

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee

held on Monday, 21st September, 2020 at Virtual

PRESENT

Councillor JP Findlow (Chairman)
Councillor Q Abel (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors L Braithwaite, S Brookfield, J Buckley, T Dean, A Farrall, P Groves, M Hunter, D Jefferay, C Leach and K Parkinson

Also Present

Councillor Laura Crane- Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste
Councillor Nick Mannion- Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration
Councillor Mick Warren- Portfolio Holder for Communities
Visiting Member Councillor Nicky Wylie- Member for Poynton and Pott Shrigley
Frank Jordan- Executive Director of Place
Chris Hindle- Head of Strategic Infrastructure
Paul Reeves- Flood Risk Manager
Vicky Venn- Flood Risk Officer
Mark Vyse- Enforcement Officer
Jonathon Cartledge- United Utilities
David Brown- The Environment Agency
Richard Christopherson- Local Area Partnership Manager

13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies of absence were received from the Committee, however apologies for absence were noted from the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Councillor Toni Fox.

14 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meetings 15 June 2020 and 16 March 2020.

RESOLVED-

That both sets of minutes be accepted as a correct and accurate record and be signed by the Chairman.

15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

16 WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

There were no whipping declarations.

17 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

Local Resident Sue Helliwell attended the meeting and made a statement relating to the consultation of the Active Travel Scheme Lodge Road, Alsager.

Sue advised the Committee that currently there were over 350 negative online comments in respect of the consultation, and with this in mind would this Committee consider calling in any decision to enable an 18-month scheme to be rolled out.

Sue also advised the Committee that following updates to the consultation in August, similar schemes in Crewe and Knutsford had been withdrawn.

RESOLVED-

That Sue be thanked for her attendance and statement at the meeting and that Helen Davies send a response to Sue.

18 HIGHWAY DRAINAGE AND FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT (INCLUDING A FLOOD INVESTIGATION- POYNTON 2019)

Chris Hindle, Head of Strategic Infrastructure attended the meeting and introduced this item.

The Committee heard that the Council has a duty to carry out a Flood Investigation as required by Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (Section 19) legislation and following any significant flooding affecting the borough. The presentation received by the Committee focused on the Section 19, the subsequent actions of the Flood Risk Management Authorities and the mechanisms of flooding to enable recommendations for the instances of future flooding.

Vicky Venn, Flood Risk Officer and Paul Reeves, Flood Risk Manager presented to the Committee.

The Committee heard detail relating specifically to the flooding in Poynton in July 2019 (the second incident of flooding, the first being in 2016) that included:

- The July 2019 Flood Event covered 5 catchments: Poynton Brook, River Dean, River Bollin, Harrop Brook and the tributary of Todd Brook;
- The area experienced 180mm of rainfall which was 2 months rain in 5 days;
- A major incident was declared by the Council, affected 105 residential properties and 12 commercial properties;

In terms of completed Flood Recovery Works these included:

- 14,000 drains were cleared in flood hit areas;
- 290 ironwork repairs were completed;
- 74 drainage repairs were completed; and
- 111 drainage issues were investigated and completed. Structural carriageway repairs are ongoing.

Cheshire East Council have continued a programme of Highway Improvements following the incident in 2019 that have included, road, highway drainage, surface water separation and CCTV improvements. The Council have consulted with residents and worked with external partners as part of extensive Multi Agency partnership approach.

Jonathan Cartledge from United Utilities (UU) and David Brown from the Environment Agency (EA) attended the meeting as external partners and provided a presentation to the Committee. Key points included:

- During flooding UU had been contacted by a number of residents. When rivers broke the banks, this had a dramatic impact on the downstream network;
- CCTV had been installed where inundation of water was known;
- As a Proactive measure UU had undertaken a pilot scheme to monitor the water network and extended it out to Poynton with CCTV at areas of concern; and
- EA had an engagement event with people interested in voluntarily holding water on their land, (there was no mandatory requirement for landholders) and how homeowners manage the banks along their homes. Cheshire Wildlife were working towards developing schemes to promote Natural Flood Management.

Members were invited to question the officers and visiting partners present, and the following points were acknowledged:

- The importance of strong partnership working;

- The importance of sustainable urban drainage system and system expertise;
- The Active Flood Action Group in Poynton and managing the relationships with Poynton residents, particularly those who were advised in 2016 that the flooding would not happen again. The importance of informing debate and not losing the local views;
- Acknowledging history and the resources available to Local Authorities particularly questioning if full water course inspections are in place;
- The need for funding and more emphasis on the skills to deliver resources because of Climate Change;
- Informing residents about repairing water systems in urban areas and futureproofing;
- Communications to home owners on managing expectations of Culvert inspections on their land, responsibilities and the rights of the land owner;
- Encouragement of wider biodiversity; and
- The importance to ensure Local Residents are communicated with appropriately, some residents do not have access to the internet.

