

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee**
held on Thursday, 14th March, 2024 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor L Wardlaw (Chair)
Councillor R Vernon (Vice-Chair)

Councillors L Anderson, S Adams, D Brown, B Drake, H Seddon, M Simon
and N Mannion

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Brian Reed, Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Domenic de Bechi, Head of Highways
Paul Davies, Contract Operations Manager, Highways
Mark Heywood, Cheshire East Highways
Nikki Bishop, Democratic Services

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

David Brown, Senior Advisor, Environment Agency
Katy Holt, Team Leader Flood Risk Management, Environment Agency
Emma Birch, Area Engagement Lead for Cheshire, United Utilities
Cheshire and Craig Connor, Wastewater Drainage Area Manager, United
Utilities
Matt Barlow, Group Manager, Cheshire Fire Authority
Steve Barnes, Area Manager, Cheshire Fire Authority

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Smith, Julie
Smith, Hannah Moss and Joy Bratherton.

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In the interests of openness and transparency, Cllr Mannion declared that
he was a member of the Environment Agency North-West Regional Flood
and Coastal Committee.

13 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 14 December 2023 be
approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

14 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no registered public speakers.

15 UPDATE ON FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

Councillor Lesley Smetham addressed the committee as a visiting member and spoke in relation to local flooding issues across Henbury as a result of substantial development. Cllr Smetham highlighted how serious matters were becoming and that some residents could not access their gardens/homes. Cllr Smetham asked what local ward members could do to support residents.

Committee Members received presentations on flood risk management functions from key colleagues representing Cheshire East Highways (Lead Local Flood Authority), Ringway Jacobs, Cheshire Fire Authority, United Utilities and the Environment Agency. Representatives updated Committee Members on the role of their organisations in the event of flooding, how they communicated and worked with partners, funding for flood risk management and future strategies that took into consideration key risks such as climate change.

The committee agreed that having a single point of contact for local ward members would be helpful. Representatives from the Environment Agency confirmed that there was a 24-hour / 7 day a week hotline for individuals to report environmental hazards, including flooding. It was agreed that a list of useful contact numbers would be circulated to the committee.

The committee noted that good progress had been made to improve partnership working across all agencies. The committee requested, whilst noting the complex split of statutory responsibilities, that this should continue and that further consideration should be given to how, during an incident of flooding, agencies could co-ordinate and improve communications to local residents such as the introduction of a single-alert system.

Updates were provided funding bids made by the LLFA. The committee were pleased to note that to date, £20,000 had been secured in successful funding bids and that the team now had dedicated resource to pull together future bids for funding.

The committee were pleased to learn that new legislation was anticipated to be in place by 2025 that would make SuDs (Sustainable Drainage Systems) a requirement in all new major developments, which provided agencies with the ability to address matters more effectively prior to construction works commencing. It was noted that a High-Level Business Case had been submitted for additional resource in readiness for the SuDs legislation, which had been successful.

RESOLVED:

That the presentations and updates be received and noted.

16 WORK PROGRAMME

The committee considered the Work Programme. The following updates were noted:

- Update on Knife Crime (following the hosting of the Knife Angel in Crewe) had been added to the Work Programme for September.
- A review of the Prevent and Channel Guidance had been added to the Work Programme for September.
- The East Cheshire NHS Trust Quality Account 2023-24 had been added to the Work Programme for July.
- It was proposed that the September committee meeting be held at Safety Central, as discussed at the last meeting in December.

The committee agreed that an informal virtual meeting should be arranged with the committee and lead officers to review the Work Programme for the new municipal year.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 1.15 pm

Councillor L Wardlaw (Chair)