

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Scrutiny Committee**
held on Thursday, 14th April, 2011 at The Tatton Room - Town Hall,
Macclesfield SK10 1DX

PRESENT

Councillor A Thwaite (Chairman)
Councillor J Narraway (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors A Arnold, G Baxendale, J Crockatt, H Davenport, M Davies,
P Edwards, J P Findlow, D Topping and S Wilkinson

Apologies

Councillors D Brickhill and S Conquest

99 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2011, be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

100 OFFICERS PRESENT

Mark Nedderman – Senior Scrutiny Officer
Dave Upton - Organisational Change Manager

101 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor H Davenport declared a personal interest in respect of items CE10/11-61 and CE10/11-62 in the forward plan, on the grounds that he was a Member of Disley Parish Council.

Councillors G Baxendale, AR Thwaite, PJ Edwards and J Narraway declared personal interests in respect of item CE10/11-62 in the forward plan on the grounds that they were Members of Congleton Town Council, Congleton, Town Council Middlewich Town Council and North Rode Parish Council respectively.

102 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present who wished to make a statement.

103 WORK PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee considered a report of the Borough Solicitor setting out the 2010/2011 work programme.

The Committee reviewed the current work programme with a view to making recommendations for the handover to the new committee in the 2011/2012 civic year.

The Committee was reminded that the following 3 monitoring groups had been set up during 2010/2011 and that consideration should be given as to whether all 3 groups should continue in the new civic year. :

- The Highways Contract
- Macclesfield Data Centre
- Budget Monitoring

RESOLVED- (a) That the report be received;

(b) That an item be placed on the agenda of the next meeting in June 2011 to consider whether the Budget Consultation Monitoring group should continue;

(c) That work of the Highways Monitoring Group and Macclesfield Data Centre be received and noted

(d) That the work programme be approved subject to the deletion of the following items:

- Communications service
- Shared Services

104 **DEPOT RATIONALISATION**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Environmental Services and Borough Treasurer and Head of Assets relating to the progress of phase 1 of the depot rationalisation project.

In December 2010, the Committee had received a report on the depot rationalisation project and at that time had been informed that:

- The Council would be evaluating future options for all depots used for Cheshire East business, including Council owned sites used by external contractors;
- Depots that did not meet current and future business needs would be decommissioned within a phased plan;
- Opportunities for capital receipts and revenue reductions would be explored
- The Council's vision was to move towards its 2 super depots in Crewe and Macclesfield;
- Assurances were being made that there was the capacity to meet all operational needs during the transition process;
- Stock held at sites would be rationalised.

The Depots review had been split into 3 phases:

- Phase 1 – involved changes that could be made now to protect business continuity and to declare depots no longer required for operational purposes surplus to Environmental Services requirements
- Phase 2 – would proceed after the letting of the Highways maintenance contract
- Phase 3 – would tie in with longer term Council depot requirements linking with the long term waste and vehicle maintenance strategies.

The project, which was being led by an officer working group, had set the following objectives:

- Identify changes needed to protect business continuity
- Rationalise number of sites
- Super depots
- Make better use of the sites
- Identify potential capital receipts/Revenue savings
- Identify where we need to make investment to raise standards
- Devolution process/Town and Parish Councils

To date, the project had identified the following issues:

- That there too many sites and some were in the wrong locations
- A significant amount of repairs required
- Under-utilised space
- Clutter
- Poor staff facilities (E.g.Mess room/Showers)
- Some sites were outside of Cheshire East and there were issues such as excess travel/Carbon)
- Still operating in silos
- 7 sites had Fuel bunkers (

On behalf of the Committee, the 4 Members of the Business Generation Task and Finish Group had visited depots at Lyme Green Macclesfield, Brunswick Wharf Congleton, Town yard Alsager and Pyms Lane Crewe on 11 April 2011 to witness at first hand the facilities at each of these locations.

The Committee then questioned David Upton, Organisational Change Manager about phase 1 of the proposals.

In response to a question concerning the suitability of the depot at Town Yard Alsager for an affordable housing scheme, David explained that the Council first needed to take a decision in principle as to whether the site was considered to be surplus to requirements.

Members raised concerns about the proposal to offer three sites to Poynton Parish Council under the devolution process banner, on the grounds that the future of the 3 sites had not been subject to the wider strategic asset challenge process and also because the financial case for offer from the Parish Council was not known.

In summary, the proposals involved :

- Relocating all fleet vehicles and vehicle maintenance staff from Phoenix House Winsford to Pyms Lane Depot, Crewe. The vehicle maintenance facilities at Pyms Lane Depot would be improved by re-opening a currently dis-used facility to enable future maintenance to be carried out in-house as this element of work.
- Relocating the Greenspace team from Phoenix House Winsford to premises within Cheshire East – to be identified.

- Carrying out essential works to develop new operations and improve the utilisation of the buildings and yard at Pyms Lane Depot Crewe.

The following would be recommended as surplus to the requirements of Environmental Services, once they had been vacated for operational purposes:

- a) Town Hall Yard Depot, Alsager ;
- b) Wellington Road Depot, Bollington;
- c) Somerton Road Depot, Macclesfield;
- d) Barnaby Road, Poynton;
- e) Anson Road Depot, Poynton;
- f) London Road North Depot, Poynton.

Brunswick Wharf Depot, Congleton was in very poor condition and would require major investment to provide modern facilities. This Depot was currently under-used since Waste collection vehicles had been relocated to Pyms Lane Depot. Brunswick Wharf depot along with part of Pyms Lane Depot that had been offered to the bidders for the highway maintenance contract. Therefore, the future of this Depot could only be determined after the contract was awarded.

RESOLVED- That subject to the Committee's reservations concerning the offer of three depots to Poynton Parish Council, being raised with the Portfolio Holder for Procurement, Assets and Shared Services, the recommendations contained in phase 1 of the depot rationalisation review be endorsed.

105 **BUSINESS GENERATION CENTRES**

The Chairman referred to the work of the Business Generation Centre Task and Finish group which had concluded two weeks ago. The final report was still in draft stage and could not therefore be considered by the Committee until the new civic year. In addition, the Committee was informed that Sandbach Town Council had expressed an interest in taking over one of the buildings involved in the investigation at Sandbach Enterprise Centre, Wesley Avenue Sandbach in accordance with the Council's devolution proposals. It would be necessary therefore to carry out further investigations to determine the status of Sandbach Town Council's enquiry.

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

106 **FORWARD PLAN - EXTRACTS**

The Committee considered items listed in the current Forward Plan.

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan be received and noted

107 **CONSULTATIONS FROM CABINET**

There were no consultations from Cabinet.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.40 pm

Councillor A Thwaite (Chairman)