

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

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

held on Monday, 16th November, 2020 as a Virtual Meeting

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- Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste
Councillor Nick Mannion- Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration
Visiting Member Councillor Carol Bulman- Member for Middlewich Ward
Visiting Member Councillor Janet Clowes- Member for Wynbunbury

Frank Jordan- Executive Director of Place
Paul Bayley- Director of Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services
Peter Skates – Director of Growth and Enterprise
Frank Jordan, Executive Director of Place
Karen Carsberg- Head of Housing
Dawn Taylor- Cheshire Gypsy & Traveller Coordinator

33 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

34 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED- That the minutes of the meeting 19 October 2020 be accepted as a correct and accurate record.

35 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In the interest of openness and transparency, Councillor Mike Hunter declared an interest in agenda item 6- Gypsy and Traveller Key Decision as he is the Ward Councillor for Middlewich and the Chairman of Strategic Planning Board (SPB) and he did not want to potentially predetermine any future planning application that could be determined by SPB.

Councillor Hunter decided to remain in the meeting, as the item was for information only and he did not take part in any debate or questions.

36 WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations of the Party Whip.

37 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

Local Resident Sue Helliwell, had planned to speak during public speaking time however had been unable to attend the meeting. The Chairman agreed to read her statement on her behalf.

Sue had previously spoken at the meeting of this Committee on the 21st September 2020 in relation to the Active Travel Scheme in Lodge Road Alsager.

Sue confirmed that Lodge Road residents/nearby residents and Town Councillors had not been consulted on this scheme and that Cheshire East Council had advised there was a consultation in place using 10-12 year data. Sue questioned how residents could expect Cheshire East Council to consult when a legal order was in place for this scheme.

The Lodge Road scheme had caused a lot of tension among the residents of Alsager and traffic was navigating down Pikemere Road, Sue questioned the environmental impacts of this.

Sue requested that this committee "call in" the Lodge Road scheme for the legal order to be revoked.

RESOLVED-

That the statement from Sue be received and noted; and that Helen Davies follow up with appropriate officers and feed back to Sue.

38 GYPSY AND TRAVELLER KEY DECISION

Karen Carsberg, Head of Housing and Dawn Taylor, Cheshire Gypsy & Traveller Coordinator attended the Committee to present this item.

The presentation was to advise the Committee on the process taken so far and the planned next steps.

The Committee were advised that there was a need for:

- 32 Gypsy and Traveller residential pitches;
- 5-10 Transit site pitch provision; and
- 5 Travelling Showperson Plots.

The Committee heard that unauthorised encampments have fluctuated over the last couple of years and have continued to throughout the pandemic and lockdown period. Unauthorised encampments, where Gypsy and Travellers camp without permission on land they don't own, can lead to tensions within the community. 50% of the work of the Cheshire and Warrington Traveller Team related to unauthorised encampments.

Two visiting Members spoke on this item. Councillor Carol Bulman spoke as the Ward Councillor and advised that she was convinced that a site was needed but that it needed to be in a suitable place. Councillor Bulman expressed concern about the viability of the identified site in Middlewich, given that Cledford Lane is very long, is a thoroughfare for lorries and there were ditches either side making it

unsuitable for pedestrians. Councillor Bulman also noted the strong Romany community with a historical connection to the town and did not wish to see that unsettled.

Councillor Janet Clowes asked questions that related to the planning application for the Cledford site, specifically if there was anything by Historic England that could delay a planning application, and whether there were any differences to the planning application previously submitted in 2015.

The Head of Housing advised there was a team working on the historic assets as part of the planning process. An archaeological survey was planned but several surveys prior to this had suggested there would not be anything to find. The barn had been removed from the new planning application, but the 10 pitches, to accommodate 20 caravans, and a standalone amenity block remained.

The Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions and there was some key discussion that included:

- Understanding how the various sites worked across Cheshire and Warrington, and how each Local Authority has a statutory duty to assess the accommodation needs for the Gypsy and Traveller community;
- The budget across Cheshire and Warrington was £2.2million. £1.5million related to the Cheshire East contribution, including a £550k Homes England Grant. There was a budget which had been identified for the development of a transit site.
- The expectation that some Local Authorities will meet the shortfall of housing through planning policies, it was not expected that Local Authorities will develop residential pitches themselves, but through the private sector;
- That while there is no transit site provision, there is more likelihood of unauthorised encampments moving into these areas;
- If transit sites are full, Local Authorities would have to accommodate an unauthorised encampment;
- The needs assessment indicated a need for ten pitches and the authority needed to work on that basis- it was noted that each pitch could accommodate two caravans;
- Transit sites offer good value for money. They allow the Gypsy and Traveller communities appropriate accommodation which they will pay for. This in turn relieves stress to the local community and businesses; and
- The potential for a booklet to be given to Members to promote good community relationships and a better understanding of unauthorised encampments

RESOLVED:

That Karen and Dawn be thanked for their attendance and presentation and that it be duly noted by the Committee.

39 FORWARD PLAN

Consideration was given to the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED- That the Forward Plan be received and noted.

40 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme.

Councillor Findlow advised the Committee that:

- the Budget 2021/22 consultation was going to be considered at Corporate Scrutiny (26.11.20) and then this Committee ahead of February decision making; and
- the item for the Carbon Action Plan Key Decision had been rescheduled to the meeting on the 18th January due to the competing report priorities for officers following an unprecedented year.

Councillor Parkinson raised a question on how effective the planned suspension of the food waste collection programme plus the green bin not being emptied would be. This related to the planned suspension scheduled for the 18th December and would be borough wide for 2 weeks.

Frank Jordan, Executive Director of Place, advised that this query related to the operational management of food waste collection services.

Paul Bayley, Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services advised the suspension was to enable services to catch up on the two bank holidays and significant waste generated over Christmas.

Councillor Parkinson requested data relating to the tonnage of food waste collected this year.

Councillor Findlow advised the Committee that since the approval of the Task and Finish Group Membership at the last meeting, there had been a meeting of the group to agree the terms of reference for the deep-dive and the second meeting was confirmed for tomorrow where the scoping process will be finalised ahead and an action plan time line would be agreed.

Councillor Findlow had been approached with a request to co-opt Members from Poynton and Bollington onto the group to enable representation from worst affected areas.

Councillor Suzanne Brookfield noted there had not been an update on Key Performance Indicators in some time.

Frank Jordan advised that the Scorecard was being reviewed at Officer level but the current performance was skewed because of lockdown, and also that Officers been responding to pandemic.

RESOLVED- That

- a) The Work Programme be received and noted;
- b) Paul Bayley to connect Councillor Parkinson with the appropriate officer for food tonnage waste; and
- c) Frank Jordan to discuss scorecard data at the next liaison meeting for this Committee.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 11.22 am
Councillor JP Findlow (Chairman)

