

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Local Service Delivery Committee (Macclesfield)

Held on Tuesday, 1st November, 2011 at the Heritage Centre, Macclesfield

PRESENT

Councillors C Andrew, L Brown, K Edwards, D Druce, M Hardy and L Roberts

Participating/Local Ward Members

Councillors J Jackson, L Jeuda, B Murphy and D Neilson.

In attendance

Councillor W Livesley

Officers in attendance

Vivienne Quayle – Head of Performance and Capacity

Chris Allman - Project Manager East

Paul Goodwin - Finance Lead Places

Mark Wheelton – Leisure Services and Greenspace Manager

John Leach – Market Manager

Rob McGarry – Streetscape and Technical Support Manager

Jez Goodman – Economic Development Manager

Apologies

Councillors A Harewood

8 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor D Druce be appointed as Chairman for the Municipal Year 2011/12.

(Councillor Edwards abstained from voting).

9 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

That Councillor L Roberts be appointed as Vice-chairman for the Municipal Year 2011/12.

(Councillor Edwards abstained from voting).

10 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 SEPTEMBER 2011

RESOLVED

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Note – This item was considered as the first item on the agenda).

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting. However, Cllr Edwards declared a personal interest at minute 13 (sub-heading “Town Centre Management”), by virtue of being a member of Bollington Town Council, when reference was made to the role of the Town Centre Manager and potential charges to other communities, such as Bollington.

12 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public in attendance, wishing to use the public speaking facility.

13 LOCAL SERVICE DELIVERY - TRANSFER AND DEVOLUTION

The Committee considered the joint report of the Director of Finance and Business Services and the Head of Performance, Customer Services and Capacity together with appendices, which provided detailed information to support the costs associated with the list of assets that could potentially form the calculation for a special expense levy for 2012/13.

This information was intended to assist Members in making an informed decision on those existing services that they wish to see provided in the currently unparished area of Macclesfield (consistent with those transferring to parished areas) and the associated budgets that related to those services.

The Committee was requested to make a recommendation to Cabinet on the level of service and related budgets it wished to see continue to be provided in the unparished area of Macclesfield, potentially leading to the levying a relevant charge. It was noted that the process would be for Cabinet to then make a recommendation to Council.

Officers explained the need to be fair and consistent in the provision of discretionary services across Cheshire East. Members sought clarification in respect of a number of issues and made a number of comments. They expressed views about the concept of a special expenses levy and some Members felt it would lead to double taxation on the people of Macclesfield and that, as there was not a Town Council for Macclesfield, there was no legal body for the services to be transferred to. Officers explained the thinking in terms of consistency with the parished areas relating to the assets approved for transfer in the 5th September cabinet report. In addition officers clarified that no assets would transfer as the Committee is a body of the Council and not a separate entity.

Officers in attendance provided a summary of each of the areas under consideration and Members asked a number of detailed questions and raised the following issues :-

Allotments

Members commented that miscellaneous expenses appeared to be high and requested further detailed information for the next meeting, in respect of the following -:

- How many individual plot holders were there in the Macclesfield area and where do they live.
- What was the current waiting list for each site and a breakdown of where those on the waiting list lived.
- What percentage of the allotments were currently unoccupied, where were the vacant allotments and what was the consequent loss in income.
- To what extent was the Council complying with its legal duty, in terms of statutory provision.
- What formal relationship did the Council have with the local Allotment Associations, in terms of legal agreements and what annual return did they make to the Council.
- Detailed and accurate draft budget figures, with a line by line focus for each item, to enable Members to compare the various costs.
- A general tidying up of the generic titles for the budget figures.

Senior Citizens Hall

- It was questioned whether this item should be considered when the hall fell within the Macclesfield Town Centre Development area.

