

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

held on Thursday, 24th March, 2016 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor J Wray (Chairman)
Councillor G Barton (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors M Hardy, N Mannion, A Martin, M Parsons and B Roberts

Apologies

Councillors H Davenport

61 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

62 ALSO PRESENT

Ralph Kemp - Corporate Manager Waste and Environment Service
Paul Reeves - Flood Risk Manager
George Broughton Parks Development Manager

63 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

64 WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

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

65 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

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

66 FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

Paul Reeves, Flood Risk Manager attended the meeting and gave a presentation on flood risk management in Cheshire East.

Paul explained the background to the responsibilities to monitor the Councils flood risk arrangements which emanated from the Pitt report into flooding in England in 2007.

The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 had added additional responsibilities for Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) including new principal duties

Relating to requirements to maintain an Asset Register

Consent and Enforcement Powers:

Whilst the Environment Agency continued to have responsibilities for main rivers and the sea, LLFAs now had responsibilities for all other water sources including ordinary watercourses, surface water and groundwater .

In summary the act specified:

- Powers to Designate Features/Make byelaws
- Duty to Investigate Significant Flood Incidents
- Delivery of Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (revised LLFA statutory consultee arrangements from April 2015)

During 2015 /16, drainage Improvement Schemes had been carried out at:

- Chelford Roundabout Phase 1 completed
- Chelford Phase 2 imminent
- Mill Lane Elworth - 2 Phases nearing completion
- A50 Dog Lane Brereton - 2 Phases of work completed
- Bradfield Green Scheme Phase 1 completed

In addition, the team had established liaison with arrangements with Planning Officers as Statutory Consultee with effect from April 2015, and since that date had been consulted on 242 planning applications.

In response to a question about which body was responsible for enforcing matters affecting the flow of water in river courses, Paul explained that the Highways agency targeted known risks in urban areas which under the current inspection regime meant that inspections were carried out annually on main rivers. Although the responsibility lay with the Environment agency, matters of concern could be reported to the Council and they would be forwarded to the Environment agency.

It was noted that there were 3 vacancies within the flood risk management section and bearing in mind the pressures on the Council in terms of residential development, Members expressed concern that the vacancies should be filled as soon as possible.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the presentation be received;

- (b) That the Chairman be requested to write to the Highways and Infrastructure portfolio holder seeking his assurance that every effort will be made to fill the current vacancies in the flood risk management section as soon as possible;
- (c) That a copy of the draft flood risk strategy be circulated to Members of the Committee outside of the meeting for comment.

67 PARKS STRATEGY

The Committee considered a report of the Ralph Kemp, Corporate Manager Waste and Environmental Services providing background and strategic context to the delivery of the Cheshire East parks strategy, which supported the Greenspace Strategy and the Stronger Communities element of the Local Plan.

The strategy provided guiding principles for managing and developing the Council's parks in the future to ensure that they met user needs and aspirations for delivering good quality parks and open spaces.

The strategy was due to be submitted to Cabinet on 12 April 2016.

In response to a comment about the strategy needing to be more specific in respect of its objectives, Ralph acknowledged that specific points within the strategy could be re-drafted to provide highlights.

RESOLVED – That the draft parks strategy be noted.

68 QUARTER 3 ANSA AND ORBITAS REPORTS

The committee considered a report of the Corporate Manager Commissioning – Waste and Environmental Services relating to the quarter 3 performance reports for ANSA and Orbitas.

Ansa was maintaining its high standards across the breadth of services that they delivered. A key factor in this quarter was the need to reduce the levels of contamination within the recycling (silver bin) stream. The work to reduce contamination resulted in more bins being unemptied and thus the levels of reported missed bins increasing. The campaign had succeeded in reducing levels of contamination significantly; a key factor in ensuring the recycling reprocessor accepted all the Council's loads.

The construction of the Environmental Hub had stalled pending the outcome of a legal ruling as to whether the decision to grant planning permission on the site in Middlewich could be subject to judicial review.

Approximately £0.1m of the potential pressure related to a forecast shortfall in Markets income. This continued the trend of a gradual decrease in income over the last few years, specifically in Macclesfield, where low rents of vacant shops and a major trader leaving had contributed to the shortfall. Negotiations over the projected transfer of Crewe Markets to Crewe Town Council were continuing.

Bereavement Services projected a potential budget pressure of £0.2m based on the Third Quarter Review income forecast against a net income budget of £1.3m. This related to a realignment of the original proposed income growth over a period of five years to gradually build market share.

Within year, core bereavement income was currently reporting a £0.1m shortfall against a £2.4m income target. The shortfall was due to a reduced service as a result of the contract refurbishment at Crewe Crematorium between July and December 2015.

Orbitas was also forecasting a £173,000 shortfall in Core Bereavement Income due to the disruption to service resulting from the ongoing refurbishment works at Crewe Crematorium.

However, to counter balance this lost income being experienced at Crewe whilst works are ongoing, Macclesfield Crematorium had increased performance by 12% compared to 2014/15 contributing an additional income of £77,000.

The handyman's service had forecast a surplus (£24k) due to holding vacancies in the service and a forecast reduction in the minor adaptations spend.

69 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the forward plan.

RESOLVED

That the forward plan be received

70 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee reviewed its work programme.

RESOLVED –

That items relating to TSSL and Bus Service Routes be considered at the informal meeting to be held on 23 June 2016.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 1.00 pm

Councillor J Wray (Chairman)