

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Scrutiny Committee**
held on Friday, 7th December, 2012 at Meeting Room Sandbach Library -The
Commons, Sandbach CW11 1FJ

PRESENT

Councillor G Merry (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)
Councillor (none)

Councillors S Corcoran, F Keegan and D Newton

Apologies

Councillors G Baxendale, B Burkhill, R Domleo and D Neilson

1 ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Peter Raynes – Finance Portfolio Holder
Councillor Paul Findlow – Corporate Portfolio Holder

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of the existence of a party whip.

4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

Mr Stuart Redgard of Wilmslow attended the meeting to seek the Committee's advice about the background to the Romani caravan bequeathed by the late George Bramwell Evans, a radio broadcaster, to Wilmslow Urban District Council on his death in the 1940's but which in November 2012, had been gifted by Cheshire East Council to Bradford Metropolitan Borough Council and was now located in the Industrial Museum Bradford.

The Chairman informed Mr Redgard that this matter was beyond the scope of the Committee but undertook to pass his details onto the relevant officer within the Council to pursue the matter.

6 COUNCIL TAX BASE AND SUPPORT AND TECHNICAL REFORMS

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Finance and Business Services notifying Cabinet of the Council tax base for Cheshire East for 2013/14 and containing changes relating to the calculation of the Council tax base.

The Local Government Finance Act 2012 allowed Billing Authorities flexibility over the application of council tax discounts and premiums in respect of empty properties. The Committee considered the merits and potential risks of changing the Council's arrangements with respect to the application of council tax discounts and premiums in respect of empty properties which were uninhabitable but undergoing substantial renovation (formerly class A exemption), particularly in relation to individuals or families who had bought a property with the intention of living in it themselves.

The committee was informed that the Council had flexibility through section 13A of the Local Government Act 1992 to apply discretion in respect of discounts locally, where it considered the circumstances required and it was suggested that the Council should deal with such circumstances on a case by case basis.

In connection with the Council Tax base calculation, the committee sought advice about the discretionary powers available to the Council to allow council tax payments to be made over a 12 month period rather than the current arrangements for 10 payments.

RESOLVED-

- (a) That the arrangements set out in the report to allow the Council to apply discretion on a case by case basis in relation to applications for Council Tax discounts in connection with uninhabited properties undergoing substantial renovation, in accordance with Section 13A of the Local Government Act 1992, be monitored with a view to the arrangements being reviewed in 12 months time.
- (b) That the Finance Portfolio Holder be requested to investigate the possibility of extending arrangements to allow all Council Tax payers within Cheshire East to pay Council tax over 12 months instead of 10 months.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.00 pm

Councillor G Merry (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)