

South Staffordshire College should merge with Walsall College. However, both colleges indicated that they saw no benefit in a merger for financial reasons. In particular the structure of the loans would mean that the existing arrangements for both colleges could not be rolled forward with their banks. In addition there would be difficulty with the pension liability as both colleges had different pensions. Therefore a merger would not benefit either organisation.

He explained that South Staffordshire College was not in attendance at the meeting today given the current situation. Once they were in a better position and had a strategy in place they would be able to attend a meeting.

In response to a question the Head of Economic Development confirmed that South Staffordshire College owned the college building and it was therefore an asset.

32. West Midlands Combined Authority Update

Tony McGovern, Managing Director provided the Committee with the following update in relation to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA).

He advised that the WMCA was a new regional body with a number of key priorities – economic growth, skills, transport and housing as well as public sector reform. The WMCA was established via a parliamentary Order and had secured a devolution agreement from central government. The Strategic Economic Plan was the key document which sets out the vision, objectives, strategy and actions to improve the quality of life of everyone who lives and works in the West Midlands. The Committee noted that all the documents and further information was available on the West Midlands Combined Authority website.

He further advised that there was an election process ongoing to elect a Mayor and he outlined the candidates for the benefit of Members. The outcome of the Mayoral election will be known on 5 May, 2017. The Mayor will be able to raise the precept and raise the Business Rates Levy (with agreement of the relevant LEPs).

He explained that there were two types of membership – constituent and non-constituent. There are 7 constituent members made up of the 7 West Midlands Metropolitan Council's who could vote on everything. There are 8 non-constituent members; Cannock Chase District Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth District Council, Redditch Borough Council, Tamworth Borough Council, Telford and Wrekin Council, Black Country LEP, Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP and Coventry and Warwickshire LEP. These can only vote on certain things. There were also applications from additional Council's and LEP's and once these were approved there would be 15 non-constituent members. Non-constituent members were not under the jurisdiction of the Mayor but they would work with the Mayor to deliver the Strategic Economic Plan.

The Committee noted that the WMCA was in set up mode; a constitution had been produced and a Committee structure had been established. During 2017 all the basics would be in place. The WMCA had set up 3 separate commissions (priority areas):-

- ***Mental Health Commission***

This commission will assess how mental health illness stops people from gaining employment. It will be chaired by Norman Lamp, MP. The commission has identified key areas and produced recommendations (Action Plan). These have been accepted and a senior Police Officer has been appointed to co-ordinate these recommendations.

- ***Land Commission***

This commission will look at how land can be made available in the West Midlands for housing and business as the Strategic Economic Plan should not be constrained by a lack of developable land. Metro Dynamics have been appointed as the strategic advisor and a set of recommendations have been produced. These are currently being considered by the WMCA.

- ***Productivity and Skills Commission***

This commission has been set up to understand the extent of the productivity challenge in the West Midlands. The commission has published a “Call for Evidence” and will in time develop a set of recommendations.

The Managing Director advised that Cannock Chase District Council joined the WMCA “first wave” following a recommendation from Cabinet. Just under half of the working age population travel to the south of Birmingham and the Black Country. If these areas were doing well the District would benefit from employment opportunities. Members noted that the Council had already benefited from being a member of the WMCA as it was the only non-constituent member to have secured an investment. An allocation of £7million from the Collective Investment Loan Fund has been secured for Retail/Logistics Distribution Centres at Kingswood Lakeside. Planning consent has been granted and work on site would commence shortly. The Distribution Centres would deliver 425 new jobs with an average salary of £26,000. The scheme would be delivered in 2019.

The Managing Director confirmed that Cannock Chase Council will continue to play an active part in the WMCA and aim to secure other opportunities for the District.

Members were then offered the opportunity to ask questions. A Member asked whether Staffordshire County Council not being a member of the WMCA was to the detriment of Cannock Chase Council. The Managing Director advised that should Staffordshire County Council now wish to join they could only do so as a non-constituent Member. It was not possible for Staffordshire County Council to be a constituent member as all District and Borough Councils would have to have joined at the same time but not all are currently members of the GBSLEP. The Managing Director considered that it would help in discussions if Staffordshire County Council was to become a Member but confirmed they had no inclination to join.

Another Member asked if the WMCA was leading to a regional Government. The Managing Director advised that central government want to devolve responsibility to local authorities via a Mayoral Model so there was a single point of contact that central government could hold to account. He considered that the establishment

of the WMCA was a step towards regional government but it was still a long way off.

