

**CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**CABINET**

**HELD ON THURSDAY 13 AUGUST 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

**9. Apologies**

None.

**10. 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.

**11. Updates from Portfolio Leaders**

**Community Safety and Partnerships**

Review of Police and Crime Commissioners

The Portfolio Leader advised that following the Government announcement in July that the role of the Police and Crime Commissioners was to be reviewed, a number of questions had been raised to Members in relation to the review, what it would entail and what the likely outcomes would be.

Community Safety Hub and Safeguarding Referrals

The Portfolio Leader drew to Members attention the following numbers of Community Safety Hub (CSH) and Safeguarding Referrals for the period 21 May to 21 June 2020, compared to the same period in 2019:

	21/05/19 – 21/06/19	21/05/20 – 21/06/20	Change (+/-)
CSH Referrals	29	37	+8 (+28%)
Safeguarding Referrals (Adult and Child)	9	17	+8 (+89%)

## **Culture and Sport**

### Leisure Facilities

The Portfolio Leader advised that both of the District's leisure facilities had re-opened successfully for dry-side activities; Chase leisure centre on 25 July and Rugeley leisure centre on 1 August. Feedback from customers had been really good, with most classes at both centres being fully booked.

Videos showing the customer journey and featuring leisure centre staff had been developed to welcome back members and users. These could be found on the Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles (IHL) website and were well worth a look. All visits to both centres had to be booked in advance on the new booking system, which again could be accessed via IHL's website.

### 5s, Bradbury Lane

The Portfolio Leader advised that this facility re-opened on 10 August, and IHL was working on re-opening the museum of Cannock Chase toward the end of August.

### Rugeley Swimming Pool

The Portfolio Leader advised that the swimming pool at Rugeley leisure centre was still out of action but IHL had removed all the tiles from it and were currently preparing specifications to procure contractors to tender for the works required to bring the pool back into use as soon as practically possible.

### Tennis Awards

The Portfolio Leader advised that the Council's tennis coaching partners, Cheslyn Hay Tennis Club, had won the 2020 'Communities and Parks' award at the virtual Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) awards last week. Aimed at promoting more grass roots tennis participation, the Club, which boasted over 200 players, continued to deliver a range of coaching programmes including 'Tennis for Free' at Cannock park and Hednesford park.

This was a fantastic achievement for the Club, who already held the county award for Staffordshire and the LTA regional award for the Midlands. For anyone interested, 'Covid Free Tennis Coaching' sessions were being held throughout August every Tuesday and Friday morning at Hednesford park, and every Thursday and Sunday at Cannock park. Each session would last for 30 minutes in groups of no more than three, including a LTA Accredited Coach.

In response to a question from a Member about how this scheme could be accessed, the Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles advised that he would check this out, advise Members accordingly, and ensure this information was also displayed on the Council's website.

## **Economic Development and Planning**

### Economic Picture

The Portfolio Leader advised that as mentioned previously, the Covid-19 pandemic was having a massive impact upon the local economy, local businesses and residents/communities.

It was confirmed yesterday that the UK was now officially in a recession, with the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) estimate for April to June 2020 showing that the UK economy shrank by a record 20.4%, reflecting the impact of the pandemic and the lockdown. There was some encouraging news though in that the economy had started to recover, with GDP growth of 8.7% in June 2020 as lockdown measures were eased. It was however still too early to say whether this was part of a sustained 'v shaped' recovery though, and clearly it would be necessary to continue to monitor the impact of the recession on the District and continue with efforts to support local businesses through this difficult period.

In addition, the latest unemployment figures were published on Tuesday by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). In July, there were 3,660 residents out of work and claiming benefits, which equated to an unemployment rate of 5.8%. Although this was only a slight increase from the previous month, to date, 2,000 local residents had lost their jobs since March, and with the furlough scheme due to close at the end of October, it was expected that the unemployment numbers would sadly increase.

The focus over the coming months would be to redouble efforts to identify opportunities to create new jobs and investment to rebuild and renew the District's economy. The McArthurGlen Designer Outlet for example would create at least 1,000 new jobs, and the Council would be working hard to make sure local people could access these jobs.

### Business Support

The Portfolio Leader advised that the Council continued to work hard to support local businesses and ensure that they got access to the funding they needed to safeguard their businesses.

To date, the Council had allocated and paid out over £20 million of grants to over 1,700 eligible small businesses, as well as businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. Excellent progress had also been made in allocating the £1 million Local Discretionary Grant fund and the scheme was now closed to new applications.

Thanks were again given to staff from the Revenues & Benefits and Economic Development teams for their tireless work in processing the applications and getting grants paid to businesses.

### Rugeley Power Station

The Portfolio Leader advised that he amended planning application for the Rugeley Power Station site had now been approved by the Planning Control Committees at both Cannock Chase District Council and Lichfield District Council. The amended application incorporated the proposals for a new 'through' school for Rugeley (led by the John Taylor Multi-Academy Trust), and it was anticipated that there would be a decision from the Department for Education on their application in the autumn. Demolition work was also progressing, and the next key event would be the controlled explosion of the

former boiler house at around 10am on Thursday 20 August.

### Planning

The Portfolio Leader advised that throughout the whole of the lockdown period, the Council had managed to maintain a full Development Control service, with 170 applications received since 23 March. Within weeks of the lockdown taking effect, the team was set up at home and many processes had been adapted with the help of technology and virtual Planning Control Committee meetings had taken place via Zoom. There had also been an increase in the number of planning enforcement cases, and the team was working hard to reduce the backlog of cases that had built up over the last couple of months. Despite the challenges faced, the performance of the team remained excellent, and thanks were given to all of the Officers involved.

