

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET

HELD ON THURSDAY, 21 AUGUST, 2014 AT 4:00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors:

Adamson, G.	Leader of the Council
Holder, M.J.	Deputy Leader of the Council and Crime and Partnerships Portfolio Leader
Lovell, A.	Corporate Improvement Portfolio Leader
Mitchell, Mrs C.	Culture & Sport Portfolio Leader
Bennett, C.	Environment Portfolio Leader
Davis, Mrs. M.A.	Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Leader
Allen, F.W.C.	Housing Portfolio Leader

30. Apologies

Apologies had been submitted by Councillors G. Alcott, Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader; and Mrs. D.M. Todd, Town Centre Regeneration Portfolio Leader. An apology had also been submitted by Mr. S. Brown, Chief Executive.

31. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members

No Declarations of Interests were made in addition to those already confirmed by Members in the Register of Members' Interests.

32. Updates from Portfolio Leaders

Deputy Leader and Crime and Partnerships

Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel

The Deputy Leader advised that the Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel had agreed a scheme of substitutes to address concerns about meetings being potentially inquorate. A revision to the Terms of Reference of the Panel had been drafted to this effect, which was required to be approved by all constituent local authorities. In accordance with the original Terms of Reference, the appointment would need to be made from the ruling Group at Council to reflect

the political control of the authority. The Deputy Leader suggested that, in accordance with the approved procedure for making additional appointments, the matter should be determined by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, which was agreed.

Corporate Improvement

Council Website

The Portfolio Leader advised that the Council's website was being redeveloped to be more functional and user-friendly. Although the redevelopment work had presented an opportunity for generating income through advertising, it had not been taken up as the resource implications of the associated moderation outweighed the relatively small potential income, circa £5,000.

Environment

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Liaison Group

The Portfolio Leader advised that a liaison group, which had been established to foster good working relationships between the Council and taxi trade, had held its inaugural meeting on 6 August, 2014, with 9 Taxi trade representatives; 2 Councillors; and 2 Officers in attendance. The liaison group was intended to act as a forum where issues could be raised and discussed to assist in the understanding of differing views and achieve resolution, where possible.

Enforcement Action for Spitting

The Portfolio Leader reminded Members that with effect from 1 September, 2014, the Council would commence taking action against spitting in public places by way of the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Health and Wellbeing

Contract for New Home Improvement Agency

The Portfolio Leader advised that confirmation had been received from the County Council that it now intended to proceed with the new arrangements for the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants using the new Home Improvement Agency that had been procured.

Housing

Affordable Homes Programme 2015-18

The Portfolio Leader advised Members that, following Cabinet's agreement on 17 April, 2014 to a bid for £1,472,000 of Affordable Housing Grant from the Homes and Communities Agency, under the 2015-18 Affordable Homes Programme, he was pleased to confirm that the Council's bid had been agreed in full.

The additional resources would enable the Council's new build programme to be extended by a further 12 dwellings, to a total of 92 properties. The additional dwellings would be built on former garage sites and would be let at affordable rents equivalent to social housing rents. A report detailing the proposed sites, the dwelling mix and the method of procurement would be submitted to Cabinet in the future.

33. Minutes of Cabinet Meeting of 17 July, 2014

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 July, 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed.

34. Forward Plan

The Forward Plan of Decisions for the period August to October, 2014 (Item 5.1 – 5.2 of the Official Minutes of the Council) was considered.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period August to October, 2014 be noted.

35. Recommendations and References for Determination and Minutes of Policy Development and Other Committees

None received.

36. St Michael's Drive, Brereton – Service Roads and Former Garage Site

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Housing and Waste Manager (Item 7.1 – 7.5 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The rear and side service roads to the Council's shops and flats at St Michael's Drive, Brereton be re-surfaced as part of the 2014-15 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme.
- (B) A budget of £24,000 be established to undertake the work through virement from the agreed contingency budget within the 2014-15 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme.
- (C) Scheme approval and permission to spend in relation to the re-surfacing work be agreed.
- (D) The former garage site at St Michael's Drive be retained for the Council's future new build programme.

