND TO CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

Consideration was given to a report inviting Council to make appointments to the Cheshire Fire Authority and the Cheshire Police and Crime Panel.

The nominations for the Cheshire Police and Crime Panel and the Cheshire Fire Authority were moved and seconded and put to the vote and declared carried.

RESOLVED: That

- 1 Councillor David Brown, David Jefferay and Judy Snowball be appointed to the Cheshire Police and Crime Panel, with Councillor Russell Chadwick as nominated substitute.
- 2 Councillors Rachel Bailey, Peter Coan, Laura Crane, Rob Moreton, Patrick Redstone, Margaret Simon, Geoff Smith, Rob Vernon and Mick Warren be appointed to the Cheshire Fire Authority.

15 APPROVAL OF ABSENCE FROM COUNCIL MEETINGS

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

16 SOFTWARE DEFINED WIDE AREA NETWORK (SD WAN) CONNECTIVITY PROCUREMENT

Consideration was given to the report seeking approval in principle for the procurement of a new connectivity network contract which was expected to cost more than £1m.

The recommendations were proposed and seconded. During the debate a 'friendly amendment' was proposed and accepted to add 'in consultation with political group leaders' to Recommendation 2.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1 approve in principle the procurement of a new connectivity network contract which is expected to cost more than £1m.

- 2 delegate authority to the Director of Digital of Cheshire East Borough Council, in consultation with political group leaders, to award the contract to the successful bidder following the competitive procurement process.

17 REPORTING OF URGENT DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Council received a schedule of urgent decisions taken by the Chief Executive on behalf of the Council, which were reported for information in accordance with the Council procedure rules.

RESOLVED:

That the schedule of urgent decisions be noted.

The meeting commenced at 11.00 am and concluded at 3.12 pm

Councillor D Edwardes (Chair)