

Cannock Chase Council
Minutes of the Meeting of the
Cabinet

Held on Thursday 11 November 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

In the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Cannock

Part 1

Present:

Councillors:

Lyons, Mrs. O.	Leader of the Council
Jones, B.	Deputy Leader of the Council and Neighbourhood Safety & Partnerships Portfolio Leader
Jones, Mrs. V.	Community Engagement, Health & Wellbeing Portfolio Leader
Sutherland, M.	District Development Portfolio Leader
Johnson, J.P.	Environment & Climate Change Portfolio Leader
Fitzgerald, Mrs. A.A.	Housing, Heritage & Leisure Portfolio Leader
Hewitt, P.M.	Innovation & High Street Portfolio Leader

49. Apologies

None received.

50. 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.

51. Updates from Portfolio Leaders

(i) Leader of the Council

The Leader updated in respect of the following:

- **11 November: Armistice Day**

The Leader advised that the Council had observed the anniversary of the end of the First World War with a two minute silence.

On Remembrance Sunday, Members and Officers would be attending various services across district to lay wreaths and pay their respects.

The Leader said that all should take the opportunity that day to remember and never forget the brave and ultimate sacrifice that so many gave in order that people in the present were able to enjoy the freedoms they had.

- **Covid-19 Update**

Cannock Chase district was currently the lowest rate in Staffordshire, below West Midlands and England averages. The latest rate was 345.9 per 100,000.

It was noted that the majority of cases were still amongst the 11-18 and 5-10 age groups.

Cabinet colleagues were reminded to encourage residents to undertake regular lateral flow tests and register for PCR tests if experiencing symptoms of Covid-19, and to avail themselves of booster vaccinations when offered to them.

- **Rugeley Swimming Pool**

The recent works had all been due to unforeseen issues that had arisen over the lockdown period. Originally, this had amounted to repairing the pool tank as a leak had been identified, and the previous administration had agreed to begin that work in January, 2021 at a cost of £300,000. A decision had also been made to bring forward replacement of the boilers at the same time to avoid a further future closure, at an additional cost of £190,000.

During the initial works, further issues were discovered and works to repair and waterproof the overflow channel undertaken, which was almost completed.

Unfortunately, a further issue had since been identified affecting the poolside tiles, which were coming away, where the waters overflow was located.

Inspection of the issue indicated that the tiles would have a limited lifespan if left unaddressed. Therefore, a decision had been taken under emergency powers for the work to be undertaken at same time.

The work had commenced and would take 5-6 weeks. It would then take a further 2 weeks to refill the pool and undertake the final commission of the boilers once the pool was full.

It was considered sensible to get all the required works completed at the same time rather than reopening knowing that a further potentially extensive closure would be required at a future date.

The Leader would also report on the matter at Full Council in December.

- **Chase Chamber of Commerce AGM**

The Leader had been invited to be a Guest Speaker at Cannock Chase Chamber of Commerce's AGM. This had been an opportunity to share the administration's aspirational vision for the District and build strong relations with local businesses. Feedback had been that this was well received.

- **Meeting with Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire and Rescue, and Crime**

The Leader had enjoyed a positive meeting with Ben Adams, Staffordshire's Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. Both parties were keen to strengthen the relationship between PFCC's Office and the Council and work collaboratively, where possible, moving forwards. It had been agreed to set regular meetings every couple of months in the diary.

(ii) District Development

The Portfolio Leader updated in respect of the following:

- **Staffs Means Business and Additional Restrictions Grant Investment in Apprenticeships**

All £250,000 of Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) originally allocated to apprenticeship delivery had been committed across 30 employers, with all 30 having a grant agreement in place.

The £250,000 had generated the full 50 apprenticeship opportunities target that was in place. To date, 15 apprentices had been with their employer for the 6-week payment trigger date. The remainder were waiting for the 6-week date or were in the process of recruiting.

In addition, in Cannock Chase District there was an additional commitment to fund 1 employer for 2 apprentices via the Staffordshire County Council contribution of funding not using the ARG allocation.

- **Youth Futures Foundation ‘Connected Futures’ Fund**

Cannock Chase Council was one of the eligible local authorities for the Youth Futures Foundation ‘Connected Futures’ Fund. Bids were being sought from partnerships (comprised of 3 or more organisations) and support was focused around improving backgrounds of young people from marginalised backgrounds. Any potential partners wishing to bid were openly encouraged to contact the Council so work could be done to submit a bid by the application deadline of 17 January 2022.

