

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET

HELD ON THURSDAY 12 JULY 2018 AT 4:00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors:

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| Adamson, G. | Leader of the Council |
| Alcott, G. | Deputy Leader of the Council and Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader |
| Bennett, C. | Crime and Partnerships Portfolio Leader |
| Mitchell, Mrs. C. | Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader |
| Martin, Mrs. C.E. | Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Leader |
| Pearson, A.R. | Housing Portfolio Leader |
| Todd, Mrs. D.M. | Town Centre Regeneration Portfolio Leader |

20. Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillors J.T. Kraujalis, Corporate Improvement Portfolio Leader and J.P.T.L. Preece, Environment Portfolio Leader.

21. 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.

22. Updates from Portfolio Leaders

Economic Development and Planning

Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) Awards for 'Best in Class' 12/07/18

The Portfolio Leader advised that the Council's Economic Development team entered the FSB Local Authority Small Business Friendly Awards 2018 earlier in July and was delighted to confirm that earlier in the day the Council was announced as the winners of the 'Best in Class' category and were presented with an award.

The award was for the work carried out by the team on Town Centre Business Rates and the support they offered to retail businesses taking space or growing in town centres. This was the first time the award had been given to a local authority.

The team administered the Council's Town Centre Business Rates Relief Scheme. The purpose of this scheme was to promote the occupation of empty retail units in the town centre locations of Cannock, Hednesford and Rugeley. Subject to criteria being met and certain priority factors the Council provided 100% discount on business rates for either a 12 or 24 month period, or a maximum of £10,000 contribution toward business rates, whichever was the lower.

In all cases the maximum award from the Council under this scheme would be £10,000 for each approved application.

The FSB clearly saw the benefit of this scheme especially in the current climate where small town retailers were struggling to survive.

The Portfolio Leader asked that the Economic Development team be congratulated for their work in achieving the award on behalf of the Council.

Crime and Partnerships

Knife Crime

The Portfolio Leader advised that he had attended a meeting at Staffordshire Police HQ in respect of knife crime. Although not as prevalent as in other areas of the country, knife crime in Staffordshire had increased by 22% in the last 12 months and was of concern.

Safer Neighbourhood Panels Funding

The Portfolio Leader advised that he had raised the issue at the most recent Police and Crime Panel meeting. In response to the Portfolio Leader's questions, the Police and Crime Commissioner had advised that the SNP funding had not been withdrawn from local authorities, it had been re-allocated. The Portfolio Leader had sought a detailed written assurance to this effect from the PCC, which he was still awaiting.

Culture and Sport

Green Flag Awards

The Portfolio Leader advised that the Council had successfully retained Green Flag status for all its parks, and she had been invited to attend an awards presentation ceremony at Walsall Council House on Tuesday, 17 July, 2108.

The Portfolio Leader asked that Parks and Open Spaces team be congratulated for their work in achieving the awards on behalf of the Council.

23. Minutes of Cabinet Meeting of 14 June, 2018

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June, 2018, be approved as a correct record and signed.

24. Forward Plan

The Forward Plan of Decisions for the period July to September, 2018 (Item 5.1 – 5.3 of the Official Minutes of the Council) was considered.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period July to September, 2018 be

noted.

25. Cannock Chase Skills and Innovation Hub – Memorandum of Understanding

Consideration was given to the Report of the Managing Director (Item 6.1 – 6.7 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The recent development of skills and further education opportunities in the District be noted.
- (B) The Memorandum of Understanding with South Staffordshire College related to the development of a Skills and Innovation Hub in the District be approved.
- (C) The development of a Retail Skills Academy locally in the District by Walsall College linked to the planned McArthur Glen Outlet Village, Cannock be noted.
- (D) Proposals for the establishment of an Engineering Academy in the District in 2019 be received at a later meeting of Cabinet.
- (E) The re-allocation of the £10,000 grant to Support Staffordshire to support the work to develop the Skills and Innovation Hub and the proposal to establish an Engineering Academy be approved.

Reasons for Decisions

Cannock Chase was the only District / Borough in Staffordshire that did not currently have any further education (FE) delivered locally in the District. Students travelled to Walsall, Stafford and further afield to access FE. The District had lower than average skills and qualifications levels when compared to all other areas in Staffordshire, excluding Stoke-on-Trent.