A Member questioned whether the Land commission/Strategy would put pressure on the District Council to provide more housing. The Managing Director confirmed that there was no evidence of this. There is a separate issue to tackle the deficit of housing supply and as one of a number of authorities in the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area, all had a duty to address this deficit whether the Combined Authority existed or not.

The Managing Director then made reference to the West Midland Growth Company which had been established by the WMCA to promote the West Midlands on an international basis. Councillor G. Alcott was the agreed nomination from Cannock Chase Council and he would represent the non-constituent Members on the Board. Councillor Alcott then outlined how Cannock Chase Council had benefitted from being a Member of the Birmingham LEP as it had been successful in securing money for training schemes.

The Committee thanked the Managing Director for the update provided.

(At this point in the proceedings Councillor G. Alcott and Councillor M. Buttery left the meeting.)

33. The Council's Street Trading Policy and Related Matters

Sean O'Meara, Senior Licensing Officer and David Prosser-Davies, Food Safety and Licensing Manager were in attendance and provided the Committee with the following information.

The Senior Licensing Officer advised that the Licensing Unit was made up of the Senior Licensing Officer, the Licensing Enforcement Officer, 3 Licensing Support Clerk (equivalent to 2.6 FTE). Approximately 1000 Licences were issued per annum and these were split into 3 elements: People; Premises; and Vehicles.

The Licensing Unit generally impacts upon the town centres because it licenses pubs, clubs, high street book makers, adult gaming centres, taxi drivers and vehicles, sex shops, pet shops, street and house to house collections and street trading. The Unit also licence or register other small businesses such as dog and cat boarders, tattooists, skin piercers and hairdressers etc.

These licensed premises are inspected and dealt with on a risk assessed basis and in accordance with the intention of council's corporate objectives, those who act lawfully and appropriately have no unnecessary interference from the Council.

The Unit contributes to the Better Jobs and Skills priority through:

- Implementing proportionate risk based regulation
- Ensuring a high standard of compliance
- Tackling non compliant businesses so that they do not gain an unfair advantage

The Unit also contributes to the Cleaner, Safer Environment priority through:

- Ensuring public safety
- Promoting fairness
- Preventing Crime & Disorder
- Preventing public nuisance and
- Protecting children and vulnerable people

Further, the Unit contributes to the Better Health outcomes priority through:

- Ensuring that the public are safe
- Working with other partners and agencies to help ensure a smoke free environment and engage in wider health promotion issues. These agencies/partners include:
 - Local Businesses
 - SCC Highways
 - Staffordshire Police
 - Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service
 - Staffordshire County Council Trading Standards
 - CCDC Planning Department
 - CCDC Environmental Health
 - CCDC Public Health
 - CCDC Health & Safety
 - SCC Child Protection Department

In addition the Unit also works with other local authorities where, in particular, good practice is discussed and shared and the Senior Licensing Officer has represented the West Midlands on the influential Local Government Association Licensing Forum.

The Licensing Unit consistently employs Council policies which relate to taxis, street traders, alcohol licensed premises and gambling premises. They are intended to ensure consistency across the board for licence holders, the general public as well as Members and Officers alike.

The Unit has recently become compelled by government to ensure that applicants for both taxi and alcohol licences have the right to remain and work in the UK. Business support is high on the agenda and since the retirement of the Head of Environmental Health, the Unit has been moved to the Head of Economic Development where the emphasis on such support is well established as it is in the Environmental Health Department.

The Licensing Support Clerks provide significant support and information to the customer. This might be help, advice or information about fees and/or the licensing process. Many applications (especially taxi drivers and vehicles) are made face to face within the Civic Centre by the Licensing Support Clerks. The Unit also has a dedicated area of the Council website which holds information about licence fees, forms and other guidance. Both the Senior Licensing Officer and the Licensing Enforcement Officer can offer similar licensing advice and information during visits to premises.

Furthermore, as most of the licensed premises require a degree of food safety or health & safety on site assessment, officers from that team are also able to offer professional advice and support which is specifically designed to help small

businesses.

Street Trading Policy

All streets and areas of the district which are open to the public without payment are deemed by the Council to be consented streets. This means that all the roads, streets, business areas and industrial estates in the District are licensed as well as the 3 town centres. Street trading consents/permits are issued for as little as a day or for as long as a full year.

