

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

held on Tuesday, 24th July, 2012 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor W Livesley (Chairman)
Councillor D Stockton (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors A Barratt, D Brickhill, H Davenport, W S Davies, K Edwards,
W Fitzgerald, P Hayes, P Hoyland and S Jones

Substitute

S Jones

In Attendance

Councillor R Menlove – Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services
Councillor A Thwaite – Cabinet Support Member for Environmental Services

Officers

M Averill – Service Leader, Cheshire East Highways
F Crane - Lawyer
P Evans – Programme and Commercial Manager
Neil Morgan – ICT Strategy – Programme Manager
C Williams – Transport Manager

Apologies

Councillors R Fletcher and S Hogben

18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

19 DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of party whip.

20 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/ OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present wishing to speak.

21 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

22 HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE UPDATE

Consideration was given to an update on the progress made during the first six months of the highways services contract with Ringway Jacobs. It was reported that the annual value of the contract was £15million, however this year, it was closer to £17/18million due to additional work being undertaken.

With regard to potholes, it was noted that due to the introduction of a Velocity Patcher, it was now possible to fill around 500/600 potholes per week, however, it was only suitable for treatment on rural roads.

Members questioned whether or not there had been an increase in claims against the council due to poor quality road surfaces, Mr Averill stated that claims were at the same level as in the winter and that the authority is responsible for all road defects, even those undertaken by utility companies. Members agreed that more should be done to inspect the works of utility companies and reclaim any costs due to defective works. Mr Averill informed the Committee that the possibility of introducing a permit scheme was being investigated which would enable the authority to charge for inspections.

It was agreed that as highways is an important issue to members of the public, Councillors and Town and Parish Councillors need to be kept informed of the programme of works, to enable them to advise constituents accordingly.

It was reported that there was a delay to the works due to be undertaken on the M6 and A500, which was the responsibility of the Midlands Highways Agency. This in turn was delaying the commencement of works on the Basford Estate. Councillor Menlove highlighted that this issue no longer fell within his remit; however he was happy to progress this with the relevant Portfolio Holder and officers.

The Committee agreed that it would like to consider a report on traffic calming at a future meeting.

RESOLVED

1. That the progress be noted and a further report be received by the Committee at a later date.
2. That a report on traffic calming measures be considered by the Committee at a later date.
3. That all Councillors and Town and Parish Councillors receive the schedule of works on a regular basis.
4. That Midlands Highway Agency be requested to commence works on the M6/A500 as a matter of urgency.

23 STREET LIGHTING STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report outlining the strategy for the investment into street lighting within Cheshire East to deliver both energy and carbon savings.

With regard to the process applied to identify the appropriate operation for street lighting, it was agreed that, to fully allow the impact of seasonal changes to be assessed, the scheme should be reviewed after 12 months rather than 6 months.

Members raised concerns that lights would be switched off between midnight and 5.30am at weekends, however the Portfolio Holder assured the Committee that this would only happen in residential areas and not within town centres.

It was highlighted that the proposals may cause energy suppliers to increase their tariffs, which the Authority was unable to influence. Therefore the financial savings may be minimal; however there would be carbon and energy savings.

It was agreed that consultation and marketing with the public and Town and Parish Councils was critical, as concerns regarding fear of crime and possible accidents must be addressed.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet be recommended to approve the Street Lighting Strategy subject to the comments highlighted above.

24 STREET NAMING POLICY

Consideration was given to a draft policy in relation to the Street Naming and Numbering Service for Cheshire East Council, prior to it being submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment for approval.

The report highlighted that it was essential for a new policy be implemented to facilitate the effective delivery of the Street Naming and Numbering Service and the attendant benefits realised from a well run, proactive service.

It was noted that it would be possible to make administrative charges to applicants in many cases, however the level had yet to be determined and this should not be seen as a financing mechanism. The Portfolio Holder highlighted that in order to reduce administrative costs; payment could only be made via debit card. Members agreed to receive a progress report on the charges agreed and income generated.

It was agreed that alternative forms of advertising other than through the media should be pursued as this was costly to the authority and considered to be ineffective.

RESOLVED

1. That the Portfolio Holder for Environment be recommended to approve the Policy subject to the comments highlighted above.

2. That a progress report outlining the agreed charges and income generated be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

25 LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND (LSTF)

The Committee was informed that the Council had been successful in a bid for £3.509m from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund to be used to support local authority transport projects. Two key aims of the fund were to promote jobs and employment growth and to promote sustainable travel.

It was agreed that, as Basford was a growth area for Crewe, Shavington had been omitted from the wards affected.

RESOLVED

That subject to shavington being included in the wards affected, the report be noted.

26 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the work programme. Members agreed that in order to fit in with Cabinet timescales, an additional meeting of the Committee would need to be held to enable Members to give consideration to the Transport Consultation Evaluation.

RESOLVED

That an additional meeting of the Committee be arranged to give consideration to the Transport Consultation Evaluation.

27 FORWARD PLAN

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

RESOLVED

That the forward plan be noted.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.40 pm

Councillor W Livesley (Chairman)