

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the **Cabinet**
held on Tuesday, 9th June, 2020

PRESENT

Councillor S Corcoran (Chairman)
Councillor C Browne (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors L Crane, K Flavell, T Fox, L Jeuda, N Mannion, J Rhodes, A Stott and M Warren

Councillors in attendance

Councillors S Akers Smith, R Bailey, J Buckley, J Clowes, T Dean, J P Findlow, R Fletcher, P Groves, G Hayes, S Hogben, A Kolker, J Nicholas, K Parkinson, J Parry, S Pochin, B Puddicombe, J Saunders, M Simon and L Wardlaw

Officers in Attendance

Lorraine O'Donnell, Chief Executive
Frank Jordan, Executive Director Place
Mark Palethorpe, Executive Director People
Jane Burns, Executive Director Corporate Services
Jan Bakewell, Director of Governance and Compliance
Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services
Paul Mountford, Executive Democratic Services Officer
Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C Browne declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 9 – Loan Facility to Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership, as the Council's representative on the LEP Board.

Councillor A Stott declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the same item as the Council's representative on the Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zone.

Both Councillor Browne and Councillor Stott would leave the meeting when the item was considered.

Councillor R Bailey declared a personal interest in a matter she wished to raise under members' questions in relation to the involvement of partners and stakeholders in the delivery of the Council's Environment Strategy and Carbon Action Plan.

2 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION - VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Richard Hamilton asked a question relating to VISSIM models commissioned to assess the traffic implications of a number of development proposals for Sandbach.

The Leader acknowledged Mr Hamilton's expertise on the matter and reiterated a previous offer to meet him when conditions allowed.

Jane Grime referred to public transport problems in Little Bollington, Agden and High Legh and asked when Cheshire East Council, Warrington Borough Council and Transport for Greater Manchester would sit down to agree a viable solution.

The Deputy Leader responded that he had recently attended a virtual meeting with the questioner and others at which proposals had been put to the Council. Whilst the Council's immediate priority was to reintroduce existing bus services after the lockdown, he was prepared to respond in writing to the proposals put to the Council in due course.

Sue Helliwell asked if the Council could ask the author of a draft report for the Alsager Arms planning application to write a draft report for the Radway Green North site.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning responded that application 19/4463 was still to be considered by the Planning Committee and the Cabinet could not comment on live planning applications. The application at Radway Green North had been the subject of a planning appeal which had been allowed at the end of March and there was no opportunity for further comments to be made on that application.

3 QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS - VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Councillor S Akers Smith asked if highways and planning officers could work together to ensure that all outstanding S106 agreements were completed to ensure that cycling and pedestrian infrastructure was built, and that developers be made more accountable for its delivery. She also asked if the Parkgate, Knutsford roundabout and the new Kings School, Macclesfield roundabout could be re-designed to accommodate cycle and pedestrian safety.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning undertook to provide a written response.

Councillor R Bailey asked if stakeholders and partners, such as the NFU, would be involved in the delivery of the Council's Environment Strategy and Carbon Action Plan.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration responded that stakeholders and partners, such as the NFU, and landowners, would be involved in the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan.

Councillor K Parkinson, on behalf of Councillor M Beanland, asked what measures the Council had in place to ensure the successful implementation of Track and Trace.

In responding, the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Corporate Services stressed that the system would be operated by the NHS and that the Council was not responsible for it and had no control over it. The Council would have a supporting role. There were still unanswered questions as to how the system would work and how data would be shared with the Council. The Council's officers would continue to work closely with the regional branch of Public Health England.

Councillor J Buckley asked about progress with connecting the footpath between the Coppice Estate and the Poppy Fields Estate, Alsager, completion of which had been expected two years ago.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning responded that officers would discuss the matter with the developer to resolve any outstanding issues.

Councillor P Groves referred to changes to the town centre review format announced last week and asked if a full car parking review was still part of that agenda. He also referred to a Cheshire East bus strategy which was due to be published in the summer and asked when members would be consulted on the document prior to its publication.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste confirmed that the car parking review would still go ahead but had been delayed until later in the year, along with other reviews, because of the pandemic. The Deputy Leader confirmed that the bus strategy had been similarly delayed but that members would be consulted.

Councillor G Hayes asked what additional support the Council had provided to schools, and in particular to vulnerable children and their families, given the impact of Covid-19.

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Families referred to a report on the agenda relating to the Council's response to Covid-19 which addressed this question. She was happy to follow up with a written response if required.

Councillor B Puddicombe referred to the procurement of a housing development framework approved at the previous meeting and asked for confirmation that the framework only related to Council-owned sites, whether sites in the green belt could be developed within the framework, and when the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee would consider the framework.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration confirmed that the framework only related to land in the ownership of the Council. Sites which

were not allocated in the Local Plan for housing development would not be included in the framework. The matter was included on the agenda for the meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15th June 2020. The Portfolio Holder for Planning added that a press release had been issued to clear up any confusion about the framework.

Councillor J Saunders asked why the return to school of Year 6 primary school children had been delayed until 29th June.

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Families responded that the view had been taken by schools that the youngest children would find it most difficult to adapt to the changed circumstances in the schools and that they should be allowed to settle in first and get used to the different routines before the other children were brought back. It was also felt that Year 6 children had already covered much of their curriculum and were getting ready to transition to secondary school.

