

# **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the **Cabinet**  
held on Tuesday, 1st December, 2020

## **PRESENT**

Councillor S Corcoran (Chairman)  
Councillor C Browne (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors L Crane, K Flavell, T Fox, L Jeuda, N Mannion, J Rhodes, A Stott  
and M Warren

## **Councillors in attendance**

Councillors S Akers Smith, R Bailey, M Benson, C Bulman, J Clowes, T Dean,  
J P Findlow, R Fletcher, S Gardiner, M Houston, A Moran, D Murphy,  
J Nicholas, J Parry, J Saunders, M Simon, L Smetham, D Stockton,  
L Wardlaw and J Weatherill

## **Officers in attendance**

Lorraine O'Donnell, Chief Executive  
Frank Jordan, Executive Director Place  
Mark Palethorpe, Executive Director People  
Jane Burns, Executive Director Corporate Services  
Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services  
David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance  
Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance  
Paul Mountford, Executive Democratic Services Officer

## **57 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **58 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION - VIRTUAL MEETINGS**

Robert Douglas referred to the Council's proposals in respect of future recycling sites and asked if the Council would ensure that a budgeted new purpose-built recycling site at Congleton was included in those proposals.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste responded that the household waste recycling centre consultation was being undertaken to hear public opinion in preparation for the procurement of a new operational contract in 2023 and included the option of a replacement site for Congleton. The consultation was open until 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021, following which a report would be submitted to Cabinet in March.

## 59 QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS - VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Councillor J Clowes referred to a Notice of Motion to be submitted to the 16<sup>th</sup> December Council meeting, proposing that the Council support the cessation of car park charges on all Cheshire East Council-owned car parks that directly served the Borough's towns from 3<sup>rd</sup> December to 17<sup>th</sup> January, to support local businesses and encourage residents to shop locally. She asked if Cabinet would support the motion.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, IT and Communication responded that she would need to consider the detailed financial implications before supporting any such proposal. The Deputy Leader shared a graphic which he said showed that the Borough's towns were performing better than the national average in terms of footfall over the 12 month period to September 2020, and that footfall was recovering month on month, and that this seemed to indicate that parking charges were not the main determinant of whether people returned to town centres and that the loss of revenue was perhaps not the most effective way to stimulate economic recovery. The Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Corporate Services added that from a public health perspective, the Council would not want to encourage people to dwell in town centres for long periods during the pandemic. The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste referred to parking initiatives already in place in some town centres and said that the proposal to suspend charges was an option for the future but was not appropriate for now, given the public health considerations.

Councillor M Simon referred to a question she had asked at a recent Cabinet meeting about idling car engines outside schools and the effect this had on air quality. She asked what the Council had since done to discourage this practice which she had also witnessed at her local GP's surgery car park. She also asked what plans there were to address this issue in the Council's Environmental Strategy.

The Leader indicated that a written response would be provided.

Councillor L Smetham referred to the second tranche of Active Travel funding, which she said had been promised for rural areas, and asked when schemes would be coming forward to make rural roads safer.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste clarified that the second tranche of funding, which amounted to £588,000, was not specifically for rural roads. The Council was working with ward members and town and parish councils, and would be consulting residents and local stakeholders, with a view to bringing forward detailed proposals in the Spring.

Councillor L Wardlaw asked for a meeting of the Staffing Committee to be held to consider the issue of staff leaving the Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Corporate Services responded that the Council had to respect the rights of officers to choose where to live

and work. She added that the reasons for individual officers deciding to leave the Council were not a matter for a public meeting. The Leader declined to allow the question to be considered further as it related to an employment issue.

Councillor S Akers Smith referred to a Notice of Motion to be submitted to the 16<sup>th</sup> December Council meeting, urging councillors to support a reduction in speed limits from 30mph to 20mph in central, urban and residential areas of the Borough. She asked Cabinet to support the motion.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration referred to a road safety campaign taking place in Congleton on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, involving the Council, Cheshire Police and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, which aimed to educate drivers to help keep people safe on the roads. The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste added that she fully supported 20 mph zones where these were appropriate.

