

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the **Cabinet**
held on Tuesday, 13th April, 2021

PRESENT

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

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

Councillors in attendance

Councillors S Akers Smith, R Bailey, M Beanland, M Benson, S Brookfield,
D Brown, C Bulman, J Clowes, T Dean, S Edgar, H Faddes, J P Findlow,
R Fletcher, S Gardiner, L Gilbert, P Groves, G Hayes, S Holland, M Houston,
A Moran, R Moreton, D Murphy, J Nicholas, S Pochin, B Puddicombe,
J Saunders, M Simon, L Smetham, D Stockton, L Wardlaw, J Weatherill,
P Williams and J Wray.

Officers in attendance

Lorraine O'Donnell, Chief Executive
Frank Jordan, Executive Director Place
Jane Burns, Executive Director Corporate Services
David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance
Ged Rowney, Interim Director of Children's Services
Jill Broomhall, Direct of Adult Social Care
Paul Goodwin, Head of Financial Services
Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance
Paul Mountford, Executive Democratic Services Officer

Apologies

Councillors K Flavell

The Chairman asked all present to observe a minute's silence as a mark of respect for the life of HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh.

100 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

101 **HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE PROVISION**

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste informed Cabinet that it had come to light that there was an administrative error in the papers relating to Item 7 on the agenda - Household Waste Recycling Centre Provision, which meant that Cabinet did not have all the information it needed to consider the matter at this meeting. She therefore proposed that Item 7 be deferred to the Cabinet meeting on 4th May 2021.

RESOLVED

That Item 7 on the agenda - Household Waste Recycling Centre Provision be deferred to the Cabinet meeting on 4th May 2021.

102 **PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION - VIRTUAL MEETINGS**

Paul Duffy asked how a decision to review household waste and recycling centres could be taken during the 'purdah' period.

Kay Wesley asked Cabinet to convene a task and finish group to evaluate all possible options before taking a decision to remove household waste and recycling services from Congleton. She also said that the closure of the Congleton site would disproportionately impact elderly and disabled residents and those on a low income without their own transport.

Robert Douglas asked why the later, February report on responses to the recent consultation on household waste recycling centres had not been included with the report on the agenda, and why no reference had been made in the report to the recommendations of the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Suzy Firkin asked why there was no reference in the report on household waste recycling centres to the recommendation of the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee that a task and finish group be appointed to consider all options for a new recycling centre in Congleton.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste commented that as the report on Household Waste Recycling Centres had been deferred it would be inappropriate for her to respond to the questions in detail at the meeting. She therefore undertook to respond to each question in writing.

James Law asked what traffic studies had been made to inform and direct the active travel proposals for Congleton, and why the proposals were being put forward now rather than waiting until the changes to traffic flow caused by the imminent opening of the Congleton By-Pass could be studied.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste responded that the timing of the consultation had been determined by the requirement for the Council to confirm its intended use of the Active Travel funds by the end of the last financial year. The results of the recent consultation had shown a clear majority against the proposals. Therefore, the Council did not intend to take them forward, and Active Travel funding would be deployed in other areas where such proposals had received widespread support.

Sue Helliwell asked if the 317 bus service from Alsager to Leighton Hospital, which ran on Mondays to Fridays, could be extended to Saturdays to enable Alsager residents to use a bus with a direct route to attend hospital appointments on Saturdays.

The Deputy Leader responded that it was important to remain vigilant for Coronavirus as lockdown measures eased, with national guidelines still affecting the use and provision of bus services. As the entire bus industry was supported by government funding, now was not the right time to commence new services. A number of towns in Cheshire East had no direct bus service on Saturdays, although trips could be made by interchanging, and concessionary passengers would incur no additional costs by using two different routes.

David Mayers referred to the road accident figures for Cheshire East and asked if the Cabinet would promote and organise at least one event, or issue a press release or other public statement, to support the UN Global Road Safety Week which called for policymakers to limit speeds to 20 mph where people walked, lived, shopped, worked and played. He asked if such measures could also be incorporated into the current speed management strategy review.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste responded that the Council's Safer Cheshire East Partnership report showed that since 2016 there had been a decline year-on-year in the number of road traffic collisions and the number of killed and seriously injured as a result of these collisions. The Council was considering how best to promote road safety during the UN Global Road Safety Week in May and would be engaging with key stakeholders to have a shared approach where possible. The revised speed management strategy would cover a number of measures that could be utilised in the management of vehicle speed.