Councillor L Wardlaw referred to the Government funded initiative 'Safer Public Places' and asked how much money would be available, what criteria would be applied, and how many schemes had been brought forward. She also asked if now was the right time to re-introduce car parking fees.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste responded that the funding allocated to the Council would be targeted at built-up areas to ensure social distancing, including cycling and walking routes into town centres. It was necessary to re-introduce car parking charges at this time as an important source of income for the Council.

Councillor J Parry referred to the People Helping People scheme providing support for vulnerable families and individuals during the pandemic and asked that the Council's thanks and recognition go out to all those involved in delivering the scheme.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities responded that he had already thanked volunteers in writing during Volunteer Week and agreed that it was appropriate to extend those thanks to everyone involved.

Councillor K Parkinson referred to the Government's guidance to local authorities on the reduction of public transport capacity, and felt that this had been misinterpreted by officers. She asked that it be reconsidered and that new proposals be brought forward for consideration.

Because the final part of Councillor Parkinson's question was obscured by audio interference, the Deputy Leader asked her to submit her question in writing and he would then provide a written response.

4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5th May 2020 be approved as a correct record.

5 RESPONDING TO COVID-19

Cabinet considered a report providing a summary of the work undertaken in response to the current national and international public health emergency on Covid-19. The report also outlined how the Council was planning for the initial stages of the lockdown restrictions being lifted. A progress report would be presented to the next Cabinet meeting.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. notes the issues outlined in this report;
2. notes the financial implications of COVID-19 to date and the ongoing lobbying to ensure that the Government fund the total financial impact of the pandemic on Cheshire East Council; and
3. will continue to lobby the Government and raise concerns as appropriate.

6 COVID-19 - EMERGENCY TEMPORARY FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THE SOCIAL CARE EXTERNAL MARKET

Cabinet considered a report on temporary financial support to the social care external market to mitigate against the financial pressures arising from Covid-19.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. notes and approves the actions and mitigations already taken as set out in paragraph 5.3 of the report;
2. approves the provision of a temporary financial supporting fund as set out in recommendations 3 and 4 below to providers delivering the services set out in the addendum of the report;
3. approves the one-off emergency funding payments to care homes set out in paragraph 5.4.1 of the report; and

4. approves the one-off emergency funding payments to domiciliary and Complex care providers set out in paragraph 5.4.2 of the report.

7 CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE REPORT

Cabinet considered a report on the outcome of the first Cheshire East Corporate Peer Challenge review which had been facilitated by the Local Government Association and had examined the Council's leadership, governance, financial planning and capacity to deliver its priorities.

The Chairman of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor J Clowes, reported that the Committee had considered the Corporate Peer Challenge report at its meeting on 4th June 2020 and had asked that Cabinet acknowledge the review report's recommendation 8 and that overview and scrutiny should remain an important element in the Council's future political management arrangements.

At the Leader's request, the Head of Democratic Services and Governance advised that it was open to the Chairman of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to attend meetings of the Governance Working Group and the Constitution Committee to discuss future arrangements for scrutiny.

In response to a question as to who would be the single point of contact for any ongoing external investigations into historic practice following the forthcoming departure of the Director of Governance and Compliance, the Director confirmed that this would be the Chief Executive.

The Leader emphasised the significant progress made with workforce culture as mentioned in the report.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. approves the Corporate Peer Challenge report for wider publication;
2. notes the progress to date, and the delivery of key actions since the informal feedback was received in January 2020;
3. agrees to take forward the further work identified on strategy and finance, governance, culture and partnerships and support the development of required action plans; and
4. will monitor progress on a six-monthly basis.

At this point, having declared personal and prejudicial interests in the following item earlier in the meeting, Councillors C Browne and A Stott left the meeting.

8 LOAN FACILITY TO CHESHIRE & WARRINGTON LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

Cabinet considered a proposal to enter into a facility agreement with the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership with the aim of stimulating and accelerating economic growth through the provision of grants to developments in the Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zone.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. approves that the Council enter into a £10m Facility Agreement with the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership;
2. delegates authority to the S151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration and the Director of Governance and Compliance, to finalise the terms and conditions of the legal agreement between the Council and the LEP in respect of the loan and the associated governance processes;
3. delegates authority to the S151 Officer and the Director of Governance and Compliance for the preparation, negotiation and completion of all ancillary legal documents required to give effect to the loan, and to make arrangements to provide loan advances in accordance with the initiative as necessary; and
4. authorises Finance and Legal Officers to take all necessary actions to implement the proposals.

At the conclusion of this item, Councillors C Browne and A Stott were re-admitted to the meeting.

9 2019/20 FINANCIAL OUTTURN

Cabinet considered a report on the 2019/20 financial outturn.

The Chairman of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor J Clowes, reported the comments and recommendations of the Committee which had considered the outturn report at its meeting on 4th June 2020.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. notes that gross expenditure has been balanced to gross income with the appropriate allocation of reserves;

2. notes the financial impact of the COVID-19 emergency on the 2019/20 budget and the use of the emergency funding to cover this cost;
3. notes the debt management position;
4. notes the reserves position;
5. notes the achievements during the year;
6. approves the supplementary revenue estimate of £790,265 relating to the increase in Public Health grant received, this being additional to the estimated amount approved in the budget report; and
7. recommends to Council to approve a fully funded supplementary revenue estimate above £1,000,000 in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules as detailed in Appendix 2, Table 1 of the report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Cabinet considered a report on the Risk Management Framework.

Councillor R Fletcher spoke on this matter as Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee which had considered the report at its meeting on 12th March 2020 and had recommended the Risk Management Framework for adoption.

RESOLVED

That the Risk Management Framework be approved for adoption.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 4.00 pm

Councillor S Corcoran (Chairman)