

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee**
held on Friday, 31st January, 2025 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall,
Sankey Street, Warrington, WA1 1UH

PRESENT

Councillor L Gittins (Chair)
Councillor N Mannion (Vice-Chair)

Councillors H Mundry, M Gorman, Shore and Flaherty

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Philip Cresswell, Executive Director – Place, Cheshire East Council
Janet Witkowski, Acting Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer,
Cheshire East Council
Sam Jones, Democratic Services Officer, Cheshire East Council
Delyth Curtis, Chief Executive Officer, Cheshire West and Chester Council
Steve Broomhead, Chief Executive Officer, Warrington Borough Council
Paul Clisby, Director of Law and Governance, Warrington Borough Council
Steve Park, Director of Growth, Warrington Borough Council
Philip Cox, Chief Executive, Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington
Steve Purdham, Chair of Business Advisory Board
Damon Taylor, Chief Executive Officer, Cheshire Police and Crime
Dan Price, Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Cheshire Police and
Crime
Joanne Morecroft, UNISON North West's Regional Convenor

23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

25 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2024 be approved
as a correct record.

26 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

The public speaking procedure was noted. There were no public speakers.

27 ENTERPRISE ZONE

The sub-committee considered a report which set out the findings of an independent assessment of Enviroo's Business Case for £1,000,000 of Enterprise Zone Grant Funding and sought approval from the Joint Committee for Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington to issue a grant funding offer and draw down funds aligned to a Grant Funding Agreement, from Councillor Nick Mannion.

The sub-committee were updated that the project reflected a significant opportunity within the region as the grant would allow for a state-of-the-art recycling facility to be constructed, creating jobs and promoting sustainable practices.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee:

1. Approve the award of EZ grant funding to Enviroo of up to £1 million to support the delivery of a waste plastics recycling facility subject to the terms and conditions precedent set out in this report.
2. Note that the Chief Executive of ECW, in consultation with the Joint Committee leads for Place and Net Zero, will enter into a Grant Funding Agreement with Enviroo on terms consistent with paras 15 and 16 of this report to implement the grant and monitor the terms of the funding agreement.

28 CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON JOINT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE AMENDMENTS

The sub-committee received a report which detailed the formal response of each of the three Councils to the Joint Committee's request to amend the Terms of Reference for the Committee, from Councillor Louise Gittins.

Members noted that they would like to retain the name of Cheshire and Warrington in order to reflect the history of the town and the significance of it within the area.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee:

1. Note the agreement by each of the three Council's to amend the Terms of Reference for the Joint Committee.
2. Note the amended Terms of Reference for the Joint Committee, detailed in Appendix 1.
3. Note the request from Cheshire West and Chester as detailed in the report, but agree that the name of the subregion be retained as Cheshire and Warrington.

29 DEVOLUTION WHITE PAPER

The sub-committee received a report which provided details on the high-level impacts that the new devolution framework, outlined in the English Devolution White Paper published on 16 December 2024, would have if Cheshire and Warrington councils formally decided to move forward with devolved powers and investment, from Councillor Hans Mundry.

The sub-committee were updated that Cheshire and Warrington had been invited to join the Devolution Priority Programme to create a Mayoral Strategic Authority by May 2026, which would hold devolved powers related to transport and local infrastructure, skills and employment, support for housing, strategic planning and economic development, regeneration, environment and climate change, health and wellbeing, public service reform and public safety. The funding level for Cheshire and Warrington would be determined following the Government's Spending Review in June 2025.

It was noted that the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee would not make decisions alone; all decision would be ratified by the three individual authorities independently.

Members were updated that, after 18 months, if effective governance and financial mechanisms had been demonstrated, Mayoral Strategic Authorities could apply for Strategic Authority Status.

It was request that options for Ex-Officio and Observer Membership of the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee be considered and Members were informed that the Joint Committee were awaiting national guidance on this matter.

Amendments to recommendations 2 and 4 were proposed by Councillor Gittins and Seconded by Councillor Louise Shore:

2. Agree in principle that the named members of the Joint Committee detailed in this report will oversee the work with officers to develop priority themes for Cheshire and Warrington, before bringing all detail back to the Committee for strategic leadership and oversight, and delegate authority to the Chair, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, to agree the involvement of any other officer and Members, and updates back such involvement being reported back to this committee to be noted.

