

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
held on Thursday, 9th January, 2020 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor J Clowes (Chairman)
Councillor B Murphy (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors L Braithwaite, P Butterill, JP Findlow, R Fletcher, S Hogben,
M Hunter, A Moran, J Saunders, M Simon and L Wardlaw

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor J Rhodes, Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Corporate
Services
Councillor A Stott, Portfolio Holder for Finance, ICT and Communication

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Jan Bakewell, Director of Governance and Compliance
Jane Burns, Executive Director of Corporate Services
Frank Jordan, Acting Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Place
Michael Moore
Mark Palethorpe, Acting Executive Director of People
Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance

46 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bratherton and Crane,
who were substituted for by Councillors Braithwaite and Hogben.

47 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2019 be approved as a
correct record and signed by the Chairman.

48 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

49 DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of the existence of a party whip.

50 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

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

51 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF A COMMITTEE SYSTEM

Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance and Jan Bakewell, Director of Governance and Compliance Services (Monitoring Officer), provided a verbal update on the financial implications of a committee system form of governance.

Jan Bakewell advised members that an agreement needed to be reached on what the desired final structure of the committee system would be, before its financial implications could be fully understood and costed. It was noted that the current recommendation regarding the potential committee system structure was to have five service committees and one corporate committee (for cross cutting issues.)

Members had the opportunity to ask questions and sought clarity on whether or not the call-in function would apply under the new arrangements. Brian Reed advised there could be the opportunity to 'reference up' issues or matters that required additional scrutiny.

Councillor Clowes summarised that the process was as not as far forward as had been hoped for by the end of 2019, and that based on current projections there should be neutral cost implications arising from the change in governance arrangements. It was also noted that the way in which this council, being a unitary authority, would operate under a committee system, would potentially differ to borough or district councils under the same governance arrangements.

RESOLVED –

That the update be received and noted.

52 BUDGET PROPOSALS, 2020/21 TO 2023/24

Consideration was given to the budget proposals for 2020/21 to 2023/24, in advance of a decision being taken by Cabinet. The committee also observed the comments made by each of the other three overview and scrutiny committees in relation to the budget proposals within their remits.

More detailed consideration was then given to the budget proposals in relation to outcome six of the councils' Corporate Plan 2017-20: a responsible, effective and efficient organisation, following which questions and comments were put to the relevant portfolio holders and officers. These included;

- whether the recent announcement to increase the cost of the living wage would impact the 'Pay Inflation and Structure Review (Revenue Investment)' proposal. The Executive Director for Corporate Services advised that the changes would be factored in and added that the Council does not fund the entire cost as there is an assumption that vacancies are carried across the organisation

- asking for greater clarity on the 'Alternative Service Delivery Vehicle (ASDV)' proposal; and
- Members questioned whether the figures would be adapted in light of the Autumn Statement and were advised that it was a statutory requirement for the Council to hold reserves, any under or over spending would be published as part of the Third Quarter Review.

RESOLVED –

That the comments made by the four overview and scrutiny committees be submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

53 UPDATE FROM ASDV SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE

Frank Jordan provided members with an update on the work of the ASDV Shareholder Committee, a body that provided advice to shareholders, but did not make decisions. This was the first piece of work undertaken by this committee.

RESOLVED –

- 1 That the presentation be received and noted.
- 2 That this item be added to the work programme to ensure that committee receives further updates.

54 MEDIA RELATIONS PROTOCOL REVIEW 2020

Consideration was given to the protocol and, following some debate, comments and questions were put in relation to;

- that the successes of the overview and scrutiny committees/function should be promoted through the media; and
- how quotes from local ward members and committee chairmen would be obtained, and whether or not it was appropriate for these to be done only in agreement with the relevant portfolio holder, as they may be independent of the executive.

RESOLVED –

That this committee recommend to Cabinet that the draft Media Relations Protocol be approved.

55 FORWARD PLAN

Consideration was given to the council's forward plan of key decisions.

RESOLVED –

That the forward plan be received and noted.

56 WORK PROGRAMME

The committee reviewed its work programme.

RESOLVED –

That an update from the ASDV Shareholder Committee be added to the programme.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.45 pm

Councillor J Clowes (Chairman)