

## **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

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

held on Monday, 15th December, 2014 at Committee Suite 1 & 2, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

#### **PRESENT**

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

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

#### **Apologies**

Councillors S Hogben

#### **ALSO PRESENT**

Councillors D Newton and R Cartlidge – visiting members

#### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

Julian Cobley – Head of Investment  
John Willis – Inward Investment & Business Engagement Manager  
James Morley – Scrutiny Officers

#### **27 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to Councillor G Barton's apology for absence being included

#### **28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest

#### **29 DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP**

There were no declarations of party whip

#### **30 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION**

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

#### **31 UPDATE ON CHESHIRE NEIGHBOURS CREDIT UNION**

The Committee received a brief update following it's consideration of a progress report, on recommendations made to Cabinet by the Finance Policy Development

Group in February 2014 regarding Council support for Cheshire Neighbours Credit Union (CNCU), at it's previous meeting.

The Committee had written to the Finance Portfolio Holder requesting that a decision be reached as soon as possible on a request for financial assistance from CNCU. The Committee had received a response from the Portfolio Holder saying that officers would prepare a decision for formal agreement. Further details on the decision were not available at the meeting but would be sent to members of the Committee by email.

RESOLVED – That further details on a decision regarding a request for financial assistance from CNCU be sent by responsible officers to Committee via email.

### **32 BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT - STRATEGIC ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT, CHESHIRE EAST'S TOP 100 INVESTORS**

John Willis, Inward Investment & Business Engagement Manager, presented a discussion paper about the role of the Business Engagement Team (BET) and how councillors might contribute to refining the Council's engagement with the top 100 businesses in the Borough.

During discussion the following points were made:

- Members wished to be provided with the list of the 100 top companies in Cheshire East.
- Some members were concerned that if the Council focused on large companies then small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) would be overlooked. The BET provided support to approximately 500 SMEs with some European funding. "Start Up" business survival rate in Cheshire East was healthy.
- Three areas of challenge for where the Council could support for businesses were: securing finance; securing premises; and recruiting the correct staff/retaining graduates.
- There was a business engagement phone line which companies could use as a first point of contact but this needed to be publicised more. There was currently no specific website for business engagement that companies could access but work was ongoing to put one in place.
- Concern was expressed that the Council's current procurement processes did encourage local businesses to bid. The cost of the bidding process could be prohibitive to local businesses and consideration should be given to how the cost could be reduced.

The discussion paper contained seven suggestions for how the Committee could consider the topic further. During discussion the Committee agreed that options B, F and G would be most beneficial for members to contribute to.

RESOLVED – That the Committee consider Business Engagement further at a future meeting by concentrating on options B, F and G for paragraph 5.7 of the report, namely:

- B. Evaluate the performance by assessing employee numbers, GVA output and value to the Cheshire East economy. Establish a baseline to track and bench mark future results.

- F. Identify potential relationships with key business e.g. UKTI invest or existing relationships with BIS.
- G. Develop processes to track progress and measure results

### **33 HIGH GROWTH CITY TASK AND FINISH GROUP - UPDATED REPORT**

The Committee considered an updated version of the High Growth City Project Task and Finish Group's report. The report was updated following the Committee's previous meeting due to further developments in relation to HS2 which had made previous parts of the Task Group's report out of date.

The Chairman of the Task Group talked through the amendments that had been made to the report which were highlighted for members to easily identify.

The Committee agreed to the latest version of the report and requested that following submission to Cabinet a response to the recommendations of the report be received by the Committee.

The Chairman requested that the Task Group's thanks to the Scrutiny Officer for the work that was required to complete the meeting be recorded.

**RESOLVED** – That the updated version of the High Growth City Project Task and Finish Group's Final Report be approved and submitted to Cabinet with a request for a response to the Report from Cabinet in March.

### **34 FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee considered the latest Forward Plan. It was noted that Cabinet was due to consider an item on consultation of the Housing Strategy which was currently being redeveloped. It was suggested that the Committee should consider how regeneration of town centres impacted on the Housing Strategy at a future meeting.

**RESOLVED** – That an item on Housing Strategy be added to the work programme for February

### **35 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered its work programme. Due to a lack of business in the work programme it was agreed that the meeting scheduled for 12 January be cancelled. The Chairman raised the general issue of frequency of meetings and suggested that in order

It was agreed following discussion of the Forward Plan that an item on the Housing Strategy be received at the February meeting.

**RESOLVED** – That the work programme be updated as discussed

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.35 pm

Councillor P Groves (Chairman)