Full year permits are issued to the 2 Cannock town centre traders and those who ply their trade in ice cream vans etc. which are then permitted to trade within the whole district. Of the 3 town centres, 2 are pedestrianised. Hednesford is not but has a small square which is traffic free.

Cannock: Has the greatest footfall and largest number of street traders. There are 2 food businesses which trade from fast food trailers within the town centre. Consents are issued for 12 months and payment of fees is by instalments. There are other ad hoc traders who sell fruit and veg and other hot food but the variety of food on offer is generally limited. It would be nice to encourage others so as to help create a food court area in the town centre. Other occasional traders include utility companies and children funfair rides. There is a market on a Friday and although the Licensing Unit issues the Street Trading Permit for the market, they do not control or monitor its operation. That falls to Property Services; however, there is an occasional cross over of involvement.

Hednesford: Has limited area for traders and the least footfall of all our towns. Unfortunately street traders tend to want to sell hot fast food but do not to last very long. It does have an active Traders Association.

Rugeley: Has some significant footfall and 2 large squares in which to street trade on non market days. Street traders have some success in Rugeley and it is regularly used by utility companies etc. Rugeley also has an active Traders Association.

Help support and advice is offered to anybody who wants to trade within the town centres. This includes help advice and information as well as flexibility around the payment of fees.

(At this point in the proceedings Councillor G. Molineux left the meeting.)

Restrictions/barriers to trade:

Restrictions or barriers are essentially legislative and can be repeated or embellished in Council policy. However, restrictive conditions were/are at risk from an EU Services Directive which would require the Council to remove, amongst other things, various restrictions on the distance between street traders and the local shops any restrictions on what may be sold in close proximity to another trader. However, it was now unsure what will happen with this due to Brexit.

The Street trading policy is due for some small amendments and as it stands it is intended to compliment Economic Development's vision for Cannock town centre

which was outlined in their issues and options consultation paper issued in January 2017.

Fees:

£25 per day in a town centre

£250 for a District wide annual permit

£250 for an annual permit to trade on Private land

£500 for a permit to trade on the highway

£4240 Town centre annual consent. A 1 month trial is £350

Same for trading on a Trunk Road which in effect is the A460 or the A5.

Commercial obstructions policy consultation 2017

A draft policy which includes a proposal to licence Street Pavement Cafés, A-Boards and other commercial obstructions such as fairground rides, vehicle and gazebos etc. was carried out during February and March 2017. There was a very wide consultation base which included all town centre premises in all 3 towns. There was also a press release and some national publicity.

The draft Council policy is based upon the Staffordshire County Council's policy of the same name created in 2007 and updated by the County in 2008. The rationale behind the draft policy is essentially to ensure that the public are safe within our town centres, to ensure some consistency to our approach towards commercial obstructions and to enable the Licensing Unit to recover some of its costs from town centre activities which are not street trading and cannot at present attract a fee.

27 responses were received and these were either supportive, constructive or less supportive. The themes which arose were as follows:-

- increase costs to traders and revenue raising exercise by the Council
- A-Boards are helpful to the trade and not generally considered to be a problem
- The Council time and effort could be better spent on other town centre issues such as reducing car parking charges or preventing vandalism

The responses and the Licensing Unit's appraisal of these responses will be presented to the Licensing & Public Protection Committee in May 2017. This compliments Economic Development's vision for Cannock town centre which was outlined in their issues and options consultation paper issued in January 2017.

Public Fund Raising Agreement (PEFA)

The Agreement was signed in August 2015 and collectors are permitted to Direct Debit collect twice a week in both Cannock & Rugeley town centres. This is generally on a Monday & Thursday. Charities that have benefitted include Shelter, Barnardo's, Cancer Research, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Amnesty international amongst many others. The Licensing Unit controls the area and number of collectors. There are 4 in Cannock and 2 in Rugeley. No complaints have been received since the Agreement was signed.

Members were then offered the opportunity to ask questions. A Member considered that the Licensing Unit provided a great service and any concerns he had previously had with regard to Cannock town centre had been addressed.

Another Member made reference to the work of Hednesford in Partnership involving the recent street market that had been held and the 2 further markets that would be held in Hednesford. The Senior Licensing Officer commented that the revision to the Street Trading Policy had addressed the issue of street markets and the organisation arranging the market had control over the running of it. He had recently issued a "Temporary Event Notice" as a stall holder at the next event wanted to sell alcohol.

