

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

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

PRESENT

Councillor N Mannion (Chair)
Councillor M Gorman (Vice-Chair)

Councillors C Bulman, D Clark, J Clowes, M Goldsmith, A Harrison,
J Pearson, J Rhodes, J Saunders, M Warren, S Gardiner and L Crane

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Rob Polkinghorne, Chief Executive Officer
Janet Witkowski, Acting Director of Governance and Compliance and
Monitoring Officer
Adele Taylor, Interim Director of Finance and Customer Services and S151
Officer
Karen Wheeler, Interim Director of Policy and Change
Chris Allman, Interim Director of Transformation
Sam Jones, Democratic Services Officer

29 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Chris O'Leary and Fiona Wilson.
Councillors Stewart Gardiner and Laura Crane were present as
substitutes.

30 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

During the meeting, Councillor Stewart Gardiner declared, in the interests
of openness and transparency in relation to agenda item 11 (Revised
Statement of Licensing Policy) that he was a member of Knutsford Town
Council, who had made representations on the revised policy.

31 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was requested that the resolutions of the committee made in relation to
the 'Submission of the Transformation Plan' item be amended to clearly
identify how each motion was carried (unanimously or by majority) and
also make clear that Councillors S Gardiner and C O'Leary formally
requested that how they voted on recommendations 2 and 3 be recorded
in the minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 August 2024, subject to the above amendments being made, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

32 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

33 FIRST FINANCIAL REVIEW 2024/25

The committee considered the report which set out the first financial outturn position for 2024-25. It was highlighted that the overall forecasted revenue outturn position was an adverse variance of £26.5m against a revised revenue budget of £387.6m. It was noted that this was based upon activity, expenditure and commitments as at the end of July 2024.

It was noted that the Capital Programme had forecasted an expenditure of £164.5m against the MTFS approved budget of £215.8m. The committee queried the reprofiling of capital expenditure and requested that further detail be provided to update members on the overall programme including projects that had slipped, when they would be reconsidered and any implications. Officers agreed to ensure that this detail be included in the Second Financial Review report.

The committee were pleased that regular discussions with MHCLG continued with lead officers and noted that the Q1 financial forecast did not include application of Exceptional Financial Support that was requested in 2023-24. It was noted that whilst the forecasted overspend was significant, a number of mitigations had been put into place to urgently reduce spend and identify additional savings, this work was being overseen by the Strategic Finance Management Board.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Corporate Policy Committee

1. Note the factors leading to a forecast adverse Net Revenue financial variance of:
 - Council: £26.5m against a revised budget of £387.6m (6.8%)
 - Corporate Policy: £0.0m against a revised budget of £41.7m (0.0%).
 - Noting the contents of Annex 1, Section 2 relevant to services within the committee's remit, and review progress on the delivery of the MTFS approved budget policy change items, the RAG ratings and latest forecasts, and to understand the actions to be taken to address any adverse variances from the approved budget.

2. Note the in-year forecast capital spending of:
 - Council: £164.5m against an approved MTFS budget of £215.8m, due to slippage that has been re-profiled into future years.
 - Corporate Policy: £11.7m against an approved MTFS budget of £10.4m
3. Note the available reserves position as per Annex 1, Section 5.
4. 4. Note the Capital Virements above £500,000 up to and including £5,000,000 as per Annex 1, Section 4, Table 3 will be approved in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

Cllr Mick Warren was not present during the debate and vote on this item.

34 PERFORMANCE REPORT - CHESHIRE EAST PLAN, QUARTER 1 2024/25

Cllr Mick Warren arrived at 10.28am.

The committee considered the report which set out an overview of organisational performance against the priorities and vision set out within the Cheshire East Plan 2024-25 for the period April 2024 – June 2024.

The committee queried the RAG ratings within the report and how these had been applied. It was agreed that the application of the RAG rating system needed to be reviewed to ensure consistency and accuracy. Officers welcomed the feedback and recognised that this needed to be reviewed and further developed for the Q2 performance report.

It was suggested that an additional column to the RAG ratings, setting out the direction of travel, be considered for future reports to ensure members were clear on whether performance was improving or declining. Members also suggested that additional consideration be given to actions that were impacted by external factors. Officers committed to ensuring future reports contained additional narrative on these external issues.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Policy Committee

1. Note the progress and performance against delivery of the Cheshire East Plan 2024/25 in Quarter 1 2024/25.

35 PROPOSED NEW SENIOR MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The committee considered the report which set out the proposed new senior management structure created following a period of formal consultation. The proposed structure had been designed to respond to the

recommendations within the peer challenge and meet the requirements to achieve financial stability, deliver the Children's Services Improvement Plan and the Council's Transformation Programme.

