

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Environment and Communities Committee**
held on Thursday, 30th January, 2025 in the The Capesthorne Room - Town
Hall, Macclesfield SK10 1EA

PRESENT

Councillor M Warren (Chair)
Councillor L Braithwaite (Vice-Chair)

Councillors J Bratherton, M Brooks, T Dean, S Gardiner, H Moss, B Posnett,
H Seddon, L Smetham, H Whitaker, G Marshall and J Place

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Tom Shuttleworth, Interim Director of Planning and Environment
Tracey Bettaney, Head of Regulatory Services
Rick Hughes, Trading Standards and Community Protection Manager
Ralph Kemp, Head of Environmental Services
Emma Williams, Carbon Manager
Tom Evans, Strategic and Environmental Planning Manager
Steve Reading, Principal Accountant
James Thomas, Principal Solicitor
Josie Lloyd, Democratic Services Officer

10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Farrall and D
Jefferay. Councillors J Place and G Marshall attended as substitutes.

11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In relation to item 7 (Review of CCTV Service), Councillors Bratherton,
Gardiner, Marshall, Seddon, Warren and Whitaker declared that they were
members of Town Councils which were financial contributors to the CCTV
service.

12 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2024 be agreed as
a correct record.

13 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

Ms Debbie Jamison addressed the committee in relation to the work
programme and queried why the Strategic Leisure Review report had been
deferred to the March meeting. Ms Jamison requested an update on this

report and that it be amended on the work programme to include the requirement for an investment plan for Poynton, Knutsford and Alsager as agreed in March 2024. Ms Jamison also queried how leisure centre customers had been engaged in the investment planning following the consultation, whether there had been any changes to the arrangements between Cheshire East Council and Everybody Health and Leisure since March 2024, and whether the officers involved in the review were aware of monies available through the Community Infrastructure Levy. It was agreed that a written response would be provided.

Cllr Kay Wesley, Congleton Town Councillor, spoke in relation to the Review of the CCTV Service and expressed support for maintaining the current levels of CCTV coverage in Congleton and asked the committee not to consider any option which would reduce this service. Cllr Wesley highlighted its importance in both preventing crime and supporting law enforcement and stated that 95% of Congleton residents supported the use of CCTV.

Mr Robert Brunt spoke in relation to the Wider Borough Carbon Action Plan and highlighted the role of farming in controlling carbon through managed grassland and the challenges farmers would face as a result of inheritance tax. Mr Brunt asked members to support the Notice of Motion to oppose inheritance tax budget changes. The Notice of Motion would be received at the March meeting of the Economy and Growth Committee.

Cllr Robert Douglas, Congleton Town Councillor, addressed the committee in relation to the Review of the CCTV Service. Cllr Douglas expressed concerns about reducing or removing the service and emphasised the importance of CCTV in public safety. Cllr Douglas urged the committee to reject options do something 3 and 4 and consider negotiating additional income from the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Mr Richard Yarwood spoke in relation to the Wider Borough Carbon Action Plan and supported the points raised by Mr Brunt. Mr Yarwood asked for the committee's support for the Notice of Motion against inheritance tax budget changes and emphasised the role of farming in achieving carbon neutrality.

14 THIRD FINANCIAL REVIEW 24/25

The committee received the report which provided the current forecast outturn for the financial year 2024/25 based on income, expenditure and known commitments at the end of October 2024. The report also identified actions that were being taken to address adverse variances to urgently address financial sustainability.

It was queried why the table providing commentary on the progress against budget change items contained some items which were not colour coded. Officers would clarify this following the meeting and confirm in writing.

RESOLVED:

That the Environment and Communities Committee:

1. Review the factors leading to a forecast adverse Net Revenue financial pressure of £18.3m against a revised budget of £390.5m (4.7%). To scrutinise the contents of Annex 1, Section 2 and review progress on the delivery of the MTFS approved budget policy change items, the RAG ratings and latest forecasts, and to understand the actions to be taken to address any adverse variances from the approved budget.
2. Review the in-year forecast capital spending of £144.7m against an approved MTFS budget of £215.8m, due to slippage that has been re-profiled into future years.
3. Note the available reserves position as per Annex 1, Section 5.
4. Note the Capital Virements above £500,000 up to and including £5,000,000 as per Annex 1, Section 4, Table 4 will be approved in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

15 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY CONSULTATION 2025/26 - 2028/29 PROVISIONAL SETTLEMENT UPDATE (ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE)

The committee received the report on the development of the Cheshire East Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 to 2028/29 in relation to the responsibilities of the Environment and Communities Committee.

