

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
held on Thursday, 7th September, 2017 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor M Simon (Chairman)
Councillor M Grant (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Rhoda Bailey, B Dooley, Nicholas, L Smetham, B Walmsley,
H Wells-Bradshaw, D Flude, M Deakin, S Edgar and M J Weatherill
(substitute).

ALSO PRESENT

P Bates Portfolio Holder for Finance and Communities
P Bates- Chief Operating Officer
J Willis- Section 151 Officer
F Jordan- Executive Director of Place
M Palethorpe- Acting Executive Director of People
A Thompson- Head of Finance and Performance
N Moorhouse- Director of Children's Social Care
Councillor D Bailey- visiting member for the item on Crewe Fire Station
Second Pump
Alex Waller- Cheshire Fire and Rescue
Andy Royle- Cheshire Fire and Rescue

22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors S Corcoran, H Davenport, S Pochin and Jos Saunders.

23 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED- That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 August 2017 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors M Simon, D Flude, J Weatherill and D Bailey declared a non pecuniary interest as members of the Combined Fire Authority of Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East, Halton and Warrington.

25 DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIP

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

26 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

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

27 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Operating Officer relating to the first quarter review of performance 2017/18. Councillor Paul Bates opened the item as the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Communities. The report highlighted financial and non-financial pressures and performance in connection with the outcomes of the Corporate Plan 2016 to 2020.

A potential overspend of £17.7 million was being forecast, which was attributed largely to an increase in caseloads and costs associated with children in care.

Appendix 1 of the report set out details of how the Council was performing. The appendix was divided into 3 sections:

- Section 1- Summary of Council Performance brought together the positive impact that service performance and financial performance had had on six residents first outcomes during the first year:
- Section 2 – Financial Stability provided an update on the Council's overall financial position. It demonstrated how spending in 2017/18 had been funded including service budgets, grants, council tax and business rates, treasury management, centrally held budgets and reserves.
- Section 3 Workforce Development - provided a summary of the key issues relating to the Council's workforce development plan.

The Chief Operating Officer, Section 151 Officer, Executive Director of Place and Acting Deputy Chief Executive and the Acting Executive Director for People and Portfolio Holders were questioned robustly, at length, on the contents of the report and sought additional information on the several matters which would be reported back to Members outside of the meeting, these included:

- Requesting further details of challenges and low performance in addition to the top performing indicators;
- Figures relating to the uptake of free nursery places across the borough;
- Details of the number of instances of fly tipping led to prosecutions;
- Clarification of why Cheshire East has borrowed funds from other Authorities; and
- Clarification on why £100,000 of Professional Services savings were unachievable.

The Chairman also read out and requested answers to each of the questions tabled, in advance, by Cllr S Corcoran who could not be present at the meeting. The answers would be provided in writing to him and circulated to all members of the Committee together with answers to questions that Senior Officers were unable to answer during the meeting.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report be received;

- (b) That Cabinet be informed that this Committee acknowledges and understands that this is a very challenging year and that there is immense pressure on the Council's limited resources. The pressure on the public sector this year is perhaps unprecedented particularly in Adult Social Care and Children's' Services.
- (c) That this Committee recognise that there are actions in place to address £7.7 million of the predicted overspend of £17.7 million and that ongoing work is taking place to mitigate against the remaining £10 million.
- (d) That the Council's four Scrutiny Committees will continue to help with the identifying of savings and of sorting and prioritising challenges within the Directorates and Portfolios.
- (e) That this Committees congratulations be extended to Officers and Members concerned for their continued hard work towards producing a balanced budget for the Council in these very challenging times.
- (f) That Cabinet be asked to formally acknowledge these comments in the minutes of the meeting.

28 CREWE FIRE STATION SECOND PUMP

Alex Waller and Andy Royle from Cheshire Fire and Rescue attended the meeting and gave a presentation on the proposal to change the second fire pump at Crewe Fire Station from full time utilisation to on-call utilisation. The fire pump was a High Volume Pump which was used to pump high volumes of water to an incident to tackle fires. It could also be used to pump water away from flood affected areas.

The existing contract arrangement was that both Fire Pumps were categorised as red and were available for use 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at a cost of £800k per year. Re-categorising one pump to yellow would mean fire fighters would be on-call and required to live no further than 5 minutes travel to the station. This type of arrangement would mean the pump would cost £150k per year. Alex made it clear that in the situation of an incident, the red pump would always be despatched first. Currently, 69% of incidents required one pump, 31% of incidents required 2 pumps.

The Committee was informed that:

- Between 2004-2011 there had been a 40% reduction in the number of incidents Cheshire Fire and Rescue dealt with;
- Despite the decline in incidents, the number of firefighters had maintained at a steady number, whereas the number of fire engines had increased;
- Pumps designated as red 24/7 use were utilised for incidents 6% of the time. Pumps designated as yellow on-call were utilised 1% of the time;

- At Crewe Fire Station, the red pump was in use 4.5% of the time (734 incidents) the existing second red pump was in use 3% of the time (242 incidents).
- On average turn-out time for a red pump was 90 seconds with an arrival time of 5.5 minutes. A yellow pump took 5 minutes to turn-out with an arrival time of 8.5 minutes; and
- Although fire pumps were situated within stations in towns, they were not designated to any one particular town and often travel between towns and over county borders to help with incidents in other parts of the country.

Alex reminded the Committee that firefighters could spend 6% of their time at incidents. Alongside this work they were involved in other aspects of community engagement including a recent pilot with the Fire Brigades Union to respond to cardiac arrests with defibrillators.

Councillor Damian Bailey was invited to address the Committee before the Committee discussed the item.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Alex and Andy be thanked for their presentation and it be received and noted;
- (b) That Members of this Committee who are also Members of the Fire Authority be requested to continue to monitor the situation regarding the second pump and feedback to the Committee later in the year.

29 **WORK PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee reviewed the Work Programme.

Helen Davies advised the Committee that the inclusion of some Communities items followed on from the previous resolution by the Scrutiny Chairmen to transfer Community Safety items to Corporate whilst the Partnerships led work including the Third, Faith and Voluntary Sectors and Community Development items remained with the Health and Adult Social Care and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Kirstie Hercules advised the Committee that the contract for Private Enforcement had been re-let for a further 12 months and that an update could be provided to the Committee in March 2018.

RESOLVED-

- (a) That the Work Programme be received and noted.
- (b) That the Committee receive an update on the Private Enforcement contract in March 2018.

30 **FORWARD PLAN**

RESOLVED- That the Forward Plan be received and noted.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.42 pm

Councillor M Simon (Chairman)