

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Jobs, Regeneration and Assets Overview and Scrutiny Committee

held on Monday, 24th November, 2014 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor P Groves (Chairman)
Councillor F Keegan (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors S Corcoran, S Hogben, B Murphy, M J Weatherill and J Wray

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor D Stockton – Housing and Jobs Portfolio Holder
Councillor K Edwards – visiting member
John Weir – Cheshire Neighbours Credit Union

OFFICERS PRESENT

Caroline Simpson – Director of Economic Growth and Prosperity
Julian Cobley – Head of Investment
Sharon Angus Crawshaw – Partnerships Manager
Paul Mickleburgh – Property Information Officer
James Morley – Scrutiny Officer

16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies

17 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting on 13 October 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

19 DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

There were declarations of party whip

20 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present who wished to speak

21 WEBGIS FEEDBACK SESSION

Paul Mickleburgh attended the meeting to receive feedback from the Committee regarding their use of WebGIS and user guide following Paul's demonstration at the previous meeting.

Paul informed the Committee that general feedback received about the system from general users had been good so far and that the number of people finding information for themselves, as opposed to making a planning enquiry, had increased.

Members of the Committee were pleased with the system suggesting it was easier to use and extremely useful for finding out about planning their ward.

RESOLVED – That Paul Mickleburgh be requested to inform all members of the Council about WebGIS and provide them with the user guide via email.

22 CHESHIRE NEIGHBOURS CREDIT UNION - UPDATE ON FINANCE PDG RECOMMENDATIONS

Sharon Angus-Crawshaw, Partnerships Manager, and John Weir, Cheshire Neighbours Credit Union (CNCU), presented a progress report on recommendations made to Cabinet by the Finance Policy Development Group (PDG) in February 2014 regarding Council support for CNCU.

The following actions were highlighted:

- CNCU was now operating from the Council's offices at Delamere House and in six libraries where staff have been trained to provide information and take payments for CNCU.
- CNCU was currently services for approximately 1% of employees of Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council. CNCU wanted to target at least 10%.
- CNCU was currently struggling to get volunteers. One suggestion for this was that the current trend for recently retired people is to be performing child care roles for their grandchildren rather than having time to volunteer.
- There was some CNCU information on the Council's website further work was needed to get full coverage.
- CNCU's links with registered social landlords had improved which gave it access to a wider market for its jam jar accounts. The delayed introduction by the Government of Universal Credit had restricted the take up of jam jar accounts.
- CNCU had employed three apprentices through a Government scheme who had all gone on to gain employment elsewhere.
- The Finance PDG's recommendation to offer CNCU memberships to care leavers had not yet been progressed.

In addition to updating the Committee on progress made against Finance PDG recommendations, John Weir informed the Committee that CNCU had made a request to Councillor Raynes as Finance Portfolio Holder for financial assistance to enable CNCU to continue operating.

The Committee was pleased with the progress that had been made regarding the majority of the Finance PDG's recommendation and wished to see further progress on those that had not yet been undertaken. Regarding CNCU's request for financial assistance the Committee was unable to make any recommendation to the Portfolio Holder, having not received sufficient information to consider it in effectively. However the Committee acknowledged the value to the Borough and the Council of the work of the credit union and wished to see a resolution to the request as soon as possible.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the progress made on the Finance PDG's recommendation to Cabinet to noted.
- (b) That the Scrutiny Officer be requested to contact appropriate officers to progress the Finance PDG's recommendation in relation to care leavers.
- (c) That the Scrutiny Officer be requested to write to Councillor P Raynes to request that that a resolution to the Cheshire Neighbours Credit Union's (CNCU) request for financial assistance be reached as soon as possible to avoid potential uncertainty about the credit union's future.

23 STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT & DELIVERY PLAN REVIEW

The Committee considered the establishment of a task and finish group to review the Strategic Asset Management & Delivery Plan. Julian Cobley was present to discuss the proposed terms of reference which the Committee had requested at the previous meeting.

Julian explained that the Strategic Asset Management Plan was due to be submitted to Cabinet for approval in February and suggested that a task and finish group would be able to critically review the plan in January and present a report to Cabinet on its findings also at the February meeting.

RESOLVED – That the proposed terms of reference be accepted and a task and finish group be formed with the following members: Councillors F Keegan (chair), S Corcoran and J Wray.

24 HIGH GROWTH CITY TASK AND FINISH GROUP - DRAFT REPORT

The Committee received copies of the High Growth City Task and Finish Group's draft report. The Chairman introduced the report and gave an overview of the work the task and finish group had undertaken during its review.

The Committee considered the Task and Finish Group's recommendations for approval to be submitted to Cabinet for consideration. It was noted that the report had been produced in a short time frame and some further amendments were required to ensure the report was accurate.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee approve recommendations A-F at 2.1 of the Task and Finish Group's report.
- (b) That the Task and Finish Group's be submitted to Cabinet subject to minor amendments and correction of typographical errors

25 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee examined the Forward Plan

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan be noted

26 WORK PROGRAMME

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.50 pm

Councillor P Groves (Chairman)