The committee agreed a friendly amendment to recommendation 3, that this be amended to *"Subject to Full Council approval of recommendation 1, that the Corporate Policy Committee recommend the release, and associated redundancy and pension costs, of the impacted/at risk staff members"*.

The committee acknowledged the costs and timeline associated with the recruitment process however agreed that progressing this and filling critical vacant posts was essential to achieve stability and accountability across the organisation, and to further drive improvement as outlined in the Transformation Plan, Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan and Children's Services Improvement Plan.

It was confirmed that Appendix A would not be a confidential Part 2 item when published for Full Council on 16 October 2024.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Corporate Policy Committee

1. Agree that the senior management structure, (Phase 1 only), set out in Appendix 1 be presented to Full Council for approval, including approval of new positions within that structure with salaries more than £100,000 per annum and statutory officers, prior to implementation, and agreement that the Chief Executive commences recruitment to vacant/new positions within the senior management structure.
2. Note the implementation/recruitment timeline to a new senior management structure.
3. Subject to Full Council approval of recommendation 1, that the Corporate Policy Committee recommend to Full Council the release, and associated redundancy and pension costs, of the impacted/at risk staff members.

36 TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

The committee received a presentation which provided an update on progress made against the Transformation Programme. It was confirmed that a detailed update would be presented to the committee in November on the Plan that was agreed and submitted to MHCLG in August 2024.

It was reported that since submission of the plan to MHCLG, work had concentrated around initiation and mobilisation of the programme with a dedicated Transformation Programme Management Office now in place. Several Programme Directors from Inner Circle had been appointed to oversee key workstreams working alongside council officers. Significant resource had been provided from Inner Circle to assist in driving forward projects and programmes at pace, including the Council's Target Operating Model which would be discussed with elected members in November, along with the development of the new Corporate Plan. Members requested that dates for any briefings were confirmed as soon as possible.

The committee were pleased to note that recent staff engagement events (both in person and virtual) had been very well attended throughout September and that this engagement with staff would continue with detailed communications planned over the next six-month period.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Policy Committee note the update provided.

37 THE CHESHIRE EAST HEALTH AND CARE 'BLUEPRINT 2030' AND CARE COMMUNITIES OPERATING MODEL

The committee considered the report which set out the 'Blueprint 2030' and the Care Communities Operating Model which had been developed in partnership with colleagues across the NHS and community and voluntary sector, creating a neighbourhood footprint for health and care services in Cheshire East in 2030.

The committee noted that the plans brought together best practice across neighbourhoods that provided a standardised way of working, with sufficient flexibility to meet local needs, further building on positive local arrangements and relationships. It was confirmed that approving the report would not commit the council to provide its statutory services any differently, but rather created a common framework for operation.

The committee agreed that it was important that Cheshire East and its care communities were fully represented on the ICS Place Board and that any changes to how the council provided services or spent monies would be subject to consultation and approval from the appropriate committee to ensure scrutiny and oversight.

A friendly amendment was accepted by the committee in relation to recommendation 3. It was agreed that the recommendation should read as follows:

"Delegate to the S151 Officer alongside the Executive Director, Adult Social Care, Health and Integration, the consideration of and, if deemed appropriate by them, the decision to allocate existing resources to the

Place Partnership Board for deployment within the Care Communities, *subject to appropriate approvals from the Adults and Health Committee, in line with the Constitution*".

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Corporate Policy Committee

1. Endorse the Cheshire East Health and Care 'Blueprint 2030' and the continued involvement of officers to work on its implementation.
2. Endorse the Care Communities Operating Model and the continued involvement of officers in the work of the Care Communities.
3. Delegate to the S151 Officer alongside the Executive Director, Adult Social Care, Health and Integration, the consideration of and, if deemed appropriate by them, the decision to allocate existing resources to the Place Partnership Board for deployment within the Care Communities, subject to appropriate approvals from the Adults and Health Committee, in line with the Constitution.

38 A HEALTHIER FOOD AND DRINK ADVERTISING POLICY

The committee considered the report which proposed the adoption of a 'healthier food and drink advertising policy' as part of efforts to prioritise residents' health and wellbeing and to reduce health inequalities in the borough.

The committee agreed that it was important to encourage individuals to have a nutritional diet and suggested that this was explored further with schools and Everybody Leisure to further expand the ethos to encourage people to move more and choose healthier food options. It was reported that a piece of work was underway that would pick up elements of this with the 'Eat Well, Move More Partnership' which brought together key providers including Everybody Leisure representatives, members of the community and voluntary sector. Officers agreed to ensure that representation from the school communities were linked into this group going forward.

