

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on Thursday, 11th January, 2018 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

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

Councillors Rhoda Bailey, S Corcoran, H Davenport, B Dooley, J Nicholas, S Pochin, B Walmsley and M J Weatherill

Apologies

Councillors L Smetham

12 ALSO PRESENT

Paul Hancock – Chief Fire Officer, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service
Alex Waller - Head of Service Delivery, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service
Andrew Fox-Hewitt - Brigade Secretary Fire Brigades Union
Councillor Paul Bates – Finance and Communications Portfolio Councillor
Janet Clowes – Adult Care and Integration Portfolio Holder

13 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Margaret Simon and Jackie Wetherill declared a non pecuniary interest in the respect of the item relating to the second pump at Crewe Fire Station on the grounds that were both members of Cheshire Fire Authority.

15 DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of the existence of a party whip

16 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

Mr Bob Wilson a resident of Crewe attended the meeting and addressed the Committee in connection with the item on the agenda relating to the second pump at Crewe Fire Station. Mr Wilson informed the Committee that he had recently retired as firefighter in Yorkshire and suggested that a town of the size of Crewe needed two full time fire engines. He raised concerns about the extra time that stations with 'on-call' fire engines required to respond to incidents which he suggested added 5 minutes to the call-out time.

Town Councillor Marilyn Houston from Crewe Town Council also spoke in connection with the second pump at Crewe and informed the committee that the Town Council was opposed to the proposal to reduce the hours of the second pump at Crewe on the grounds of the potential increase of risk to the public.

17 CREWE FIRE STATION SECOND PUMP

Alex Waller, Cheshire and Rescue Service gave a presentation on a proposal by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service to reduce the utilisation of the second pump (fire engine) at Crewe Fire station from whole time to “on-call” status. The proposal had previously been considered by the Committee at its meeting held on 7 September 2017.

Andrew Fox-Hewitt - Brigade Secretary Fire Brigades Union (FBU) also attended the meeting and gave a presentation on the FBU response to the proposal.

After each presentation, representatives of the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and FBU were questioned on the content of the presentations

The Committee summarised its observations on the proposal as follows:

- It appeared that the west side of Cheshire, which included Ellesmere Port and Warrington, had a large proportion of whole-time on call pumps, whereas if the current proposal received approval, Cheshire East would only have one whole-time pump in Crewe.
- CFRS had not fully taken into account future development resulting from the Cheshire East Local Plan which included a likely increase of 36,000 houses in the area. Nor had it appeared to have taken into consideration the implications of HS2, the town centre redevelopment plans and the changes to the M6 motorway network.
- The Committee questioned whether the location of current Fire Station had contributed to the failure to recruit from the surrounding area because congestion in the vicinity of the fire station could adversely affect the required turn out time of Fire Officers.
- The Committee noted that the CFRS and the FBU currently disagreed on the figures on mobilisation times.
- The precept from Cheshire East residents for Fire and Rescue services was the highest of all the local authorities in Cheshire, yet Cheshire East appeared to have fewer appliances compared to other parts of Cheshire.
- The Committee indicated that it would like to see how the response times to fire incidents in Crewe compared to those of neighbouring forces.

RESOLVED:-

- (a) That the Committee recommend that the Adult Care and Integration Portfolio Holder request that the proposals for Crewe’s 2nd pump to become ‘On-Call’, be dropped for the foreseeable future.

- (b) That the Leader of the Council and Cabinet be requested to advise Cheshire Fire and Rescue and Cheshire Fire Authority that they cannot support a proposal for the 2nd pump to become On-Call.
- (c) That Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee cannot support the proposal to change the 2nd pump to become On-Call.
- (d) That the Chairman be authorised to formally respond to CFRS in relation to the consultation on behalf of the Committee.

Note, the Committee adjourned for a period of five minutes at the conclusion of the presentation given by CFRS and adjourned again for a further period of five minutes at the conclusion of the Committee's deliberations in respect of this matter.

18 WORK PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee reviewed its work programme.

RESOLVED - That the work programme be received and noted

19 FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED- That the Forward Plan be received and noted.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.42 pm

Councillor M Simon (Chairman)