Opportunities had recently arisen for the District Council to work in partnership with both Walsall and South Staffordshire Colleges to establish locally provided FE in the District. The Report set out the detail of those opportunities and asked Cabinet to approve a Memorandum of Understanding with South Staffordshire College. It was critical that the District Council played a pro-active and constructive role in improving skill levels and employment in the District as these were key to future economic and social prosperity.

26. District Needs Analysis and Ward Profiles 2018

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Governance and Corporate Services (Item 7.1 – 7.66 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The Report and Appendices be noted.
- (B) Internal and external publication of the District Needs Analysis, District Profile and Ward Profiles be approved.

Reasons for Decisions

The key issues of the Report and Appendices were the range of statistical and perceptions data available to the Council in order to assist with and inform the priority setting and decision making processes. The information provided in the Appendices to the Report were intended to highlight and illustrate the key areas of significance in the District. However, due to the frequently changing nature of statistical information, the documents were not intended to serve as a definitive position statement for the District.

27. Social Alarms Service

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Governance and Corporate Services (Item 8.1 – 8.7 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The actions taken to externalise the Social Alarms and Out of Hours Service be endorsed.
- (B) The awarding of the contract to Redditch Borough Council for a period of 2 years, with the option to extend for a further year, be endorsed.
- (C) The actuarial strain payments set out in the Financial Implications section of the Report be approved.

Reasons for Decisions

The Social Alarms Service had for a period of time faced resilience issues and now faced a severe staffing shortage which meant that the Council could not continue to provide an ongoing, comprehensive 24/7 service. Given the vulnerable nature of the clients (Council housing tenants and private) who used the service this was not acceptable, so the decision was made to find an alternative provide to ensure the safety of the Council's clients.

It was necessary to act quickly on this issue as it would not have been possible to provide a full 24/7 service after 15 July, 2018.

Whilst it had not been possible to carry out a tendering exercise in the time available, 3 quotations / proposals had been sought. Following evaluation of these, a decision was taken to transfer the service to Redditch Borough Council (RBC).

Work had commenced to ensure the seamless transfer of the service to RBC. It was aimed to complete the transfer during the week of 9 July, 2018, and all clients would be informed accordingly. Although all clients would initially be transferred to RBC, private clients would have the option to cancel and move to another provider if they so wished.

All of the Social Alarms staff had been informed. The Installer posts would transfer with the service to RBC, and the Council was in negotiations, including seeking alternative employment opportunities, with the remaining call handling staff since it was recognised that the transfer to RBC could be an unreasonable change to their terms and conditions of employment.

There were financial implications arising from the transfer of the service in addition to the one off severance payments. It was envisaged however that the

overall cost to the Council would be financially neutral, although there would be additional costs to the General Fund pending a full service review, and a saving on the Housing Revenue Account.

28. Approval to Spend Section 106 Monies: Improvements to Pedestrian / Cycle / Canal Links in Rugeley

Consideration was given to the Report of the Interim Head of Economic Development (Item 9.1 – 9.9 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The re-allocation of S106 monies back into the current Capital Programme budget 2018/19 and 2019/20 to facilitate the implementation of improvements to pedestrian / cycle / canal links in Rugeley be approved.
- (B) Expenditure of the S106 monies held by the Council to carry out the pedestrian / cycle / canal towpath improvement as generally described in the Report be authorised. Implementation would be carried out in partnership with Staffordshire County Council as the Highways Authority and the Canal & River Trust in relation to Canal access / towpath works.
- (C) The entering into of any legal agreements between Cannock Chase Council, Staffordshire County Council and the Canal & River Trust required to facilitate the funding and delivery of the proposed schemes be authorised.

Reasons for Decisions

A key element of the decision to grant planning permission for the Tesco store and associated food and drink units at Leathermill Lane / Power Station Road, Rugeley was the requirement for the development to fund an improved pedestrian / cycle link between the store and Rugeley town centre as part of the planning obligations (S106 agreement) signed in 2011. The aim of that element of the project was to maximise the opportunity for linked trips between the store and the town centre in order for the store to contribute to the overall vitality and viability of the town centre as envisaged in the policies of the Rugeley Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP). The funding allocated for the link was £256,000, with a further £12,500 potentially available from the separate element in the agreement related to town centre landscaping and environmental improvements. That element was delivered for the Council by Staffordshire County Council (SCC) during 2014.