(iii) Environment & Climate Change

The Portfolio Leader updated in respect of the following:

- **Waste & Recycling**

A new Waste & Recycling Calendar was being published from December 2021 to March 2022 that detailed in a simplified manner which items should or should not be put in each bin. After that, the Dual Stream Recycling project should be introduced, and it was hoped to have the new bags delivered to residents before then.

The Council was aware of the ongoing HGV driver shortage, which to date had had a limited impact on recycling collections.

There had been another rejection free period for dry mixed recycling, with the last rejected load being in August 2021.

- **Climate Emergency**

The Council’s costed action plan was still ongoing with consultants and a report was expected imminently.

Energy Catapult and EQUANS / Zero Carbon Rugeley (formerly Engie) were now joining AECOM to work on the costed action plan.

(iv) Housing, Heritage & Leisure

The Portfolio Leader updated in respect of the following:

- **Parks Repair Works**

The Council was using an allocation of £50,000 to repair and upgrade the flooring of 16 parks across the District where work was required. Having visited Cannock

Park yesterday it was pleasing to see the repairs work these had been completed.

(v) Innovation and High Streets

The Portfolio Leader updated in respect of the following:

- **Levelling Up Fund Bid**

As Cabinet were aware, the Council had been successful in receiving £20m from the Government's Levelling Up Fund to regenerate Cannock Town Centre.

Having now succeeded, local people were encouraged to submit their views on the vision to transform the town centre via an online consultation and virtual exhibition called 'A brighter future for Cannock town centre – welcome to our virtual exhibition'.

The multi-storey car park, which was a current eyesore, needed to be addressed, and enhancements made to areas such as Church Street.

The bid was built on previous work undertaken by the Council when it unsuccessfully bid for the Future High Streets Fund, which was also focused on Cannock town centre. This was considered to be the only regeneration scheme sufficiently developed enough to stand any chance of attracting Government funding.

It was appreciated that work was needed in all the District's town centres, and the Administration was developing a pipeline of projects to ensure the Council was ready to utilise future opportunities.

The Leader asked that the Cabinet's thanks be recorded for the work of Officers, consultants and all the other partners involved who had contributed to the bid coming together and securing the funding.

(vi) Neighbourhood Safety & Partnerships

The Portfolio Leader updated in respect of the following:

- **Temporary Emergency Accommodation for Asylum Seekers in Cannock**

This week a hotel in Cannock started to receive a group of asylum seekers at the request of the Home Office. The asylum seekers were being cared for by Serco as part an arrangement with the Home Office.

The Home Office did not comment on numbers or detailed accommodation locations of people seeking asylum, and the protocol was that any temporary accommodation was not disclosed.

Across the county, local authorities and their partner organisations had received similar requests to find emergency accommodation for asylum seekers, many of whom had fled their own countries to escape conflict and persecution, whilst full assessments of their situation were carried out.

Cannock Chase Council, as the host local authority in this instance, had been preparing for their arrival with Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Police, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service and NHS Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Clinical Commissioning Groups, to manage what would be a temporary stay at the hotel. None of the asylum seekers would be housed permanently in the District.

The local authorities and partners had a duty of care to look after the health and wellbeing of all those seeking asylum whilst in the District. This had involved the fire and rescue service visiting the premises to ensure fire and safety arrangements met their requirements, local police officers speaking to the immediate community to provide reassurance and the NHS available to provide medical support as necessary.

It was understood that the issue of people seeking asylum in the UK may raise concerns, but the residents of Cannock Chase were asked to be kind to these visitors during their brief stay. They were here in emergency circumstances for a matter of weeks as their claims were processed by the Home Office.

52. Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2021 be approved.

53. Forward Plan

The Forward Plan of Decisions for the period November 2021 to January 2022 (Item 5.1 – 5.2) was considered:

Resolved

That the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period November 2021 to January 2022 be noted.

54. Quarter 2 Performance Report 2021/22

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Governance and Corporate Services (Item 6.1 – 6.60).

Resolved:

That the second quarter progress and performance information related to the delivery of the Council's priorities, as detailed in report Appendices 1a-1c and 2a-2c, be noted.

Reasons for Recommendations

The performance information allowed Cabinet to monitor progress in delivery of the Council's Corporate Priorities.

55. Strategic Risk Register

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Governance and Corporate Services (Item 7.1 – 7.26).

Resolved:

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

Reasons for Decision

Cabinet was required to approve the Strategic Risk Register.

56. 2020/21 Infrastructure Funding Statement

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Economic Prosperity (Item 8.1 – 8.24).

