

Cannock Chase Council
Minutes of the Meeting of the
Cabinet

Held on Thursday 10 December 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

Via Remote Access

Part 1

PRESENT: Councillors:

Adamson, G.	Leader of the Council
Alcott, G.	Deputy Leader of the Council and Town Centre Regeneration Portfolio Leader
Pearson, A.R.	Community Safety and Partnerships Portfolio Leader
Preece, J.P.T.L.	Corporate Improvement Portfolio Leader
Mitchell, Mrs. C.	Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader
Johnson, T.B.	Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader
Newbury, J.A.A.	Environment and Climate Change Portfolio Leader
Martin, Mrs. C.E.	Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Leader
Kraujalis, J.T.	Housing Portfolio Leader

52. Apologies

None received.

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

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

54. Updates from Portfolio Leaders

Housing

- **Hawks Green Depot Housing Scheme:** The Portfolio Leader provided a progress update on the scheme, reminding Members that 44 homes were being built on the site, of which 22 would be Council housing. Two photographs were displayed that showed some of the house builds in the latter stages of completion. There would be a phased handover of the Council properties starting in Spring 2021 and due to finish by October 2021.

(Councillor Mrs. C.E. Martin joined the meeting during this update.)

Town Centre Regeneration

- **Cannock Street Market:** The Portfolio Leader advised that the relaunched street market under new operator Bescot Promotions had got off to a successful start on Friday 4 December.

A total of 86 stalls, the layout of which had been specifically designed to adhere to social distancing guidelines, offered a wide variety of goods including locally sourced food; crafts and gifts as well Christmas related items and more traditional retail market goods.

26 existing Cannock street market traders were in attendance and they were joined by a further 12 traders that were new to Cannock. The market was very busy for most of the day, though the afternoon rain did cause it to become a little quieter later on. However, the street market remained open until 4:00pm on every trading day.

Aisles between stalls were wide and clear signage was on display at frequent intervals to remind everyone to maintain their social distance. Hand sanitiser stations were situated around the market for use by the public and traders in addition to hand sanitiser being available on individual stalls.

The newer Tuesday street market also took place earlier this week. It was a smaller market, amounting to 32 stalls, but still offered shoppers a wide variety of goods including fresh food and seasonal items. Bescot Promotions were working hard to develop the Tuesday street market and were confident that they would build on their existing regular traders to reach a point where the Tuesday market was as large and popular as the Friday street market. In addition, more traders were expected to join the street market once the Government had confirmed that existing social distancing guidelines could be relaxed.

Finally, the Council's Street Cleansing Supervisor had confirmed that, following both Friday's and Tuesday's street markets, the new operator left the town centre in a clean and tidy condition.

Culture and Sport

The Portfolio Leader updated on the following matters:

- **ITV Central interview:** ITV Central news would be interviewing the Countryside Services Supervisor on 11 December to help promote a new 'countryside' GCSE. The interview would be broadcast later that same day.
- **Stadium site damage:** Disappointingly, young trees planted at the site had been purposely damaged a couple of weeks ago. Fortunately, due to the diligence and hard work of the Parks and Open Spaces team, those responsible were picked up by the CCTV staff on the site cameras. The Police had been to visit those identified, and their parents, to speak about the incident. The parents were supportive of the action taken by the police, thanks were given to the CCTV team for their work on this.

Health and Wellbeing

- **Covid-19 Cases:** The Portfolio Leader advised that in terms of the current local / regional picture, Staffordshire (excluding Stoke-on-Trent) now had 821 open Covid-19 incidents.

Cannock Chase was presently showing the third lowest seven-day rate in Staffordshire, with 175 cases per 100,000 population. The highest areas were East Staffordshire with 219 and Newcastle-under-Lyme with 198. In comparison, the Stoke-on-Trent rate was 325 per 100,000.

The Staffordshire seven-day average rate was 179 cases per 100,000, the

West Midlands 161 and England 154.

There were currently 99 open incidents in Cannock Chase District, of which 21 were associated with adult care settings, 33 with education, 3 in community healthcare and 42 with workplaces.

As Members were aware, Staffordshire was in 'tier-3' at present, and current case rates suggested this was unlikely to change when the next national review took place on 16 December and tiers were reassessed.