Reasons for Decisions

The service roads to the Council's shops and flats at St Michael's Drive, Brereton were in extremely poor condition and required comprehensive re-surfacing at an estimated cost of £24,000.

There was no agreed budget to undertake the work and it was suggested that a budget be established from the £100,000 contingency sum which formed part of the agreed 2014-15 HRA Capital Programme.

The side service road also provided access to a former garage site which Cabinet previously agreed to dispose of, for residential development. There were however, limited sites to support any further extensions to the Council's new build programme and it was suggested that the former St Michael's Drive garage site be retained for the construction of further Council dwellings.

37. Rent Setting Policy

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Housing and Waste Manager (Item 8.1 – 8.5 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the revised housing rent setting policy as set out in Appendix 1 of the Report be agreed and implemented with effect from 1 April, 2015.

Reasons for Decisions

Following consultation, the Government had determined the revised national rent policy for social housing which would become operational in 2015-16.

The new policy would form part of the regulatory framework for social housing and as a result the Council's rent setting policy had been reviewed.

A revised policy, which had been formulated in accordance with the revised national rent guidance was attached as Appendix 1 to the report. It was proposed that the policy be agreed and implemented from 1 April, 2015.

38. Chase Line Rail Service – Revenue Support

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Economic Development (Item 9.1 – 9.6 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) A request from Centro, for Cannock Chase Council to provide a funding contribution as detailed in paragraph 5.4 of the Report, to maintain the Chase Line incremental rail services between Birmingham-Walsall-Cannock-Hednesford-Rugeley for Year 5 and part of Year 6, from December 2014 – March 2016 be agreed.
- (B) The Council's existing Rail Revenue Support and Rail Revenue Reserve budgets be used to provide financial support for the incremented rail services.
- (C) The Head of Economic Development, in consultation with the Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader, be authorised to enter into agreements with Centro and Staffordshire County Council for the continued operation of the existing incremental rail services, subject to agreement for contributions being secured from Centro and Staffordshire

County Council.

- (D) The Council engage in further discussions with Centro, Staffordshire County Council, the Department for Transport, London Midland, Network Rail, the Office of Rail Regulation, the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire LEP with the aim of achieving the continued operation of existing Chase Line rail services until March, 2016 and, if possible, their increase, for the remainder of the West Midlands rail franchise until June, 2017 and beyond in a future franchise.

Reasons for Decisions

Improving Chase Line rail services was a Council transport priority and it had previously agreed to provide funding to maintain services to Rugeley. The Council's short term priority was to identify a package that would allow retention of existing service levels, for the remainder of the West Midlands franchise to March 2016 and to secure their inclusion in a future franchise funded by the DfT. The application of the Council's Rail Revenue Support budget of approximately £9,750 per annum, to support the Chase Line services was both appropriate and value for money and recommended.

In February 2011, the DfT announced it would consider funding new or enhanced rail services from April, 2015, subject to local authorities sponsoring them for an initial three year period and establishing a positive business case. If short term funding for three years could be found to reinstate and maintain the incremental Chase Line services, longer term funding would be picked up by the DfT, in the next franchise after the existing West Midlands franchise ended, subject to affordability being demonstrated through a Benefit Cost Ratio of 1.5. The DfT had indicated that the franchise was likely to run for its full period until March, 2016, with a possible extension to June, 2017.

Centro was more recently advised by the DfT in May, 2014, that there was no prospect of them funding the services before March, 2016, hence the need to agree funding for a longer period, than envisaged. Centro submitted their business case work (from 2012-15) to the DfT in March, 2014, seeking their agreement to fund these services on a permanent basis in any re-negotiated contract from 2015 or 2016. This analysis showed that the services had an estimated Benefit Cost Analysis(BCR) ratio of 1.63:1 and were, therefore, above the DfT minimum threshold of 1.5:1. Centro believed the BCR would rise to more than 3:1 when the effects of electrification and the planned linespeed upgrade, were factored in. The services had seen growth in passenger revenue of more than 70% since introduction. A final decision from the DfT was still awaited.

The financial business case for restoring the withdrawn services, would be enhanced by the Government announcements of capital investment in the Chase Line. This included the announcement in July, 2012 of the £30m, Walsall-Rugeley electrification by December 2017, currently under construction.

