

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee**
held on Thursday, 26th July, 2012 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor M Grant (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors A Barratt, L Brown, P Hayes, D Hough, J Jackson, M Parsons,
B Silvester, J Wray and G Baxendale

Substitutes

Councillors G baxendale and P Findlow

Officers

P Bayley – Customer Service and Libraries Manager

Z Neeld – Performance and Planning Manager

V Quayle - Head of Performance and Capacity

20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor B Livesley, Councillor H Murray and E Lamb.

21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

22 DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

None

23 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN

There were no members of the public present who wished to address the Committee.

24 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to:

Minute 15 – Equality and Diversity

Resolution B being amended to read 'That "social or economic status" should be removed from the list of protected groups in the Council's policy on equality for staff. However it will be retained for those who use council services'.

Minute 17 – Domestic Violence

Resolution B being amended to read 'That the Committee recommend to Council that funding for the provision of support to perpetrators of domestic violence be provided'.

That reference be made to the fact that Members were concerned about the lack of a womens refuge in Macclesfield and the use of the previous refuge. It was agreed that a report on these issues should be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

25 POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS

Ms A Collins, Engagement Manager for Cheshire Police Authority gave a verbal update on Police and Crime Commissioners. She informed the Committee that:

- The Police Authority had now completed due diligence and there were currently two prospective candidates for Commissioner. To stand for election, a £5000 deposit and 100 signatures must be submitted by 19 October 2012, candidates must own a property or live in the area. Amongst other disqualifications they cannot be an MP or member of the Police Authority and must not have been convicted of an imprisonable offence.
- A Transition Board and Partnership and Commissioning Sub Group had been established which was working to prepare for when the Commissioner has a funding pot to commission services.
- Priorities for the four areas were currently being mapped, welcome packs with local information for candidates needed to be produced.
- A Commissioning Officer had been appointed to map funding streams for Community Safety.
- Events had taken place to establish a route for the voluntary sector to express their priorities.
- Communication with the public would commence by the Home Office once the Olympics had finished.
- Complications with the purdah period needed to be addresses.
- Arrangements for the transfer of staff were being addressed
- David Parr, Chief Executive, Halton Borough Council would be the returning Officer for the election.
- Warrington Borough Council would be establishing the Police and Crime Panel to hold the Commissioner to account, the Panel would comprise of 10 Councillors and 2 Co opted members.
- The Police Authority would cease to exist on 22 November 2012.

It was noted that funding is currently received from partners, the police and central government, under the new arrangements funding would go to the

Commissioner who would then decide where to commission services from. The Community Safety Partnership would need to promote its work to ensure it continued to receive funding. Members agreed to receive a report of the Community Safety Partnership on the work it is undertaking to secure funding.

Members agreed that the authority should be briefing candidates on the work of the Council and that a report should be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on the impact the new arrangements would have on Cheshire East Council.

RESOLVED

1. That the presentation be noted.
2. That the Committee receive a report of the Community Safety Partnership on the work it is undertaking to secure funding.
3. That the Committee receive a report on the impact the new arrangements would have on Cheshire East Council

26 ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

Consideration was given to a report informing Members that the Council had recently become a signatory to a Cheshire wide Community Covenant, which is a voluntary statement of mutual support between the civilian community and the Armed Forces Community. It was highlighted that in keeping with the principals of the Covenant, it would be appropriate to develop a local action plan detailing those measures which are/could be in place to support service personnel, to reinforce this, a notice of motion was submitted to Council by Councillor Baxendale.

It was noted that to help promote the services available a webpage had been set up on the Councils internet, which provided some links and general information. Councillor Baxendale indicated that he wished for a dedicated web site to be established which would link all authorities together. Following a detailed debate it was noted that he would pursue this outside of the meeting.

With regard to strategic housing, several Members felt that priority should be for those who have a current or historical link to the borough, it was agreed that that the Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee be requested to look at the housing allocation policy for service personnel.

It was also agreed that Children's and Families Scrutiny Committee be requested to look at school admissions for service personnel.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted and the comments highlighted above be reported to Cabinet.
2. That Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee be requested to look at the housing allocation policy for service personnel.
3. That Children's and Families Scrutiny Committee be requested to look at school admissions for service personnel.

27 LIBRARIES STRATEGY

Consideration was given to the new Libraries Strategy that had been developed to define the priorities for Cheshire East Libraries to ensure the Council fulfils its statutory duty while also contributing to the priorities for action set out in the Cheshire East Sustainable Communities Strategy.

The strategy was not proposing radical changes to the library service and trends would be looked at for individual Libraries, there would not be a one size fits all model. The key challenge was to continuously improve and modernise the way that the authority delivers the service and keep pace with evolving customer needs and aspirations, and to be flexible and responsive to take advantage of opportunities when they present themselves.

With regard to Lifestyle Centres, the Customer Service and Libraries Manager highlighted that there were currently no proposals to include Libraries in the centres and that this would only be done if it made sense to do so.

Members commented that the possibility of providing free Wi-Fi in libraries needed to be investigated.

It was agreed that the Committee would review the policy in 6 months time.

RESOLVED

1. That Cabinet endorse the Libraries Strategy
2. That the Committee review the strategy in 6 months time

28 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the work programme. It was agreed that relevant performance management issues should be considered by this Committee prior to them being submitted to Cabinet.

RESOLVED

That relevant performance management issues be considered by this Committee prior to them being submitted to Cabinet.

29 FORWARD PLAN

Consideration was given to the extracts of the forward plan which fall within the remit of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the extracts of the forward plan which fall within the remit of the Committee be noted.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 12.40 pm

Councillor (none)