Resolved:

That Council, at its meeting to be held on 15 December 2021, be recommended to adopt, and approve for publication on the Council’s website the annual Infrastructure Funding Statement for the financial year 2020/21, as included at Appendix 1 of the report.

Reasons for Decisions

The Government had amended the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (‘the CIL Regulations’) to improve transparency regarding developer contributions paid under Section 106 of the Town and County Planning Act 1990 (as amended) (‘Section 106 Agreements’). The support this, councils were required to produce and publish an annual infrastructure funding statement. The statement must include details of developer contributions collected and spent both historically and for the reported year, and a statement of infrastructure projects which the Council, as charging authority, would be, or may be, wholly or partly funding from CIL.

Since Cannock Chase District Council adopted its CIL Charging Schedule in June 2015, details of receipts and spending of CIL had been published each year. However, the requirement to have Section 106 information publicly available was a fairly new requirement (except when requested via the Freedom of Information Act 2000).

57. Voluntary Sector Community Support

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Housing and Partnerships (Item 9.1 – 9.5).

Resolved:

That:

- (A) The work of Support Staffordshire with the local voluntary sector over the last 12 months as set out in report section 3, be noted, using their core funding from Staffordshire County Council and the additional funding provided by Cannock Chase District Council, as agreed by Cabinet in November 2020.
- (B) A grant allocation of £11,150 to Support Staffordshire be approved, for a period of 16 months from December 2021 to March 2023, to deliver an additional 5 hours per week to undertake local work, over and above that undertaken through the contract Support Staffordshire had in place with Staffordshire County Council:
 - (i) To continue to support the recovery of local voluntary sector organisations from the impact of their operations of the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - (ii) To identify and advise on options for anchor organisation arrangements in the District to signpost people to organisations that could support them.

Reasons for Decisions

Some other districts and boroughs in Staffordshire had established “anchor organisation” arrangements that helped to co-ordinate voluntary sector activity. This

had proved especially valuable during periods of lockdown and shielding. Other district and boroughs, including Cannock Chase, did not have such anchor organisations. This resulted in signposting having to be undertaken by District Council officers based on local knowledge. Whilst this had been done to meet demands of the pandemic, by reallocating Officers to this activity, it was not a sustainable model, as, under normal circumstances, there was very little capacity for this work.

The strength of existing networks in the District was variable. There was a good infrastructure operating across Rugeley and Brereton, including 'Good Neighbour' schemes. There were also close working relationships in Chadsmoor, Heath Hayes and Wimblebury and other local communities. The south of the District, around Cannock town centre and the east, and around Hednesford, had a much more limited infrastructure. If anchor arrangements could be established to cover the District, this would help to signpost people to the support available and give, particularly smaller voluntary sector organisations, an infrastructure to work within.

58. Energy Company Obligation – Flexible Eligibility

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles (Item 10.1 – 10.8).

Resolved:

That:

- (A) The revised Statement of Intent, as attached at report Appendix 1, be adopted.
- (B) The Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles be granted delegated authority, in consultation with the Housing, Heritage & Leisure Portfolio Leader, to approve subsequent Statements of Intent.

Reasons for Decisions

Cabinet was requested to approve the Energy Company Obligation Statement of Intent so that eligible households in the District could continue to benefit from additional funding to improve energy efficiency and mitigate fuel poverty and carbon emissions.

59. Supporting the 'Local Cultural Place Makers, Global Change Makers' Programme

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles (Item 11.1 – 11.13).

Resolved:

That:

- (A) The contents of the report be noted, along with the valuable contribution that the Cannock Chase Cultural Education Partnership made, and the 'Local Cultural Place Makers, Global Change Makers' programme could have for young people in contributing positively to addressing arts and culture education and inequalities within the District.

(B) A contribution of £15,000 funding to the Local Cultural Place Makers, Global Change Makers programme be agreed, in line with report paragraph 6.1, as a matched funding element.

Reasons for Decisions

To support the creation of opportunities for young people within the District to engage with arts and culture, which in turn could have a positive impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

60. Free Car Parking on Saturdays Before Christmas in December

(Item 12.1 – 12.2).

Resolved:

That the urgent decision to allow the provision of free Saturday car parking across the Council's pay and display car parks around the District during December 2021 (on 4th, 11th, and 18th December), to encourage shoppers into the town centres to support the local economy be agreed.

Reasons for Decisions

Historically, each year the Council had allowed for free parking on the two or three Saturdays before Christmas in December. This provision was in recent years included within the Leader's speech to Council in the previous February. It was not included in the former Leader's speech in February 2021 and therefore authorisation for the provision was required.

The meeting closed at 7:08 p.m.

Leader