

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
held on Thursday, 3rd September, 2015 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor M Simon (Chairman)
Councillor M Grant (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors C Andrew, Rhoda Bailey, G Barton, G Baxendale, S Corcoran,
D Flude, A Moran, B Walmsley, H Wells-Bradshaw, L Wardlaw, J Weston and
J Wray

In Attendance

Councillor P Groves – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Assets
Councillor S Gardner
Councillor L Smetham
Councillor D Newton

P Bates - Chief Operating Officer
S Cordon - Head of Communities
L Heath - Consultant in Public Health
R Kemp – Commissioning Manager for Waste and Environment
N Moorhouse - Head of Early Help and Protection
S Reading - Principal Accountant
B Smith - Director, Adult Social Care & Independent Living
A Thompson - Corporate Manager Strategy & Reporting
M Wheelton – Commissioning Manager for Leisure

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence

12 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2015

RESOLVED

That subject to the amendment of several typographical errors, the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

14 DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIP

There were no whipping declarations

15 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present wishing to speak

16 2015/16 FIRST QUARTER REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE

The Committee received the report setting out the Councils financial and non financial performance at the first quarter stage of 2015/16 and highlighted the latest progress towards achieving the Councils Residents First Outcomes as described in the Councils three year plan 2013 to 2016. Permanent savings of £5M in management costs had been achieved from 2013/14 to 2014/15.

Following the first quarter review the Council's reserves strategy remained effective, with a modest overspend of £0.9m being forecast. This represents a variance of only 0.4% against the net budget of £246.6m. This is the nearest forecast position to budget ever reported for the Council at this stage in the financial year, and as in previous years work is underway to achieve a balanced position by the end of the financial year.

The first quarter review showed how the Council was continuing to build on the positions achieved in the last two years, which demonstrated that the overall financial health, performance, resilience and value for money at Cheshire East Council was strong despite taking £70m out of its cost base since 2011, and freezing Council Tax for the fifth consecutive year.

Annex 1 to the report set out further details of how the Council was performing in 2015-16, including a summary of performance, an update on the Council's overall financial position and a summary of key issues relating to the Council's workforce development plan.

The Finance and Assets Portfolio Holder introduced the report and invited questions from members of the committee.

With regard to paragraph 2.3 of the report, it was noted that the establishment of a new earmarked reserve for Children's Innovation Hub by a transfer of £0.5m from general balances would help deal with the causes rather than the symptoms of troubled families.

The Council would need to wait for the Autumn budget statement before a decision could be made as to whether or not there would be a council tax freeze in 2016/17, as there may not be an offer of a freeze grant.

Members were pleased to have received the report so far ahead of Cabinet and it was noted that initial engagement with the Committee on the budget would commence on 5 November 2015, there would also be an all Member briefing in December 2015.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be supported
2. That the initial budget report be received on 5 November 2015

17 WORK PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee reviewed its work programme.

Further to the last meeting of the Committee, the Chairman suggested that after further consideration the review of indiscriminate parking around schools should be managed by this Committee. However any Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees should be invited to sit on that Group.

Katie Small informed the Committee that the item relating to digital customer services would now be considered in January 2016.

Members requested to received an update on the Local Pan in October 2015.

RESOLVED

1. That the Scrutiny Officer email all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees requesting interest to sit on the parking around schools task and finish group.
2. That the digital customer services item be considered in January 2015.
3. That an update on the local plan be considered in October 2015.

18 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee reviewed the forward plan.

RESOLVED

That the forward plan be received

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.20 pm

Councillor M Simon (Chairman)