A further component of the Tesco planning obligation was funding for improvements to pedestrian / cycle links between the store, the Trent & Mersey Canal and Towers Business Park, as described in Report paragraphs 5.4 and 5.5. The proposed scheme included a ramped access to the Trent & Mersey Canal towpath adjacent to Leathermill Lane bridge, improvements to Love Lane, including the section between the railway bridge and Towers and improvements to the canal towpath and Love Lane between the active and redundant railway bridges to enhance cycle linkages with existing routes.

Those public realm projects originated as an element of the aspiration to regenerate Rugeley town centre which emerged during preparation of the Rugeley Town Centre AAP. The Council applied for Local Enterprise

Partnership (LEP) funding of £1.3m as part of the Rugeley Improvement Package submission for Growth Deal Funding 2 to the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP (SSLEP) in 2015. Whilst £750,000 was allocated to the Rugeley Flood Alleviation Scheme, the remaining balance of £550,000 was de-allocated in November 2017 on the basis of non-submission of an acceptable business case (largely because the economic outputs had been delivered by the Flood Alleviation Scheme).

Planning obligations supporting delivery of the overall project had been secured largely from the Tesco retail development. Delivery of the final elements of the overall scheme had however been delayed due to internal restructuring and staffing changes at the Canal & River Trust (CRT) and SCC/Amey over recent years, in addition to limited staffing resource availability at CCDC. However, ongoing discussions had now progressed to an informal agreement on the remaining element of the project with the CRT and SCC, along with commencement of the detailed design stage. It was intended going forward that detailed design work would be carried out by the CRT and SCC and the work delivered by their Term Contractors, under the guidance of CCDC. The short section of cycle / footpath on CCDC land between the railway bridges would be implemented by SCC as part of their input into the scheme.

It was intended that the canal access scheme would be implemented during 2018/19 and the footway / cycleway improvements/links during/into 2019/20 by the partners using their statutory powers on land in their ownership. A legal agreement would document project delivery and payment arrangements to ensure appropriate management was carried out and CCDC would lead on this aspect.

The unspent balance in the Tesco S106 fund comprised of:

- £55,000 allocated to improvements to the canal and towpath access;
- £48,000 toward provision of the cycleway between Tesco and the Bypass;
- Unspent funds of £51,750 allocated to town centre landscaping and environmental improvements (part of a sum used as match funding for the Rugeley Partnership Scheme related to repairs to historic commercial buildings 2011-14).

In addition, a further £10,000 from the McDonald's restaurant development at Towers, £12,490 from the Westbury Homes housing scheme which adjoined the Canal and £11,725 from Elwells to compensate for loss of green space network were available to use in connection with this project.

29. Replacement Boardwalk at Laburnum Avenue, Cannock

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Housing and Partnerships (Item 10.1 – 10.5 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That an allocation of £25,000 to fund the replacement of the boardwalk situated on public open space at Laburnum Avenue, Cannock, be approved.

Reasons for Decision

A timber boardwalk, identified coloured green on the plan attached at Appendix 1 to the Report, was constructed by the Council across public open space at

Laburnum Avenue, Cannock, approximately 10 years ago to enable public access over land that could be boggy at times. A boardwalk was a walkway constructed from planks that sat slightly above ground level.

A number of the existing wooden planks had rotted and failed. In addition, the remainder of the boardwalk was showing signs of degradation due to wet rot and would inevitably fail in due course. The main timber frame supporting the boardwalk had also started to degrade.

In its current condition the boardwalk posed an immediate health and safety risk to the public. It also exposed the Council to an increased likelihood of insurance claims from individuals who had tripped or slipped whilst using it.

The most cost effective approach was for the Council to replace the entire boardwalk as a matter of urgency using recycled plastic planks. The advantage of plastic planks was that they had a longer life expectancy than timber (100 years) and were more fire resistant. In addition, replacing the whole boardwalk would give a more aesthetically pleasing result than patch repairs.

The disadvantage of undertaking a full replacement was a higher initial expenditure than patch repairs. However, the anticipated long term expenditure would be reduced and less frequent inspection would be necessary than for a boardwalk that was in a state of deterioration.