The testing rate in Cannock Chase compared favourably with other Districts in Staffordshire, and the testing facility at the Civic Centre was being well used, though not at full capacity. The positive test rate in the District was 6.4% of those tested, compared with 6.3% for the West Midlands.

Environmental Health continued to respond to ongoing notifications of affected settings and workplaces across the District.

The Council's Covid Support Team was continuing its work during daytimes and evenings / nights and weekends. Some minor non-compliance issued had been identified and addressed.

In respect of an issue that occurred last weekend on Cannock Chase, at Birches Valley, Members were advised that this was caused by misreporting on social media that a Christmas Market was taking place. In fact, only the same refreshment cabins were present as in previous years, and the organisers, Forestry England, had now removed all of these. The organisers were unaware of a viral Facebook post that promoted the cabins as an attraction in their own right, rather than simply to provide refreshment to people buying Christmas trees.

Appointments for testing site can be booked by dialling 119 and asking to book for Cannock, confirm only those showing symptoms.

Economic Development and Planning

The Portfolio Leader updated on the following matters:

- **Business Grants:** Officers continued to pay grants to businesses affected by Covid-19. Up until last Friday (4 December), the Council had paid out nearly £670,000 to 454 businesses that were forced to close during the recent national lockdown.

Following the end of lockdown, the Council had updated its policy to accommodate payments under the tiered restrictions. In summary:

- Businesses that could not open at all would receive fortnightly payments of between £667 and £1,500 depending on the rateable value of the property that they were in.
- Restaurants etc. that operated as takeaway only could also get this amount.
- Leisure, hospitality and accommodation businesses that could open but had little or no trade would get between £467 and £1,050 per fortnight.
- A sum of just under £2m was available to allocate by way of fortnightly payments to businesses that did not fit the above categories but could demonstrate a severe loss of income. Whilst priority was given to engineering, manufacturing, construction, transport and vehicle repair

businesses, discretion existed to pay businesses outside of these sectors.

The application process for these discretionary grants opened last weekend and payments would start to be made shortly.

Similarly, the first recurring payments to businesses that were 'locked down' would be paid within the next few days.

The Prime Minister had announced that 'wet-led' pubs would receive a one-off £1,000 grant in recognition of the loss of Christmas trade. The full guidance on this had yet to be provided, but the appropriate measures would be put in place. A 'wet-led' pub was one whose sale of food was less than 50% of its trade. It was hoped to make the process as simple as possible, but the Council would be bound by any conditions included in the guidance.

- **Promotion of businesses in the District:** Following a suggestion made by the Deputy Leader, Officers were looking into the feasibility of an 'expo' / trade fair being held (either online, or physically later in 2021) in order to promote businesses in the District and allow such businesses to come and advertise their goods and services.

Environment and Climate Change

The Portfolio Leader updated on the following matters:

- **Pay and Display machines:** The new contactless payment machines were now in place at all the Council-owned car parks, and card readers were to be added to the machines on the car park at the rear of the Civic Centre. Thanks were given to those staff involved with this work for completion in such a short timeframe (less than two weeks). To date 129 payments had been made by card. Users were asked to report to the Council any teething problems experienced with the new equipment.
- **Fly-tipping campaign 2021:** Following on from the increased incidents of fly tipping during 2020, a new campaign would be launched in the new year to let would be fly-tippers know they were being watched and would be prosecuted. Information would also be provided on how residents could report any incidents.
- **Free car parking offer:** As reported by the Leader at full Council on 25 November, free parking on all Council-owned car parks in the District was available every Saturday in December up to Christmas, and furthermore, free parking was always provided on Sundays.

Leader of the Council

- **Covid-19 funding support:** The Leader advised that the leaders of all local authorities in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent had jointly written to the Prime Minister to ask that more funding support be provided to the hospitality and leisure sectors operating in the area due to being in tier 3 of the Covid-19 restrictions. The letter also requested for an early review of the restrictions so that we could be moved down to tier 2 as soon as possible. The District's case would be strengthened if figures were looked at locally, rather than countywide (with Stoke included). No response had been received as yet, but it was hoped the requests would be viewed favourably.

55. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2020 be approved as a correct record.

56. Forward Plan

The Forward Plan of Decisions for the period December 2020 to February 2021 (Item 5.1 – 5.2 of the Official Minutes of the Council) was considered.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period December 2020 to February 2021 be noted.

