

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Policy Committee**
held on Thursday, 4th November, 2021 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor S Corcoran (Chair)
Councillor A Stott (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Q Abel (for Cllr Warren), C Browne, J Clowes, JP Findlow,
K Flavell, R Fletcher, S Gardiner, P Groves (for Cllr Martin), N Mannion,
K Parkinson and J Rhodes

Other Members Present

Councillors R Bailey and J Saunders

Officers

Lorraine O'Donnell, Chief Executive
Jane Burns, Executive Director Corporate Services
Helen Charlesworth-May, Executive Director of Adults, Health and Integration
David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance
Andrew Ross, Director of Infrastructure and Highways
Jill Broomhall, Director of Adult Social Care
Sara Barker, Head of HR
Helen Gerrard, Head of Customer Services
Sandra Murphy, Head of Adult Safeguarding
Richard Christopherson, Locality Manager - Community Safety
Paul Mountford, Democratic Services

Apologies

Councillors A Martin and M Warren

32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

33 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

Sue Helliwell sought guidance regarding the confidentiality of complaints made under the member code of conduct. She also asked what measures the Council could take to ensure that the complaints process was not open to allegations of politically bias. Finally, she asked how a complainant could ensure that they received a letter of apology from a member who was found to have breached the code of conduct.

The Chair indicated that the questioner would receive a written response. He added that the code of conduct process was currently under review. He also referred to a petition on the Parliament website asking for legislation

to be amended to enable councillors to be disqualified or suspended for poor conduct.

34 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th September 2021 be approved as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

The sentence:

‘The Chair reported that the Council was also providing temporary accommodation for around 20-30 refugee families in the Borough.’

be replaced with:

‘The Chair reported that, in addition to the permanent resettlement of five refugee families in the Borough, temporary accommodation was also being provided for a further 20-30 refugee families.’”

35 INTERIM REVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM

The Committee considered a Committee Review report to full Council.

The report set out the current operational data available from two rounds of the committee system, encapsulated feedback from service areas, set out further recommendations and identified the future project delivery methodology that had been adopted. The report included the current constitutional updates recommended by the Constitution Working Group. A consolidated updated text of the constitution had been provided.

The Director of Governance and Compliance reported a number of additional required changes to the constitution which had been identified since the report was written. Most of these were of a minor or technical nature to correct inaccuracies and provide clarification. However, the Constitution Working Group had also proposed that the following amendment be made to the definition of a Group Lead Member in the Glossary at Chapter 6 of the constitution:

Page 310 Group Lead Member - A Group Lead Member is a position that is held by members of each of the political groups on the Council in relation to each Committee. Group Lead Members will be expected to work with the Committee Chair to facilitate the efficient and timely conduct of the committee business, and to inform, discuss and where appropriate agree with the Chair an approach to contentious issues which support the principles of openness, timely, efficient decision making which meets the needs of the residents of Cheshire East.

Additional work was to be undertaken by the Constitution Working Group in relation to the following matters:

- Question time at Council
- Rules of debate
- Notice of Motion
- Terms of Reference of the Finance Sub-Committee/ Corporate Policy Committee (ASDVs)
- Provisions on public speaking
- Reporting of sub-committee minutes to parent committees

In response to the report, the following comments were made by various members of the Committee:

- The definition of a Group Lead Member needed more detail to define the role adequately.
- The report to Council should identify clearly any additional costs arising from the implementation of the new committee system.
- The scheme of delegation should be amended to provide that where an officer had delegated authority to take a decision in consultation with the chair and vice-chair of a committee, this should also include consultation with the lead opposition members. The Director of Governance and Compliance undertook to raise the matter with the Constitution Working Group.
- Public questions should relate to any matter within a committee's terms of reference and not just to items on the agenda.
- There was currently little opportunity for members to make political comments and this needed to be debated at full Council.
- A member briefing session was scheduled for 12th November and the Chair advised that he, as Leader of the Council, and the Deputy Leader were considering the possibility of a separate question and answer session for members and members of the public.

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor R Bailey spoke on this matter as a visiting member.

RESOLVED

That the Committee Review Report as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, and the additional changes to the constitution reported at the meeting, be recommended to full Council.

36 HS2 UPDATE

The Committee considered an update on the HS2 programme.

The report outlined recent structural changes to the local and national economic outlook arising from the pandemic and the impact this had had on existing plans and priorities for the HS2 programme. To reflect the changed circumstances, whilst ensuring that ambitions for Crewe continued, it would be necessary to revoke the following linked decisions:

- The Cabinet decision on the preferred route 'Crewe Southern Link Road Bridge' in November 2019; and
- The Cabinet decision to consult on the draft Crewe Hub Area Action Plan (CHAAP) in March 2020.

Work would progress on a revised transport strategy and bids into the Levelling Up Fund and Great British Railways HQ opportunity.

Councillor S Gardiner stated for the record that he was the Vice-Chair of the Strategic Planning Board which would consider any future planning applications in relation to this matter.

In response to the report, the following comments were made by various members of the Committee:

- There was a risk in unsafeguarding land that might be needed at a future date.
- The Council's partners should be made aware of the changes.
- This could provide a less costly and time-effective way of achieving the regeneration of Crewe.
- It would be necessary to consider the impact of any future scheme on air quality and the environment.
- By making the changes recommended in the report, the Council would improve its chance of securing funding for future schemes.
- The Chair as Leader undertook to work cross-party to try to secure Levelling Up funding.

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor R Bailey spoke on this matter as a visiting member.