30. 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

31. Cannock Town Centre

Consideration was given to the Not for Publication Report of the Managing Director (Item 12.1 –12.14 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) A surrender of the Cannock town centre Multi-storey Car Park lease from St. Modwen Developments on the terms outlined in Appendix 1 of the Report be accepted.
- (B) The possible need to close the Multi-storey Car Park in part or full on surrender of the St. Modwen Developments lease be noted.
- (C) The purchase of four retail units in Market Hall Street, Cannock, from St. Modwen Developments on the agreed heads of terms outlined in Appendix 1 of the Report be approved.
- (D) Council, at its meeting to be held on 25 July, 2018, be requested to approval a capital allocation in the Council's Capital Programme 2018/19 to cover the purchase costs outlined in the Report and any related financial implications.
- (E) The outcome of the investment prospectus and associated procurement options to deliver a redevelopment leisure led scheme in Cannock town centre be received as quickly as possible.

Reasons for Decisions

Work had continued on the production of the investment prospectus for Cannock town centre as previously agreed by Cabinet in September 2015. The findings of the phase 1 prospectus work was nearing conclusion and would be subject to a report to Cabinet in the near future post phase 2 work.

The preliminary findings recommended the focus of any future redevelopment should be either on the core of the town centre (around the Multi-storey Car Park (MSCP)) or the Cannock Bus Station site.

In parallel to the prospectus work, an approach from potential developers was informally received by Officers regarding opportunities for redevelopment in Cannock town centre.

As soon as work on the potential options was complete, Officers would look to

present options back to Members. This would hopefully be achieved over the next four to five months.

Seizing the opportunity of delivering a leisure led redevelopment scheme of the nature proposed would require a financial risk to be taken by the Council. Members noted that whilst this was largely linked to acquiring assets at this stage, the strategy was not without risk and was highly likely to require further capital investment by the Council to make the scheme viable.

Although the prospectus work was continuing and there were no formal partners, the potential to acquire full control of the MSCP and four retail units within the core area had arisen. It was recommended that the acquisition of such sites at this moment in order to assemble a preferential site and secure a development partner was considered to be the only way to have any prospect of delivery of redevelopment over the short-medium term for the town centre.

In relation to the MSCP, at the same time as the phase 1 prospectus work was nearing conclusion, growing concerns regarding the MSCP structure and its integrity had emerged. The Council had ongoing concerns regarding the soundness of the structure with potential health and safety risks for its long term use by the public without serious investment in the structure by the Council.

The MSCP was currently an eyesore and not financially viable in its current form as a car park. As part of tackling structural concerns with the MSCP it had been necessary to engage with St. Modwen Developments (SMD) as the long leaseholder given their rights and responsibilities of the MSCP in their lease.

The Council and SMD had joint responsibility to maintain the MSCP and this had not been undertaken effectively by either party over many years. This resulted in the current poor state of repair and heightened health and safety concerns being raised of the MSCP, primarily through a lack of investment by both parties.

SMD had lease obligations that extended to making financial contributions toward the cost of repairs/maintenance of the MSCP structure.

The Council needed total control of the MSCP asset in order to reduce the complexities associated by multiple owners (without third party interests being involved) regarding the future of the MSCP. However, by taking this action, the surrender of the MSCP lease removed any legal obligation on SMD to contribute toward the cost of any repairs.

Negotiations with SMD had resulted in the final terms attached at Appendix 1 to the Report being agreed for both the MSCP lease surrender and the purchase of the retail shop units.

Cabinet needed to be conscious that there would be further decisions in the future to make especially regarding the indoor market facility in Cannock town centre. This would be the subject of future reporting given market charter rights, consultation and other potential implications involved with the Council making such a decision.

32. Debt Recovery

Consideration was given to the Not for Publication Report of the Head of Finance (Item 13.1 – 13.9 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

- (A) The amounts detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 to the Report be written off.
- (B) The actions of the Head of Finance in writing off the irrecoverable debts below £1,000, be noted.

Reasons for Decisions

Set out in Appendix 1 to the Report was a list of Council Tax arrears over £1,000 which could not be collected for the reasons stated. Included in the Appendix were 17 with arrears totalling £27,142.02.

Set out in Appendix 2 to the Report was a list of Non-Domestic arrears over £1,000 which could not be collected for the reasons stated. Included in the Appendix were 2 cases with arrears totalling £22,453.89.

The meeting closed at 4:35 p.m.

LEADER