

**Cannock Chase Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of the**  
**Corporate Scrutiny Committee**

**Held on Tuesday 3 November 2020 at 4:30pm**

**Via Remote Access**

**Part 1**

PRESENT: Councillors

Allen, F.W.C. (Chairman)

Crabtree, S.K.	Startin, P.D.
Davis, Mrs. M.A.	Stretton, Mrs. P.Z.
Hughes, R.J.	Wilkinson, Ms. C.L.
Jones, B.	Witton, P.T.

Also in attendance: Councillor Miss M.A. Freeman (Invitee as Chairman of the Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee)

**4. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillors M. Sutherland (Vice-Chairman) and C. Bennett.

**5. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restrictions on Voting by Members and Party Whip Declarations**

No other declarations of interests or party whip declarations were received.

**6. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2020 were approved as a correct record.

**7. Corporate Priority Delivery Plan Performance Update – Q1 and Q2 2020/21**

Consideration was given to the latest performance update for the Corporate Priority Delivery Plan 2020/21 (Item 4.1 – 4.4).

The Head of Governance and Corporate Services advised that the performance update covered the period April to September 2020, and the document had been revised to show those actions were carrying on as planned for the year, those deferred for future years, and other being considered as part of recovery action plans.

In respect of the performance indicators, the percentage of customer phone calls answered fell during the second quarter of the year, but 5,000 more calls were taken in this quarter compared to quarter 1, so the calls took more time to reply. There had

also been an increase in the number of people paying online for Council services, with the target being exceeded in both quarters.

With regards to the projects being progressed during 2020/21, the replacement and upgrade of ICT systems was on track, as was the works to fire doors in the Civic Centre, but the toilets refurbishment had been slightly delayed.

## **8. Covid-19 Recovery Strategy**

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Governance and Corporate Services (Item 5.1 – 5.65).

The Head of Governance and Corporate Services advised that the report replaced the paper received by Cabinet earlier in year that set out the Council's initial recovery approach to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Corporate Scrutiny Committee had been presented with the full report and actions plans as the Committee with responsibility for scrutinising the Council's Covid-19 related activities.

The Strategy as set out was based on 3 stages of recovery from the pandemic, these being response, restore and reshape. Four individual work streams had been developed within the strategy - finance, economy, community, and the Council (organisational), each stream was accompanied by a detailed action plan for and dashboard of performance indicators. Regular progress updates on the Strategy were being given to the Recovery Overview Board and formal reports provided to Cabinet and Scrutiny.

A lot of work had happened since the Strategy was prepared, the with first formal progress update report to be presented to Cabinet on 12 November, although following the announcement of the new lockdown for England from 2 November, the Council was moving back into the 'response' phase, but would continue with recovery work were able to do so.

The Head of Finance reported on the financial recovery work stream action plan, advising that the pandemic had had a material impact on all local authorities, but in respect of this Council, an interim financial plan had prepared to maintain service delivery and no emergency budgets or service cuts were planned. A financial plan report was due to be presented to Cabinet on 12 November that would set out the use of earmarked reserves and working balances to provide a balanced budget for 2020/21 and 2021/22. Once the true cost of the pandemic on the Council's finances was known then a new medium-term financial plan would be prepared.

A Member queried how realistic preparation of a medium-term financial plan was given that the Council could have to keep moving out of response and recovery phases. The Head of Finance replied that it would be difficult to do as changes to local government finance from 2022 onwards were in the background, but the biggest uncertainty and impact was the impact of the pandemic. All that could be done for now was to prepare best and worst-case scenarios and focus on the middle ground. The interim financial plan would be to get the Council through the next 18 months to understand the full Covid-19 impact and then develop the medium-term plan. It was expected that Government support would change as the situation evolved.

The Head of Governance and Corporate Services then reported on the organisational recovery work stream action plan, advising that it had been split down into several different themes. Each action plan was split into the three recovery phases, and much of the work under the response phase was done apart from ongoing matters. Although the Council had moved back into response, there was no need to change what had already been put in place.

Restoration activity had taken place during the summer months and some services were still not being delivered as pre-pandemic, but most were back up and running. There were however ongoing backlogs in some areas. Reshaping work had started to be looked at in recent weeks and would be focussed on future service delivery, including digital offer, customer expectations, staff support for home working and other matters.

A Member congratulated Council Officers for the work they had undertaken in recent months, especially with the majority of staff working from home. These comments were echoed by other Members of the Committee.

Another Member asked if the health and wellbeing of officers was being monitored during the pandemic. The Head of Governance and Corporate Services replied that this was the case, with a range of measures having been put in place to support staff and encouraging them to stay in touch and maintain regular contact with colleagues.

The meeting closed at 4:48 p.m.

---

CHAIRMAN