RESOLVED

That the Committee

1. notes the recent structural changes to the local and national economic outlook arising from the pandemic and the impact this has had on existing plans and priorities for the HS2 programme;
2. revokes the decision of Cabinet in March 2020 to consult on the draft Crewe Hub Area Action Plan (CHAAP);
3. approves the formal withdrawal of the CHAAP;
4. notes that the Environment and Communities Committee, as part of its work programme, will consider revised planning policy options for Crewe;
5. revokes the Crewe Southern Link Road Bridge Preferred Route Decision of Cabinet in November 2019 and all associated safeguarding of land; and

6. notes that the Highways and Transport Committee, as part of its work programme, will develop a revised Transport Strategy for Crewe to support the transport priorities for the town and enable transport orientated funding bids linked to current Government investment priorities.

37 INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEM GOVERNANCE: THE CHESHIRE CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP CHESHIRE EAST PLACE COMMITTEE INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS - PROPOSALS AND MEMBERSHIP AND JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROTOCOL

The Committee considered proposals from the CCG to establish an interim Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group Place Committee (Cheshire East) in preparation for the abolition of the Cheshire CCG and the transfer of its functions, assets and liabilities to the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board on 1st April 2022. The terms of reference for the new Committee included a proposed membership of at least three nominated representatives from Cheshire East Council. The Committee would have decision-making powers.

It was recommended that the following members be nominated as the Council's representatives on the new Committee:

Councillor S Corcoran, Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Committee
Councillor K Flavell, Chair of the Children and Families Committee
Councillor J Rhodes, Chair of the Adults and Health Committee

It was noted that Councillor J Clowes had been a non-voting member of the Health and Wellbeing Board and that it would be helpful if the CCG would agree to Councillor Clowes becoming a non-voting member of the new body. The Chair said that he would raise the matter with the CCG.

It was also considered timely for the Committee to reaffirm a commitment to the Joint Scrutiny Committee Protocol previously adopted in May 2014.

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor J Saunders spoke on this matter as a visiting member.

RESOLVED

That the Committee

1. nominates the following councillors as its representatives on the NHS Cheshire CCG Place Committee (Cheshire East) for the period November 2021 to March 2022:

Councillor S Corcoran, Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Committee
Councillor K Flavell, Chair of the Children and Families Committee
Councillor J Rhodes, Chair of the Adults and Health Committee

2. affirms the adoption of the joint scrutiny committee protocol of 2014; and
3. notes scrutiny committees' terms of reference in the Health and Social Care Act 2006 and delegates the appointment of members to external scrutiny functions to the Scrutiny Committee, which may invite any member with the appropriate knowledge of health and social care, having regard to political proportionality.

38 WORKFORCE STRATEGY

The Committee considered a report on an updated Workforce Strategy.

The Workforce Strategy 2021-2025 set out how the Council would develop the capacity and capability of its workforce to support the priorities identified within the Corporate Plan and deliver the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

The way in which the Council's workforce had adapted effectively to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic had presented an opportunity to re-shape the way in which the Council's staff worked in future, building in more agility and flexibility to respond to new circumstances. This was reflected in the updated Strategy.

RESOLVED

That

1. the Workforce Strategy at Appendix 1 to the report be adopted; and
2. the Corporate Policy Committee receive regular progress updates.

39 MODERN SLAVERY ACT TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT

The Committee considered a report seeking approval of the 2021/22 Modern Slavery Act Transparency Statement in the context of the Modern Day Slavery Charter. The Statement outlined the approach the Council was taking to ensure that modern slavery or human trafficking was not taking place within its business or supply chains.

In response to a question about the checking of low cost tenders received by the Council, the Chief Executive advised that a due diligence exercise would be undertaken by the procurement team working closely with the safeguarding team.

RESOLVED

That the Committee

1. approves the adoption and publication of the Cheshire East Modern Day Slavery Transparency Statement 2021-22 to meet the Council's statutory obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 ("MSA");
2. delegates to the Director of Adult Social Care, authority to adopt and update the Modern Day Slavery Statement each year on behalf of Cheshire East Council; and
3. approves the adoption of the Cooperative Party's Charter against Modern Day Slavery to demonstrate the Council's commitment to ensuring that its practices do not support slavery.

40 REVIEW OF TEST AND TRACE SUPPORT PAYMENTS DISCRETIONARY SCHEME

The Committee considered a report on the Test and Trace Support Payments Discretionary Scheme which provided financial support to people on low income, who were unable to work from home if told to self-isolate and would lose income as a result. The scheme was funded by the Government and administered by the Council and was currently due to end on 31 March 2022.

There was funding to deliver a discretionary scheme and the report recommended a change to the policy for the discretionary payments, with the levels used for the benefits cap being used to define low income.

RESOLVED

That the Committee

1. approves a change the test and trace support payments discretionary policy to set the levels of low income to the amounts used for the Benefits cap:

Household	Weekly income level	Annual income level
Single person	£257.69	£13,400
Lone parent	£384.62	£20,000
Couple	£384.62	£20,000

2. agrees that awards may be made in exceptional circumstances if income is higher; and
3. delegates further changes to the policy, in line with national guidance, to the Director of Finance and Customer Services in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee to be responsive to demands and changes to guidance received with short deadlines.

41 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered an updated work programme.

The Executive Director of Corporate Services informed the Committee that since the work programme had been circulated with the agenda, an item on the Apprenticeship Programme had been added to the Committee's meeting on 2nd December 2021.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be noted.

42 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES

RESOLVED

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

Finance Sub-Committee – 1st September 2021
Finance Sub-Committee – 22nd September 2021
General Appeals Sub-Committee – 25th August 2021
General Appeals Sub-Committee – 14th September 2021

43 REPORTING OF URGENT DECISIONS

There were no urgent decisions to report.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 1.00 pm

Councillor S Corcoran (Chair)