The committee queried the buy-in and feedback from outlets and what impact had been seen in other areas. It was confirmed that in other local authority areas that had implemented the policy, there had been impact seen in relation to the amount of high fat food being advertised and advertisements shifting to advertising more healthier options. It was noted that it was difficult to measure the impact from a public health perspective and linking obesity rates to advertising however the policy was part of a wider solution to reduce health inequalities across the borough.

RESOLVED (by majority):

That the Corporate Policy Committee

1. Approve and agree the adoption of the draft Healthier Advertising Policy (food and non-alcoholic drink) set out in Appendix 1.
2. Delegate to the Director of Public Health the responsibility to roll out the policy across the Council and take any necessary actions to implement the approved policy.

The meeting adjourned for a 10-minute break at 11.35 and reconvened at 11.45am

39 REVISED STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

The committee received the report which set out the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003 and sought approval from the committee to recommend to Full Council the adoption of a revised Statement of Licensing Policy to enable proper discharge of the council's responsibilities for the regulation of alcohol sales, regulated entertainment, and late-night refreshment.

The committee noted that Town and Parish Councils (T&PCs) had requested to be directly consulted upon applications. Legislation made this request difficult, as T&PCs fell into the 'other persons' category set in legislation, and should the council decide to actively consult with this category of individuals, it would need to consult all other persons, not just T&PCs, failure to do so would leave decisions open to judicial review. It was confirmed that the council website provided a list of applications available for consultation and that Town and Parish Councils could now request copies of redacted applications to be sent to them directly.

The committee queried if the new Government had provided any guidance on the potential modernisation of the Taxi Licensing Infrastructure Framework. It was noted that to date, no communication had been received from government to indicate a change however officers committed to following this up prior to the debate of this item at Full Council in December.

It was noted that powers for planning and licencing were entirely separate however silo working should be avoided. It was confirmed that matters considered by the Licensing Sub Committee would highlight in decision notices the information that could/couldn't be taken into consideration and that more information would be provided in future revised versions of the Statement of Licensing Policy.

The committee welcomed the assurance provided by the Chief Executive that the proposed senior management structure would ensure sufficient capacity and capability across the organisation and that this would include

regulatory services such as Licensing, to enable the implementation and delivery of the revised policy.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Corporate Policy Committee

1. Note the content of the draft revised policy set out at appendix 1, the changes made, and the consultation responses received.
2. Recommend the final draft Policy be adopted at Full Council.

40 WORK PROGRAMME

The committee considered the Work Programme and noted that this had been updated to identify clearly those items for scrutiny and/or decision. It was agreed that this would be discussed further at the November committee meeting to explore areas of scrutiny that the committee could be involved in, such as policy development.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be received and noted.

41 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the following Sub Committees be received and noted.

- General Appeals Sub Committee held on 20 August 2024.
- General Appeals Sub Committee held on 9 September 2024.
- Finance Sub-Committee held on 12 September 2024.

42 STRATEGIC RISK ASSURANCE REPORT Q1 2024/25

The committee considered the report which provided an update on the activity of the council's Strategic Risk Register for Quarter 1 2023-24 (covering the period April – June 2024). The report also set out the equivalent level risk registers for the council's wholly owned companies; Orbitas, Tatton Park Enterprises and ANSA which were published in Part 2 – which the Committee did not go into.

The committee asked a number of questions as summarised below:

SR15 Capital Projects (Place): the committee were keen to understand the detail surrounding this strategic risk that had increased from a net risk score of 12 in Q4 2023-24 to 16 in Q1

2024-25. It was confirmed that this particular risk had increased as a result of the review of the capital programme and that more detailed information on this would be provided in the next performance/finance reports that would be presented to the committee during Q2.

Members queried the RAG ratings and the criteria used to apply these. It was confirmed the rating applied to the direction of travel from Q4 2023/24 to Q1 2024/25, and that risks that had remained the same from the last quarter were rated amber, and new risks/risks that had increased were rated red. It was agreed that the ratings used would be considered and reviewed further prior to the Q2 report being presented to the committee.

SRO1 (Increased Demand for Adults Services) and SRO3 (Complexity and Demand for Children's Services) the committee queried why the direction of travel between Q4 2023-24 to Q1 2024-25 had remained 'amber' and not 'red' considering that the two areas remained significantly overspent. Officers committed to providing a written response.

SR17 Carbon Neutral Status: the committee queried why the net score for this risk remained high, following the agreement to extend the date of achieving carbon neutral status to 2027. It was agreed that further detail on this risk would be provided in the narrative of the Q2 report.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Policy Committee note the report and update provided.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 12.25 pm

Councillor N Mannion (Chair)