The Office of Rail Regulation figures for 2012/13, showed that Cannock, Hednesford and Rugeley Town, generated nearly 600,000 passenger journeys

pa in total and counting Rugeley Trent Valley(Lichfield District), nearly 700,000 passenger journeys pa in total.

The Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) for the Centro metropolitan area, agreed on 25 June, to continue funding the Chase Line service enhancements from 14 December 2014 to 31 March 2016. Staffordshire County Council had given similar support.

39. Declaration of an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) Between Churchbridge and Norton Canes

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Environmental Health (Item 10.1 – 10.6 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The making of an Order under Section 83 of the Environment Act 1995 declaring an Air Quality Management Area be agreed.
- (B) The decision be exempt from the call-in process as a result of the timescales involved.

Reasons for Decisions

The outcome of an assessment of the air quality in the area between Churchbridge and Norton Canes in 2013 was that it was necessary to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) for the following area:

A stretch of the A5 Watling Street between the roundabout junction with the A34 Walsall Road at Churchbridge and the eastern district boundary with Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council.

The declaration of the AQMA was required because levels of nitrogen dioxide had been found to exceed the National Air Quality Objective. Under such circumstances the Council was obliged by the provisions of the Environment Act 1995 to declare an Air Quality Management Area. A map detailing the AQMA was included as Appendix 1 to the report.

40. Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED:

That the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

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PART 2

41. Disposal of 91-93 High Green, Cannock

Consideration was given to the Not for Publication Report of the Chief Executive (Item 13.1 – 13.7 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The proposals of the Burton Addiction Centre (BAC) to establish a substance misuse recovery community within the District based at 91-93 High Green, Cannock be noted; and previous property decisions in respect of the disposal of 91-93 High Green also be noted.
- (B) Cabinet agrees in principle to support the BAC by granting the BAC a lease of 91-93 High Green at less than best consideration in recognition of the social benefits from the services to be provided by BAC and the works required to the property.
- (C) The Corporate Director, in consultation with the Portfolio Leaders for Crime and Partnerships and Corporate Improvement, be authorised to lease 91-93 High Green to the BAC on terms and conditions to be agreed including for a consideration significantly less than market value.
- (D) Subject to the agreement of terms with the BAC, the previous decisions to maximise the financial return from the disposal of 91-93 High Green and to reimburse the Maintenance Reserve budget from the capital receipt, be set aside.

Reasons for Decisions

Whilst substance misuse services were available to people living in Cannock Chase there was an unmet need in respect of 'recovery communities', that is, the right environment *after* treatment to maintain rehabilitation. Burton Addiction Centre (BAC), an abstinence-based substance misuse organisation with national recognition for its success rate, had approached the Council with regards to leasing 91-93 High Green, Cannock. BAC wished to develop a

recovery community within Cannock subject to sourcing suitable premises.

The BAC were offering to establish their 'recovery community' within the District based on 91-93 High Green, including the potential of running a social enterprise for this purpose. They had also committed to funding the cost of works required to refurbish 91-93 High Green. In return, they were seeking to lease the premises at a reduced rental.

In January, 2012 Cabinet resolved to dispose of 91-93 High Green with the aim of maximising the financial return to the Council either from freehold disposal or commercial renting. Cabinet agreed to set aside the previous decision to maximise the financial return in the interests of securing the social, health and community safety benefits from establishing BAC services at 91-93 High Green. The Council had the power to dispose of its interest in 91-93 High Green at less than best consideration for the well-being benefits offered by the BAC.

Cabinet agreed also to set aside a previous decision to repay the Maintenance Reserve budget £20,000 out of any capital receipt from the disposal of 91-93 High Green.

Given the approach from BAC to offer a service to Cannock Chase residents which was currently not being met, it was appropriate that the Council reconsidered the previous resolution to maximise financial return in respect of 91-93 High Green. The recommendations asked Cabinet to consider the approach from BAC and provide for the terms to be agreed in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Leaders should Cabinet be minded to support the BAC.

The meeting closed at 4.35 p.m.

LEADER