7 May 2021

**Historic day as Cheshire East Council moves to committee system**

Cheshire East Council has this week made the historic change to operate a committee system for decision making.

The council has operated under a cabinet system since it was formed in 2009. Now, decisions previously made by the cabinet, will be made by ‘service committees’.

Under the cabinet system, ten individual councillors, called cabinet members, had responsibility for specific areas of the council’s work, such as ‘children and families’ or ‘highways and waste’. Cabinet members were appointed by the leader of the council. The cabinet met monthly to make many of the decisions about the council’s services and policies. Decisions of cabinet were scrutinised by cross-party overview and scrutiny committees.

Under the new system, decisions are made by committees, each responsible for a different area of the council’s services.

Each new service committee has 13 members. These members collectively make decisions. The political make up of each committee reflects the political make-up of the council. Members debate and vote on decisions, so decisions are made collectively by the cross-party membership.

The chairs of the service committees are as follows:

* Chair of the Corporate Policy Committee – Councillor Sam Corcoran
* Chair of the Finance Sub Committee – Councillor Amanda Stott
* Chair of the Children and families Committee – Councillor Kathryn Flavell
* Chair of the Health and Adults Committee – Councillor Jill Rhodes
* Chair of Economy and Growth Committee – Councillor Nick Mannion
* Chair of the Highways and Transport committee – Councillor Craig Browne
* Chair of the Environment and Communities Committee – Councillor Mick Warren

The system was implemented following a legally binding decision in November 2020 and cannot be changed for five years. It was developed with design principles in mind, ensuring that decision making would be easy to access and held in public; the cost of new arrangements would be kept to a minimum and there would be timely and efficient decision making.

The leaders of all political groups of Cheshire East Council said: “It is a councillor’s role to bring local issues that are of importance to residents to the table. The new service committees bring more councillors into the decision-making process and we hope that this new arrangement will help the council to be modern, open and transparent.

“We would like to thank the council officers who have worked tirelessly to support the move from a cabinet to a committee system. The new committees cover all areas of the Council’s business and support our aim for decision-making to be easy to access for our residents, as well as allowing greater scrutiny of those decisions at the point of discussion.

“We hope that the committee system will lead to a more consensual way of working, dealing with the matters that concern our local residents the most, with a broad range of opinions represented on each committee and giving more councillors a seat at the decision-making table.”

Members of the public are welcome to attend the committee systems, subject to local and national coronavirus restrictions in place at the time of the meeting. A calendar of committee meetings and upcoming meeting agendas and papers (once published) are available to view on [www.cheshireeast.gov.uk](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk) under council and democracy and can be found by clicking on council meetings.

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Photo caption:

Cheshire East Council logo

Notes to Editors:

The leaders of all political groups of Cheshire East Council quote comes from:

* Cllr Sam Corcoran, Leader of the Council; Leader of the Labour Group
* Cllr Craig Browne, Deputy Leader of the Council; Leader of the Independent Group
* Cllr Janet Clowes, Leader of the Conservative Group
* Cllr Rod Fletcher, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
* Cllr Brendan Murphy, Leader of the Real Independent Group

The following design principles were considered when developing the committee system at the council:

* Decision-making will be easy to access and held in public;
* Members of the public and Councillors will be given the opportunity to ask questions in Committees;
* Decisions will be made quickly, to meet the needs of the Council and local community;
* The new arrangements will be cost neutral; with technology being used to help achieve this;
* Decisions will be legally compliant;
* The new arrangements will be modern, open, and transparent; the Committees having work programmes which are available to the public.

A calendar of meetings and their respective agendas (once published) can be found on the council website at: <http://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1>

Further information on each of the service committees can be found on the council website via the links below:

* [Adults and Health Committee](http://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=964)
* [Children and Families Committee](http://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=963)
* [Corporate Policy Committee](http://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=959)
* [Economy and Growth Committee](http://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=960)
* [Environment and Communities Committee](http://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=962)
* [Finance Sub Committee](http://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=965)
* [Highways and Transport Committee](http://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=961)

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