## **60 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020 be approved as a correct record.

## **61 COVID-19 - UPDATE ON RESPONSE AND RECOVERY**

Cabinet considered an update report on the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **RESOLVED**

That Cabinet

1. notes the issues outlined in the report;
2. approves a Supplementary Revenue Estimate for £880,472, fully funded from the Covid Winter Grant;
3. delegates responsibility to the Executive Director of People to distribute the Covid Winter Grant, to provide assistance to vulnerable households over the winter period, in line with the eligibility criteria outlined within the report;
4. approves a Supplementary Revenue Estimate for £500,000, fully funded from Covid-19 Emergency Grant, to provide an increase in the 2020/21 management fee payment to Everybody Sport and Recreation Trust to support the continuation of Leisure Services in the Borough; and

5. notes that a Supplementary Revenue Estimate of £15,262,935 was approved by the Chief Executive for the 2020/21 Financial Year, to be funded from the Local Restrictions Support Grant, in order to support businesses affected by measures introduced in the response to Covid-19, in accordance with government guidelines, and in accordance with the Discretionary policies also approved under urgency powers.

## **62 DOMESTIC TAXBASE 2021/22**

Cabinet considered a report on the Council Tax Base calculation for 2021/22 for recommendation to Council.

It was noted that paragraph 5.7 of the report mistakenly referred to 'properties over 10 years old' when it should have referred to properties that had been empty for 10 years or longer.

### **RESOLVED**

That Cabinet recommends to Council that

1. in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the amount to be calculated by Cheshire East Council as its Council Tax Base for the year 2021/22 as 153,796.10 for the whole area;
2. the premium charged for property that has been empty for 10 years or longer be increased from 200% to 300%; and
3. the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2021/22 is unchanged other than increasing the income bands in line with CPI.

## **63 PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATION 2021/22 - 2024/25**

Cabinet considered a report on the arrangements for the pre-budget consultation.

Councillor J Clowes reported the comments of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee as the Chairman of that Committee.

### **RESOLVED**

That Cabinet approves the Pre-Budget Consultation survey provided at Appendix A to the report, which will be launched online on 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

## **64 DEVELOPMENT OF A GYPSY AND TRAVELLER TRANSIT SITE**

Cabinet considered a report on the provision of a gypsy and traveller transit site.

Councillor J P Findlow reported the comments of the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee as the Chairman of that Committee.

## **RESOLVED**

That Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director of Place to take all necessary steps to deliver the Cledford Hall Gypsy and Traveller Transit Site Project subject to obtaining planning approval. Within that overall authority, the Executive Director be required to:

- (a) approve the submission of the planning application;
- (b) approve the final costs of the project; and
- (c) award a construction contract to a preferred bidder in consultation with the Director of Governance and Compliance and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration.

### **65 ADULT SOCIAL CARE: OUR COVID-19 WINTER PLAN 2020/21**

Cabinet considered a report on the Council's response to the Government's policy paper 'Adult social care: our COVID-19 winter plan 2020 to 2021'.

## **RESOLVED**

That Cabinet notes the content of the report and is satisfied that measures have taken place to meet the government's winter planning requirements.

### **66 BETTER CARE FUND SECTION 75 AGREEMENT**

Cabinet considered a report which proposed a new section 75 agreement with the Council's local health partner, NHS Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

## **RESOLVED**

That Cabinet

1. authorises the Council to enter into a single S75 Agreement to establish a pooled budget with NHS Cheshire CCG for an initial period of one year (2020-21) for the Council's minimum required budget as set out in paragraph 6.2.1 of the report;
2. authorises the Better Care Fund Governance Group to continue oversight and responsibility for reviewing the delivery of the S75 agreement; and
3. delegates authority to the Executive Director of People to:

- (a) extend the S75 agreement for a further period of one year (2021-22) to establish a pooled budget for 2021-22 for the Council's revised minimum required budget for 2021-22 and subject to there being a continuing national requirement to operate the Better Care Fund and Improved Better Care Fund as a Section 75 pooled budget agreement for that period; and
- (b) make decisions and enter into agreements on behalf of the Council in relation to the commissioning of schemes funded by the Better Care Fund.

**67 SCHEDULE OF URGENT DECISIONS TAKEN ON BEHALF OF CABINET AND COUNCIL**

Cabinet received a schedule of urgent decisions taken on behalf of the Cabinet and Council which was reported for information in accordance with Appendix 4 of the Council procedure rules.

**RESOLVED**

That the schedule of urgent decisions be noted.

At the conclusion of the business of the meeting, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and wished them a Happy Christmas.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 2.44 pm

Councillor S Corcoran (Chairman)