A Member asked whether it was considered that there were too many taxis in the District. The Senior Licensing Officer commented that the number of Hackney Carriage Driver's licences can not be restricted. However, the legislation allows that the number of Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences can be restricted. The Council previously had a policy restricting the number and only 13 Hackney Carriage vehicle Licences were issued. During the 1990's a licensed Hackney Carriage Proprietor challenged the Council's policy to restrict the number of Vehicle Licences and won his case. The restriction on numbers was therefore lifted.

The Committee thanked the Senior Licensing Officer for his presentation.

34. Priority Delivery Plan – Quarter 3

Members noted the latest performance information (Item 7.1 – 7.11 of the Official Minutes of the Council). The Head of Economic Development outlined the current position in relation to the objectives and he highlighted the following:-

Improving skills and accessibility to local employment opportunities

NEET's – this information was now not available at District level and would be reviewed for next year.

Maintain an adequate supply of employment land in line with the Cannock Chase Local Plan (Part 1) Policy CP8

Officers would be aiming to include the additional employment land in the next version of the Local Plan given the loss of Rugeley Power Station and the proposed relocation of Gestamp.

Secure improvements to Cannock Railway Station (in association with improved connectivity between Mill Green Designer Outlet Village, the station and the town Centre), Hednesford and Rugeley Railway stations

Members noted that improvements to link Mill Green Nature Reserve to the station had been secured through a Section 106 Agreement as part of the planning process for the Mill Green Designer Outlet Village. The Committee considered that improved links between the station and the Mill Green Designer Outlet Village was essential along with station improvements. A Member commented that WMCA may be able to assist in this matter. The Head of Economic Development confirmed that the Chase Line had been identified for strategic improvements; however, this would be a lengthy process. The

Committee considered that the service provided by Network Rail required significant improvement before the opening of the Designer Village.

Respond to the announcement of the closure of Rugeley Power Station in the summer of 2016 through supporting a co-ordinated partnership task force to assist staff in gaining new employment and to plan for the future use of the site

The Committee noted that the timescale had slipped. This was out of Council control as it was reliant on the task force making decisions for the site. There was a requirement for the site to be remediated but it would take 2-3 years to demolish the existing structures. Members noted that although the land at the site outlined for possible housing development was in Lichfield District Council's area the land within Cannock Chase District Council's area was suitable for employment land and therefore this would generate business rates. Members considered that there should be a mention of the Rugeley Power Station in the Local Plan revision. The Head of Economic Development assured the Committee that a narrative would be included and would be similar to Lichfield District Council's who had already revised their Local Plan.

Work in partnership with the Environment Agency to deliver the Rugeley Flood Alleviation Scheme

Concern was expressed that there had been a delay with the scheme. Pile driving had commenced and would continue until June. There was an issue with red clay being deposited on the highway. Road sweepers were out sweeping the roads but the problem persisted, particularly along Sandy Lane and Hednesford Road. The Head of Economic Development would take this up with the Environment Agency on behalf of the Committee and ascertain how long it was anticipated it would continue.

Seek opportunities for Cannock Chase Council to employ more apprentices and provide an increased number of work experience placements

Members noted that Officers were working with the developers of Mill Green Designer Village regarding a "Skills Academy". The Committee discussed the "Apprenticeship Levy" due to come into force this year. It was noted that some employees regarded the Levy as a tax whereas others supported apprenticeships and would get compensatory support for doing so. A Member referred to the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) which local construction companies had to pay. This was in addition to paying the Apprenticeship Levy and therefore these companies were paying twice. The Head of Economic Development commented that this maybe something that the Committee may want to include on their Work Programme for the forthcoming year.

35. Work Programme Review

The Head of Economic Development referred to the Work Programme attached to the agenda which outlined the issues the Committee had looked at during 2016/17. The Scrutiny Committees had been reshaped for 2017/18 and would

meet less frequently. He asked that Members let him know any ideas for the Work Programme for the forthcoming Municipal Year in order that a prompt start could be made at the first meeting.

Members considered it was important that the work of the Committee focussed on Scrutiny next year and not on receiving information.

Given the reduced number of meetings the Head of Economic Development commented that the Committee may want to set up Working or Sub Groups to look at individual issues. These Groups would report back on their findings and refer any recommendations to Cabinet.

The meeting closed at 5.55pm.

CHAIRMAN