

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee**
held on Thursday, 5th January, 2012 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor H Murray (Chairman)
Councillor M Grant (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors L Brown, P Hayes, D Hough, J Jackson, W Livesley, G Wait and
J Wray
and Emily Lam – Police Authority Co-optee

Apologies

Councillors A Barratt and M Parsons

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor P Whiteley – Chairman of Licensing Committee

OFFICERS PRESENT

Paul Bayley – Customer Service and Libraries Manager
Peter Hartwell – Head of Community Services
Kate Khan – Solicitor
James Morley – Scrutiny Officer

141 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2011 be approved as a correct record.

142 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

There were no members of the Committee present who wished to declare any interests.

143 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN

Mr Bob Anderson, a member of the public, attended the meeting to address the Committee. Mr Anderson spoke about Cheshire East Council's Core Strategy for planning and was concerned that it should reflect the wording of Paragraph 126 of the Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) "To deliver the facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should: plan positively for the provision and integration of community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, public houses and places of worship) and other local

services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments". Mr Anderson was concerned that the needs of all faith groups as a whole would not be covered in the Core Strategy of Cheshire East in such a way as outlined in the NPPF Paragraph 126. He hoped that the Committee would be able to address his concerns.

The Chairman thanked Mr Anderson for attending and asked the Scrutiny Officer to contact the Spatial Planning Officer and enquire whether Paragraph 126 of the NPPF had been taken into consideration in the Core Strategy.

144 **CUSTOMER SERVICE UPDATE**

The Committee received a report from the Customer Services and Libraries Manager on the customer contact volumes in response to the north waste transformation and silver bin roll out. The waste transformation and silver bin roll out was the distribution of silver wheelie bins, for disposing of recyclable waste, to residents of the Borough. The distribution was carried out in two phases; first in the south of the Borough and then in the north.

The Customer Services and Libraries Manager had previously reported to the Committee regarding issues that Customer Services had during the south waste transformation and silver bin roll out and was asked to return to the Committee after the north waste transformation to show how Customer Services had performed in comparison.

The Customer Services and Libraries Manager explained that lessons had been learned from the experience during the south waste transformation and Customer Services had performed better during the north waste transformation. Graphs on page 8 of the Agenda showed that peak weekly call volume was 1824 compared with 5785 during the south transformation. Improvements to the waste and recycling pages on the Council's website played a key role in reducing call volumes for the north transformation.

The Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system that Customer Services was using was the same system as the Waste teams were using which meant customer information from calls received could be shared and better records were maintained. The CRM could be used to check whether there were any patterns in the calls being received to see if there were particular areas of the borough that were having issues with silver bin roll out. Councillors were interested to know more about the CRM and how it would improve Customer Services and help to monitor trends in the calls received.

The Committee was pleased that the Customer Service had shown an improvement in performance and were keen to see continued improvement in the waste collection service.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted and the Customer Services and Libraries Manager be thanked for attending the meeting.

- (b) That the Customer Services and Libraries Manager be requested to return to the Committee in April with a report on Customer Relationship Management programmes.

The Customer Services and Libraries Manager left the meeting.

145 **HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLES - QUANTITY CONTROLS**

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Community Services and the Solicitor on hackney carriage vehicles quantity controls.

On 7th March 2011 the Licensing Committee considered a report relating to a review of the hackney carriage service. As part of this review consideration was given to the issue of quantity restrictions in relation to hackney carriage vehicles.

Cheshire East inherited a number of different policies and procedures from their legacy authorities. The review of the hackney carriage service was carried out so that the Council could consider the production of a single policy and procedures to manage the hackney carriage service more effectively. Whilst the council would be able to maintain three separate zones each with the same policies and procedures, it was suggested that there are a number of benefits to operating a single zone in Cheshire East. Currently hackney carriage vehicles were only able to pick up fares in the zone they were licensed in. with three separate zones this could cause issues for drivers moving between zones as they would have to return to their own zone before being able to pick up a new fare. It was suggested that these cases were an inefficient use of a driver's time and had additional environmental impacts as hackney carriages moved between zones without any passengers. A single zone in Cheshire East would allow drivers from all three current zones to pick up passengers anywhere in Cheshire East.

The Chairman of the Licensing Committee was present and highlighted the importance of the consumer when considering licensing functions.

In order to harmonize to a single zone and have a single arrangement across the whole of Cheshire East the Council would need a consistent policy on limiting the number of hackney carriage vehicle licenses. Currently zone 1 (Congleton zone) had quantity restrictions on the number of licenses that could be issued in the zone. Zones 2 and 3 (Crewe & Nantwich, and Macclesfield respectively) were unlimited in the number of licenses that could be issued. It was noted that in cases where a limit is imposed unmet demand surveys are required to ensure that the number of licenses issuable was meeting the demand of the zone. There was no need to conduct unmet demand surveys with delimited zones. To change the arrangements in a zone would require consultation with both the trade and the public.

The Head of Community Services had no definitive indication of how much consultation of de-limiting in zone 1 would cost but advised that any such consultation would be as wide as possible to ensure that the views of the public were covered sufficiently. Once any consultation had been carried out the Licensing Committee would make recommendations based on the findings.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Member for Safer and Stronger Communities be informed that this Committee are in favour of the harmonization to a single hackney carriage zone from the three zones currently licensed within the Borough and to facilitate this the Committee recommend that a formal consultation is undertaken in relation to the removal of the existing quantity restrictions within zone 1 (Congleton zone) with a view to developing a Borough wide policy.

The Head of Community Services and the Solicitor left the meeting.

Cllr Whiteley left the meeting.

146 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee gave consideration to the Work Programme.

The meeting commenced at 10:30 and concluded at 12:30

Councillor H Murray (Chairman)