103 **QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS - VIRTUAL MEETINGS**

Councillor R Fletcher asked what action the Council had taken to resolve an issue with the play area at Swallow Drive, Alsager.

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

Councillor S Gardiner referred to the recent installation by Booths supermarket of metal plates at the exit to the Booths Car Park, Knutsford; this was causing damage to low lying cars. He asked why the Council had not been consulted before the works were undertaken, and why the Council had not worked with the supermarket to resolve the issue.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste undertook to provide a written response.

Councillor L Gilbert referred to an application which had been made under the Active Travel scheme for new street lighting to be provided for Manor

Lane, Holmes Chapel. The Council had turned down the application on the grounds that the provision of additional street lighting was precluded by current policy. He asked whether the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste was aware of the policy, what process had led to its adoption, and what member involvement there had been.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste undertook to provide a written response.

Councillor B Puddicombe sought clarity as to the status of council meetings after 6th May, and what could be done to reassure members and officers who may be apprehensive about returning to physical meetings.

The Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Corporate Services responded by referring to an email circulated recently to all councillors by the Head of Democratic Services and Governance which sought to assure members that all possible measures were being put in place to ensure their safety in the event that face-to-face meetings had to resume. The legislation which permitted virtual meetings to take place was due to expire on 6th May 2021 and clarification was being sought, including through legal action elsewhere, regarding the implications for local authority meetings after that date. The Leader added that virtual meetings had reduced travelling, were good for the environment and had been a success. All Group leaders from Cheshire East Council had signed a letter lobbying for councils to be allowed to continue to hold virtual meetings beyond 6th May.

Councillor P Williams asked if a proposed site visit to Alsager School to discuss safety concerns raised by the Headteacher about the Active Travel scheme on Lodge Road had been held and whether the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste had considered the safety concerns expressed by the Headteacher and residents.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste confirmed that a site meeting between the Head of Strategic Transport and the Headteacher had taken place on 24th March 2021. Following that meeting, a comprehensive assessment of the scheme impacts and the outcomes of the community consultation had been reported to the Portfolio Holder and senior officers. On balance, the review had confirmed that the Emergency Active Travel measures be suspended, to take effect before the end of the Easter holidays. Following this change, access to the school grounds by school bus, and traffic levels on Lodge Road, were expected to return to normal.

Councillor S Akers Smith asked when the Council would start to introduce lower speed limits on Cheshire East roads.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste responded that this had been timetabled for consideration by the Highways and Transport Committee under the new committee system.

Councillor R Moreton asked if a decision on the future provision of household waste recycling centres could be referred to the relevant committee under the new committee system to provide greater transparency.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste responded that a decision on the matter was being deferred today which would allow more time for reflection on the matter, and there would be an opportunity for members to comment further when the report was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 4th May.

104 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2021 be approved as a correct record.

105 **COVID-19 - UPDATE ON RESPONSE AND RECOVERY**

Cabinet considered an update report on the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Leader welcomed the fact that the infection rate in Cheshire East had fallen sharply over the last month, although he also expressed a note of caution, given the variants of the virus in circulation, and advised that people continue to maintain all precautionary measures.

On Finance, the Leader pointed out that the majority of the £200m in grant funding had been passported through and that the Council had borne the cost of administering the grants. The Council had also provided financial support to ESAR as leisure centres had not been reimbursed for lost income.

The Deputy Leader outlined the financial pressures for the coming financial year and welcomed the Council's continued lobbying through the Local Government Association and the County Councils Network for a fair funding settlement from Government.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration provided an update on restart grants and additional restriction grants.