57. Strategic Risk Register

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Governance and Corporate Services (Item 6.1 – 6.28).

RESOLVED:

That the Strategic Risk Register be approved and the progress made in the identification and management of the strategic risks be noted.

Reasons for Decisions

All strategic risks and associated action plans had been reviewed, and the Council risk profile was summarised as below:

Risk Status	Number of Risks at 31 May 2020	Number of Risks at 31 October 2020
Red (High)	4	4
Amber (Medium)	3	3
Green (Low)	0	0
Total	7	7

58. Housing Services 2019/20 Annual Report

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Housing and Partnerships (Item 7.1 – 7.18).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The draft 2019-20 Housing Services Annual Report be agreed, for circulation to all the Council's Housing tenants.
- (B) If required, the Head of Housing and Partnerships, following consultation with the Housing Portfolio Leader, be authorised to make amendments to the draft 2019-20 Housing Services Annual Report prior to circulation.

Reasons for Decisions

The Annual Report must be made available to all tenants, and a copy of the final

document would be placed on the Council's website.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the publication and subsequent delivery of the 'Hometalk' magazine to tenants has been paused. When it was safe to resume delivery arrangements a copy of the Annual Report would be circulated to tenants with the next edition of the magazine.

59. Jobs and Skills Opportunities in Cannock Chase to Support Economic Recovery

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Economic Prosperity (Item 8.1 – 8.12).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The current economic context that had arisen because of the Covid-19 pandemic be noted.
- (B) The pipeline of jobs and skills opportunities outlined in the report and set out in detail at Appendix 1 of the report, be noted.
- (C) The Economic Prosperity Strategy be refreshed to take account of the changed economic climate and to re-focus on supporting new jobs and skills opportunities, with the aim to present this to Cabinet in 2021.

Reasons for Decisions

To detail a set of jobs and skills opportunities to support the economic recovery of the District.

60. Statement of Community Involvement – Addendum December 2020

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Economic Prosperity (Item 9.1 – 9.13).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The revisions to the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement, required in light of changes to national guidance arising from the Coronavirus pandemic, be authorised on a temporary basis. The temporary revisions would be made by way of an Addendum to the current Statement of Community Involvement, a copy of which was attached at Appendix A of the report.
- (B) The Head of Economic Prosperity, in liaison with the Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader, be authorised to make any necessary minor changes to the Addendum prior to publication.
- (C) The Head of Economic Prosperity, in liaison with the Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader, be authorised to determine as a result of Government guidance, when the temporary changes should cease to be required and thereafter remove the Addendum with the effect of re-instating the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

Reasons for Decision

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 and National Planning Practice Guidance required local authorities to review their Statements of Community Involvement (SCI) in light of the Coronavirus pandemic. SCIs were required to reflect social distancing in any consultation activities to allow plan-making to continue as well as decision making activities.

The SCI had been reviewed, and the Addendum set out the consultation methods that would be temporarily suspended in view of social distancing restrictions. The revised temporary methods were deemed to conform to current guidance and were highlighted and would be prioritised as a means of carrying out consultation until it was safe to reinstate the full range of methods when restrictions were lifted.

The SCI Addendum would be published on the Council's website alongside the current adopted SCI.

61. Recommendations Referred from Council

Consideration was given to the recommendations referred to Cabinet from the full Council meeting held on 25 November 2020, as included at item 10 of the Cabinet agenda.

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) A strategic review of all boardwalks and footbridges in the District be undertaken and the outcome of the review be reported back to Cabinet for consideration.
- (B) A feasibility study be undertaken to determine the costs of installing broadcasting equipment in the Council Chamber, and the outcome of the study be reported back to Cabinet for consideration.

Reasons for Decisions

Works to repair / replace boardwalks and footbridges could not be delivered in the current or next financial year as funding was not available. The review would enable the Council to understand all costs involved with any such works and determine whether Staffordshire County Council had responsibility for the upkeep of any of the sites identified.

Provision of broadcasting equipment in the Council Chamber was reviewed in 2016, and cost estimates at the time were between £35,000 to £40,000. The outcome of the study would help Cabinet to determine whether this was a priority need for the Council when considered alongside required service delivery and other identified / requested projects.

The meeting closed at 4:50 p.m.

LEADER