

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
held on Thursday, 4th April, 2019 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

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

Councillors S Corcoran, H Davenport, T Dean, B Dooley, A Moran and
J Nicholas

Apologies

Councillors B Burkhill and S Pochin

72 ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Paul Bates – Finance and Communications Portfolio Holder
Councilor Paul Findlow - Corporate Policy and Legal Services Portfolio
Holder
Kath O'Dwyer – Acting Chief Executive
Mart Taylor – Interim Executive Director Corporate Services
Paul Bayley - Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services
Alex Thompson - Head of Finance & Performance
Michael Moore - Senior Social Media and Marketing Officer

73 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

74 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2019 be
confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

75 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

76 DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIP

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

77 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

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

78 MEDIA RELATIONS PROTOCOL

The committee considered the Council's media relations protocol in the context of Overview and Scrutiny. The protocol provided media guidance to officers and elected members and set out the sign off process for all media communications including amongst other things, press statements

The following points were raised in respect of the protocol:

- The protocol did not have the flexibility to allow non executive members to be quoted in press statements for example when the subject related to a specific ward issue.
- Overview and Scrutiny committees seldom received media support even when dealing with contentious issues

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Senior Social Media and Marketing Officer be requested to re-draft the media relations protocol with a view to making the document reflect a more collaborative approach which would make provision for non executive members to take part in press releases when it is considered appropriate;
- (b) That the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Communication be requested to report back to this committee in due course on progress with this matter.

79 FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED- That the Forward Plan be received and noted.

80 WORK PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee reviewed its work programme.

RESOLVED – That subject to an item being added to receive a half yearly update on the progress to deliver proposals within the medium term financial strategy as it relates to corporate services, the work programme be noted.

81 DIGITAL CUSTOMER SERVICES

Paul Bayley gave a presentation on progress of the digital customer services project which began in 2015 the object of which was to enable customer contact across all services to be primarily delivered through digital channels.

The presentation demonstrated how the new digital customer services had been constructed and highlighted some real life examples of the system in operation.

RESOLVED – That presentation be noted.

82 BEST4BUSINESS

Mark Taylor Interim Executive Director Corporate Services gave a presentation on the progress of the best4business project. The presentation had been given to the Joint working group with Cheshire West and Chester at its recent meeting.

The implementation of the new software had been subject to slippage on three occasions, but the committee was assured that the two Councils were working collaboratively and were confident that the project would still be delivered and that savings would be achieved.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the best4business project update be added as a standing item on the agendas for this committee for the foreseeable future;
- (b) That the acting Executive Director be requested to provide details of cost of the extension of the Oracle system to members of this committee.

83 TRANSPARENCY WORKING GROUP

The Committee considered a report of the acting Executive Director Corporate Services relating to the work of the transparency working group which had supported the Council's arrangements to comply with mandatory publication requirements including compliance with the Local Government Transparency code 2015, the information Commissioners Publication Scheme, re-use of public sector information regulations 2015 and various copyright and data licensing regulations.

Having completed its work, the transparency working group had been disbanded.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be received;
- (b) That it be noted that updates on the monitoring of the Council's performance on open data and transparency, will be submitted to this committee in due course

The meeting commenced at 2.15 pm and concluded at 4.00 pm

Councillor M Simon (Chairman)