Councillor J Clowes reported the comments of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee as Chairman of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. notes the issues outlined in the report;

2. recommends to Council a Supplementary Revenue Estimate for £1,561,000, fully funded from the Covid-19 Emergency Grant, to increase the budget for Leisure Services Commissioning, this reflecting reported spending in 2020/21 in support of the provision of leisure services in the Borough;
3. approves a Supplementary Revenue Estimate for £881,340, fully funded from the DfE Holiday Activity Fund Grant to increase the 2021/22 Early Help & Prevention Service Budget, enabling the Council to pass on grant funding to local organisations to deliver school holiday activity and food for children who are pre-school and school age and eligible for Free School Meal entitlement; and
4. delegates authority to the Director of Children's Services to distribute the DfE Holiday Activity Fund Grant and to approve a temporary and limited variation to the Corporate Community Grant policy to extend the scope of payments made under the policy to include Holiday Activity Grants made under the DfE grant determination half programme 2021 No 31/5325; and for this limited period section 3.9 of the policy be amended to enable private businesses who provide holiday club activity to apply for this grant between March 2021 and April 2022 only.

106 **HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2021-2025**

Cabinet considered a report on a draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-2025.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. approves the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy as outlined at appendix 1 to the report as the basis of consultation; and
2. notes that, following consultation, the final version of the strategy will be presented for approval to the Economy and Growth Committee.

107 **CONSULTATION ON THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY CHARGING POLICY**

Cabinet considered proposals to consult on a change to the Assistive Technology charging policy.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. agrees that a consultation exercise be undertaken on a proposed change to the Assistive Technology charging policy which would provide that those aged 85+ and living alone would pay the standard charge of £5 per week for this service like all other Assistive Technology service users, but that no one unable to afford the service would have to pay for it; and
2. notes that a report will be presented to the Health and Social Care Committee outlining the results of the consultation and seeking a decision on the proposed change.

108 **TREE RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Cabinet considered a proposed Tree Risk Management Strategy which was designed to ensure an active approach to risk management of the Council's trees.

RESOLVED

That the Tree Risk Management Strategy appended to the report be approved.

109 **CHESHIRE ARCHIVES: A STORY SHARED**

Cabinet considered an update to the 'Cheshire Archives – A Story Shared' project and a second stage application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. endorses the approach regarding the next steps in the development and delivery of the 'Cheshire Archives – A Story Shared' project;
2. notes that the Executive Director Place will take all necessary actions to develop the project and will submit a bid for grant funding to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to enable the delivery of the second stage of the proposed project (in line with the constitution);
3. notes that any future acceptance of grants will be undertaken in accordance with the constitution and finance procedure rules;
4. delegates authority to Executive Director Place, in consultation with the Director of Governance and Compliance, to agree terms in relation to

the grant funding with Cheshire West and Chester Council who are acting as the accountable body for this project; and

5. notes that a report to update on delivery of the project will be considered at a future meeting of the relevant committee.

110 **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE REPORT - ONE YEAR ON**

Cabinet considered a report on progress to date, and the delivery of key actions to respond to the Corporate Peer Challenge recommendations.

Councillor J Clowes reported the comments of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee as Chairman of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet notes the progress to date, and the delivery of key actions to respond to the Corporate Peer Challenge recommendations.

111 **REFRESHED EQUALITY OBJECTIVES AND EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY 2021-2025**

Cabinet considered a report on refreshed equality objectives and an updated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

Councillor J Clowes, as Chairman of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, reported the Committee's support for the refreshed equality objectives and EDI strategy.

Councillor Marilyn Houston, as the Council's Equality and Diversity Champion, also expressed her support for the refreshed objectives and strategy.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. approves the following five equality objectives at Appendix 1 to the report:

Include - Listen and involve all voices.

Inspire - Celebrate and promote the diversity in our borough and surrounding areas and make the most of the positive opportunities this brings

Integrate - Deliver and promote accessible and equitable services for all.

Inform - Be a council which empowers and cares about people.

Impact - Support and deliver meaningful change.

2. adopts the All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims' definition of Islamophobia;
3. reaffirms support for the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism; and
4. agrees the Equality and Diversity Strategy 2021-2025 for Cheshire East (Appendix 2).

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 3.10 pm

Councillor S Corcoran (Chairman)