It was queried whether the Local Government Settlement would increase the base rate for calculating future Council Tax as it would be included in the Core Spending Power total. Officers advised that it would not affect the base rate as the funding was to offset the pressure of the National Insurance change to staff costs. It was requested that this assurance be provided in writing.

It was proposed and seconded that a recorded vote be carried out. The following results were recorded:

For:

Councillors Braithwaite, Bratherton, Brooks, Marshall, Place, Seddon and Warren

Against:

Councillors Dean, Gardiner, Posnett, Smetham and Whitaker

Abstentions:

Councillor Moss

RESOLVED (by majority):

That the Environment and Communities Committee:

1. Recommend to the Corporate Policy Committee, for their meeting on 6 February 2025, all proposals within Appendix A, as related to the Committee's responsibilities, for inclusion on the Council's budget for 2025/26
2. Identify any further budget change proposals, as related to the Committee's responsibilities, that could assist Corporate Policy Committee in presenting an overall balanced budget to Council for 2025/26
3. Note the capital growth items listed in Appendix B and the revenue implications noted in paragraph 23. These will be reviewed by the Capital Review Programme Board in January before a final list is brought to Corporate Policy committee in February
4. Note the contents of Appendix C – Provisional Local Government Settlement 2025/26 (Finance Sub Committee)
5. Note the contents of Appendix D – Council Tax benchmarking and scenarios (Finance Sub Committee) and consider what the impact of any requests for a change of Council Tax policy would be

16 REVIEW OF CCTV SERVICE

The committee received the report which sought approval to undertake a public consultation exercise on the proposed options for the CCTV delivery model.

An amendment was moved and seconded which sought to remove options do something 2, 3 and 4. This was carried unanimously.

It was noted that the only remaining option (do something 1) would be operational and therefore not require committee approval or a public consultation to be carried out.

Officer engagement with stakeholders and potential partners would, however, take place with an update report being brought to the committee, with the aim of the June 2025 meeting.

The Chair highlighted that the committee would undertake a visit to the CCTV service to further understand the scope of services offered both

internally and to external partners. Officers undertook to set up this visit at an appropriate future time.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

1. That options do something 2, 3 and 4 be rejected, leaving option do something 1 to be carried out as an operational matter
2. That the committee endorses an approach to the Police and Crime Commissioner and Cheshire Constabulary specifically in regards to a permanent revenue funding contribution towards the service, noting the level of service currently provided free of charge

17 WIDER BOROUGH CARBON ACTION PLAN 2025-2030

The committee considered the report on the Wider Borough Carbon Action Plan 2025-2030.

There was a full debate during which it was acknowledged that there were many challenges within the global context and some members felt that the plan did not provide sufficient detail on how targets would be met, meaning they were unable to support the plan in its current form. Other members felt that the plan provided a good framework for action.

RESOLVED (by majority):

That the Environment and Communities Committee:

1. Approve and adopt the Wider Borough Carbon Action Plan 2025-30 and delegate authority to the Head of Environmental Services to make necessary modifications to the Plan, subject to annual status updates to the committee
2. Specifically to agree and endorse the overarching recommendations within the plan, namely:
 - a) All strategies, plans and policies created or refreshed by the council to incorporate carbon reduction and climate change considerations as a key element of their outcomes
 - b) A member of each service area (and teams where relevant), to have carbon reduction as an element of their key roles and responsibilities. These officers to then form together an ongoing Carbon Board chaired by the council's Head of Environmental Services
 - c) Cheshire East Council will continue to use its influence to encourage and enable carbon reduction activity to take place across the borough of Cheshire East and throughout the council's own procurement supply chain

- d) Cheshire East Council will consider the impacts to vulnerable groups for any policy or action that will be taken and where applicable target interventions and advice at affected groups
3. Approve that a Climate Change Member Working Group be constituted under the remit of the Committee in accordance with the Terms of Reference contained at Appendix 4
4. To note the progress made towards the council's target to reach operational carbon neutrality by 2027 as detailed in Appendix 5

18 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME UPDATE

The committee considered the report which sought approval for an update to the Council's Local Development Scheme.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Environment and Communities Committee approve that the update to the Local Development Scheme, included at Appendix A to this report is published to the Council's website and that a copy is sent to the Minister of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government by no later than 6 March 2025

19 WORK PROGRAMME

The committee considered the work programme.

Members were asked to use the work programme to identify further areas of scrutiny that the committee could be involved in, such as policy development. A small group of members would be involved in the development of any policies at an early stage through a Task and Finish Group, with their recommendations being brought back to the committee for approval. The committee were asked to send suggestions to the Chair or Democratic Services outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting commenced at 10:00 and concluded at 12:56

Councillor M Warren (Chair)