Weston Community Centre

- It was felt that the Centre needed to be brought up to a reasonable standard
- It was considered that responsibility for the Centre should not be transferred to the Committee, when there were other community facilities being used within the centre, including a well used library. Officers explained that no assets were being transferred to the Committee. The issue to be debated was as to whether a special expense levy should be charged to cover the cost of running these assets to be consistent with parished areas.
- It was suggested that a proviso should be included, to say that the Committee was not in a position to transfer the asset, legally.

Markets

- Members queried the high cost of overtime and felt that paying staff on a permanent rate was unacceptable. However, this was an issue for the Council to resolve.
- Members noted the cost of insurance and queried whether any future Town Council would be able to obtain its own insurance, rather than using Cheshire East Council's. (It was noted that the information had been presented in order to be consistent with that provided for the existing Town and Parish Councils and it was confirmed that a Town Council would be free to obtain its own insurance if it wished to do so).
- It was suggested that responsibility for markets should not be transferred to the Committee, but that the Committee should monitor the cost structure, with a view to improving the facilities for the people of Macclesfield.
- Clarification was sought in respect of the figures for car parking charges.
- Members requested a breakdown of all the costs and explanation as to where all the figures came from. (These details would be included in the comments box for consideration at the next meeting).
- It was requested that there be separate accounts for the indoor market and outdoor market.

Town Centre Management

- Further details were requested as to what was meant by Town Centre Management and what would be the benefits to Macclesfield.
- It was considered that it should be emphasised that Macclesfield was a strategic/lead town in the North of the Borough and was a major shopping centre.
- It was suggested that it seemed reasonable for town centre management to be the responsibility of the Council and that it should not result in an additional tax on the people of Macclesfield.
- It was considered that town centre management and car parking could not be separated and as the Committee had not been offered the opportunity to take on responsibility for car parking this was not equitable.

- The Committee requested further details as to how the role of the Town Centre Manager was perceived and how this reflected the requirements of the people of Macclesfield. It was noted that the current Town Centre Manager worked with other communities, such as Bollington and concern was expressed that costs would be passed onto these communities.

Christmas Lights

- It was noted that the Macclesfield Charter Trustees had budgeted £16,000 for new Christmas lights, in addition to the Council's budget provision of £20,000 and that the £20,000 was not just for lights but also for events in the town.
- It was suggested that it would be appropriate for Christmas lights to be the responsibility of a Committee such as this and for the Charter Trustee budget to be transferred. However, there was a counter argument that, unless the Committee was given total budgetary control, then they should remain the responsibility of the Council.
- Concern was expressed that currently there were no additional costs for the management of the money held by the Charter Trustee's and if the Council was responsible for the lights there would be a charge for managing the costs and the Charter Trustees would lose control as to how the money should be best spent.
- It was suggested that that, as the lights benefited local trade, then the cost should be shared between the Council and local businesses. (It was reported that local businesses already made a contribution).

Toilets

- Clarification was sought regarding overtime costs and it was agreed that information would be provided at the next meeting regarding this and other reallocated costs, which were held centrally.
- It was suggested that there were two options, that either the transfer of the public conveniences should be accepted or that consideration should be given to closing them and paying an amount of money to suitable local shops, to enable use of their toilets by the public. However, this would be for the Council to consider and not the Committee.
- It was suggested that the cost of the Churchill Way Public conveniences should be offset against car parking income.

- Additional information, including figures for the maintenance and refurbishment were requested for the next meeting.
- Information was also requested, for consideration at the next meeting, in respect of the status of the Public Conveniences on Churchill Way and whether it was proposed that they would be taken over, as part of the town centre redevelopment and whether they had originally been provided by way of a Section 106 Agreement and what the legal position would be in respect of any transfer.
- Information in respect of the condition of the Public Conveniences was also requested for the next meeting.

RESOLVED

That the additional information requested by Members be provided, for consideration at the next meeting, to enable the Committee to make a recommendation to Cabinet.

(Councillor Edwards voted against the motion).

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place at 9.30am, on Friday 25 November 2011, at Macclesfield Library.

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and concluded at 1.05 pm

Councillor D Druce