

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Jobs, Regeneration and Assets Overview and Scrutiny Committee

held on Monday, 13th October, 2014 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor P Groves (Chairman)
Councillor F Keegan (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors G Barton, S Corcoran, S Hogben, M J Weatherill, J Wray and B Murphy

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor D Stockton – Cabinet Member for Housing and Jobs
Julian Cobley – Business Manager – Economic Growth and Prosperity
Paul Mickleburgh – Property Information Officer
James Morley – Scrutiny Officer

7 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence

8 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting on 22 September be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

10 DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of party whip

11 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present who wished to speak

12 DRAFT STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

Julian Cobley, Business Manager for Economic Growth and Prosperity, presented the draft Asset Management Strategy and Delivery Plan. The draft document identified future drivers for each category of asset to provide potential direction to the new strategy.

The Committee was invited to contribute to the development of the strategic direction of asset management and desired outcomes. It was suggested that the Committee set up a task and finish group to consider one of the following areas:

- Use of current operational assets (Corporate Estate) – how do we get best use out of buildings.
- Income Portfolio – how could the Council generate receipts from assets and assist with town centre regeneration.
- Asset Disposal – how should the Council dispose of surplus assets.

The Committee discussed conducting a review of the Council's Corporate Estate. The Council had inherited a lot of assets from the legacy authorities however the Council now had a net smaller establishment and had adopted new practices such as flexible working so required less space. Operational cost of buildings was currently around £15million per year. The Council was developing closer relationships with partners such as the police and health services, and working closer with local communities which provided opportunities to change the way buildings were used. Members agreed that it would be useful to review the use of buildings to ensure it enable the Council to operate more effectively and to reduce building costs.

RESOLVED – That the Committee consider the Terms of Reference for a task and finish review of the Council's Corporate Estate at the next meeting

13 ATRIUM SYSTEM DEMONSTRATION

Paul Mickleburgh, Property Information Officer, provided a practical demonstration of WebGIS, an online mapping system used to view information relating to planning applications and permissions, assets and infrastructure. The system was used by the Assets Team to answer enquiries from the public and developers about particular assets or sites. WebGIS was currently available on the internal CEntranet to all Council employees and Councillors however new transparency laws introduced by Government meant that the Assets Team was considering making the system accessible to the public.

Paul demonstrated to the Committee how to use the system and what it could be used for. By understanding the system Councillors would be able to answer their own enquiries about assets and planning applications in their wards as well as assist their residents with enquiries.

Paul had also produced a guide on how to use the system. It was suggested that some form of training should be provided to all councillors. However prior to any training taking place the Committee agreed to trial the use of the guide and provide feedback to ensure it was user friendly.

RESOLVED – That the Members of the Committee explore WebGIS to test the user guide and provide feedback at the next meeting.

14 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee examined the Forward Plan

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan be noted

15 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its work programme. The Committee discussed the ways of working and the frequency of formal meetings. All Overview and Scrutiny Committees were considering what the most effective way of working would be in future with a variety of options open to the Committees besides formal committee meetings. It was suggested that the Committee review the frequency of meetings and explore alternative ways of working at its December meeting. The following items were suggested for the November meeting:

- Consider terms of reference for a task and finish group to review the Council's Corporate Estate
- Members to provide feedback on their experiences using Atrium following the demonstration received at this meeting

RESOLVED – That the Work Programme be updated.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.40 pm

Councillor P Groves (Chairman)