4. Involve and collaborate in principal with those Members and officers identified in Table 1 (relevant Cabinet Members and Council Committee Members), Business Advisory Board members as well as the Leaders Board to co-produce the thematic content in the context of the Devolution White Paper and ensure alignment with local priorities and delegate authority to the Chair to involve other Members and officers in line with the authority set out in recommendation 2.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee:

1. Note the content of this report.
2. Agree in principle that the named members of the Joint Committee detailed in this report will oversee the work with officers to develop priority themes for Cheshire and Warrington, before bringing all detail back to the Committee for strategic leadership and oversight, and delegate authority to the Chair, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, to agree the involvement of any other officer and Members, and updates back such involvement being reported back to this committee to be noted.
3. Engage with officers via these theme areas over the coming weeks to shape and develop thematic content outlined in this report, aligned to the Devolution White Paper and which are likely to form a future Devolution Agreement.
4. Involve and collaborate in principal with those Members and officers identified in Table 1 (relevant Cabinet Members and Council Committee Members), Business Advisory Board members as well as the Leaders Board to co-produce the thematic content in the context of the Devolution White Paper and ensure alignment with local priorities and delegate authority to the Chair to involve other Members and officers in line with the authority set out in recommendation 2.
5. Ensure Joint Committee Members to continue to work with their own council's cross party member working groups and reference groups to shape and develop the areas of thematic content in the context of the Devolution White Paper.
6. Further shape subregional priorities with a series of all-Member sessions across the three Councils in Spring/Summer 2025.
7. Engage directly with stakeholders and communities through consultation events held across programme delivery.

30 DEVOLUTION WORK PROGRAMME

The sub-committee received a report which detailed the proposed Devolution Work Programme for Cheshire and Warrington, from Councillor Michael Gorman.

The sub-committee were updated that to ensure continuity, there was a request to extend the rotation of the current Chair of the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee by a further 12 months to May 2026.

Members were updated that the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee would act as the Programme Board for the Devolution Programme, any formal decisions from the Joint Committee would be recommended to the three Council's for approval and regular meetings would take place with Council Leaders and Chief Executives, the Police and Crime Commissioner, and the Chair of the Business Advisory Board. A Devolution Steering Group would be established to make operational decisions, which would comprise of Growth Directors, Programme Team, workstream leads, and would oversee all operational programme delivery.

Members were updated that in the first quarter of 2025, there would be 5 priority activities:

- Communications and engagement
- Governance
- Workforce
- Finance
- Local Growth Plan

The importance of Trade Union engagement in the process was noted.

An amendment to recommendation 3 was proposed by Councillor Hans Mundry and seconded by Councillor Nick Mannion:

3. Approve the initial implementation workstreams, with the addition of a workforce development stream, to include full engagement with trade unions, consideration of good practice from other areas and, the headline priorities for all workstreams between January and March 2025.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee:

1. Approve the programme management reporting structure as outlined in the report, noting that the Joint Committee will receive detailed and regular reporting across all elements of the work programme for direction and oversight.
2. Note the anticipated overall programme timeline.
3. Approve the initial implementation workstreams, with the addition of a workforce development stream, to include full engagement with trade unions, consideration of good practice from other areas and, the headline priorities for all workstreams between January and March 2025.
4. Approve the devolution programme budget to March 2025 as outlined in the report and note the anticipated future budget to March 2026 which will be brought back to the Joint Committee in detail at its February 2025 meeting.

5. Approve initial programme costs to March 2025 as detailed in the report, including the use of a Programme Director.

6. Request each of the Councils of Cheshire East (CEC), Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC) and Warrington (WBC) amend the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee Terms of Reference to extend the rotation of the current Chair (CWaC) for a further 12 months to May 2026 and amend accordingly the dates for the following rotations by the same period namely CEC until May 2028, WBC until May 2030 and that it then continue in that rotation.

31 JOINT COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

Members received an update and sought direction on the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee Forward Plan, from Councillor Louise Gittins.

Members were updated that the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee did not intend to modify any health, fire or police boundaries within the area, and the sub-region would not be impacted by the population size restrictions within the Government's White Paper, and assurances had been sought.

RESOLVED:

That the reports on the Forward Plan be adopted and approved.

The meeting commenced at 10.03 am and concluded at 10.50 am

Councillor L Gittins (Chair)