Chris Hindle introduced a short update to Members on highway gullies, Simon Davies Operations Manager for Highways presented to the Committee.

Simon advised the Committee that the Council collect asset and condition data to feed into programmes for the future. The frequency did vary, some are emptied annually, some are every 3 years. The more intelligence the better informed the programmes are and resources can be targeted.

There were challenges in urban areas such as parked cars, leaf fall and detritus. Rural areas show different challenges, the highway drain relies on maintenance on associated systems downstream from the gully.

There had been investment in 2 new vehicles and the equipment to collect and manage data and inform future decisions re: emptying gullies- want to refine programme.

Members were given the opportunity to question Officers. The Committee noted that:

- There was the potential for better communications to residents to update on gullies as the perception from residents that nothing has been done if a gully has had no maintenance in some time; and
- There had been improvement in GPS and telematic systems to plot gullies accurately and highway drains associated with them however there were omissions in records.

Following the presentations and debate, suggestion was raised to establish a task and finish group to undertake an in-depth review of flooding and flood risk management in Cheshire East. This would enable a number of meetings to be set up for task and finish members, as well as local ward councillors, to scrutinise the impacts of the 2019 flooding in the various areas of Cheshire East that were affected (e.g. Poynton, Kettlethulme, Adlington, Prestbury, Bollington were named as some of the example areas).

The Committee agreed that the outcome of this would enable more in-depth and detailed scrutiny and challenge to be carried out, which could lead to some specific and effective conclusions and recommendations to bring forward through the Environment and Regeneration OSC.

RESOLVED-

- a) That Officers and external partners be thanked for their time, presentations and contributions to the debate today;
- b) That Helen Davies contact Members of this Committee to establish appropriate membership for the Task and Finish Group and identify a date for the first meeting.

19 FORWARD PLAN

Consideration was given to the Council's Forward Plan.

RESOLVED-

That the Forward Plan be received and noted.

20 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the Committee's Work Programme.

Councillor Suzanne Brookfield raised a question relating to an item previously raised at the Health, Adult Social Care and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee that related to the council's Emerging Futures contract.

Councillor Brookfield also requested an update on the subject of Houses of Multiple Occupation and Article 4 that related to Landlord Compulsory Licensing.

RESOLVED-

That:

- a) The Overview and Scrutiny Chairmen's Group be asked to discuss and determine which of the overview and scrutiny committees

- would be most suitable to take the lead on reviewing the performance of the council's contract with Emerging Futures; and
- b) That Helen Davies provide an update to the Committee on the subject of Houses of Multiple Occupation and Article 4.

21 ADDITIONAL ITEM OF URGENT BUSINESS- PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS

The Committee heard a verbal update from Richard Christopherson, Local Area Partnership Manager. He advised the Committee that this report related to Dog Fouling and Dog Control at Carrs Park, Wilmslow and the transfer of the legal status of the previous gating schemes that required a "Gating Order" across the borough to a consolidating PSPO.

There was some discussion that included acknowledgement of:

- The agreed blight of boroughwide Dog Fouling;
- 719 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) being issued in the last 4-years, for the breach of the Order in relation to Dog Fouling;
- The potential for wider education, communication and refreshed messages re: Dog Fouling and the associated costs to residents across the borough;
- The potential to map the FPNs to identify hot-spots;
- The caveats that exist under the legislation not to fine those who with a disability who cannot pick up after their dog; and
- The part of the order relating to Gating did not affect any residential properties.

There were some points that Richard agreed to pick up outside of the meeting as they related to specific issues and included:

- the availability of Dog Fouling bins, or bigger bins;
- the plans for dog control across the borough; and
- how many FPNs were issued by Kingdom, the Councils Enforcement contractor.

To summarise the Committee made enquiries as to how successful the orders had been and were satisfied with the response.

RESOLVED-

That:

- a) Richard Christopherson be thanked for his attendance and verbal update and that he follow up with specific Members outside of the meeting; and
- b) The recommendations be endorsed by this Committee to Cabinet as outlined on section 2.1 of the report.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 12.34 pm

Councillor JP Findlow (Chairman)