Furthermore, a white paper was published by the Government last week, which promised the biggest overhaul of the planning system that was introduced via the Town & Country Planning Act 1947. The document contained a number of proposals that would have implications for the way the Council produced its Local Plan and dealt with planning applications. Officers would be studying the deal and a response given to the consultation that was running until the end of October 2020.

### South Staffordshire College – Digital Skills Academy

The Portfolio Leader advised that a new 'Digital Skills Academy' was due to be established in Cannock by South Staffordshire College, and was one of eleven 'shovel ready' schemes put forward by the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP) that succeeded in attracting a share of the Government's £900 million 'Getting Building Fund'. Funding of £550,375 was awarded through the SSLEP, and the overall project would cost £1.1 million. The Academy would provide a comprehensive offer for a wide audience, including apprentices, adult learners and industry standard specialist technicians, and was a huge boost to improve skills levels in the District.

### **Environment and Climate Change**

#### Blue Bin Sticker Campaign

The Portfolio Leader advised that the blue bin sticker campaign would be starting in the next couple of weeks to inform residents of what they could put in their blue bin to help reduce the level of contamination and improve the quality of the recycled material.

It was understood that sometimes it could be confusing for residents to know what could be recycled, but hopefully the new sticker, which had been designed following feedback from residents, would help. Residents were being asked to think twice about everything they threw out and to follow the clear guidance on the new stickers.

The new sticker was also being used by other districts in the county, who were following this Council's lead to improve recycling.

#### Car Parking Ticket Machines

The Portfolio Leader advised that the investment in new contactless payment ticket machines and the payment-by-phone initiative, which was approved by Cabinet and in progress, were due to be delivered this calendar year. The Council's commitment to providing new contactless ticket payment machines

across the District's pay and display car parks supported the aim to play a key role in the recovery of the District and in increasing customer confidence to park and shop safely in the town centres.

### Fly-tipping Incident

The Portfolio Leader advised that a recent vehicle seizure had taken place in response to a fly-tipping incident. During lockdown there had been an increase in fly-tipping cases. For the months March to June 2020, the Street Cleansing team had had 216 incidents of fly-tipping, and Environmental Health had investigated 72 cases.

On Thursday 6 August a member of the public witnessed a van fly-tipping on Limepit Lane and posted photos of the van and the waste on Facebook. Many people shared this. The witness also contacted the Council, but as the incident occurred just out of Cannock Chase, within South Staffordshire district, the matter was referred onto South Staffordshire Council.

Environmental Health received a further complaint on Monday 10 August, which alleged that the owner of this van had been burning waste and was fly-tipping at an address in Benion Road. Environmental Health Officers attended the site and witnessed the fly-tipping occurring. The owner was found to not have a waste carrier's licence.

Arrangements were made to seize the vehicle the same day, and a Notice of Seizure issued and posted on the Council's website. The owner had yet to claim the vehicle.

This was an excellent example of a swift and decisive same day response to the menace of fly-tipping, which was an environmental crime, and it was hoped that this could serve as a deterrent to others.

Members would be updated in due course on the outcome of this matter.

## **Health and Wellbeing**

### Food Safety

The Portfolio Leader advised that the Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring (LAEM) return has been submitted to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) by the deadline date.

In summary, during 2019-20 the Food Team carried out a total of 880 interventions with food businesses (sometimes more than one at each business), and 96% of the District's food businesses were broadly compliant (in other words, had a rating of 3 or better – most had a rating of 5).

As of March 2020, there was a total of 845 food businesses registered in the District.

The Council did not have to take legal action against any of the food businesses last year.

The FSA had now said that visits to higher priority businesses could be made, and Officers would arrange these, according to the needs of the business and the risk. It was hoped that any backlog as a result of the Covid-19 situation would be recovered by end of December 2020, provided that the team were not subject to increased or continuing demands for contact tracing or compliance activity with licensed premises. It was emerging nationally that pubs were commonly implicated in transmission of Covid-19.

## Licensing

The Portfolio Leader advised that the Council had worked with the Director of Public Health to support a letter going to all licensed premises in the District, and had supplied a list of premises known of as potentially posing problems in relation to social distancing and non-compliance. These would be subject to further intervention in due course. Environmental Health was currently following up an incident at a local restaurant where a number of people were seen in a Facebook post not to be social distancing.

On Pavement Licences, just two enquiries had been received so far, and one application. As Members were aware, the Council had had to work very fast to introduce this scheme, so thanks were given to the Officers from the Licensing Team who made sure the Council was ready on time. The Council had agreed not to charge businesses a fee for this scheme, which was not the case in neighbouring local authority areas.

The additional work having to be undertaken by the Environmental Health and Licensing teams was causing a big strain on resources, so the Council was actively trying to secure extra funding to support the increased workload.

## Covid-19

The Portfolio Leader advised that she continued to represent the Council on the county-wide Covid-19 Member-led Local Outbreak Control Board, and received regular updates on incidents across the County, including most recently the outbreak related to the Crown and Anchor pub in Stone, and an ongoing elevated level of infections in parts of Burton.

Transmission and infection rates in the District at present were not giving cause for concern, but it was important that everyone continued to play their part in reducing the risk of Covid-19 spreading in the local communities, by remembering to regularly wash hands, comply with social distancing measures, self-isolating if feeling unwell and getting a test if had Covid-19 symptoms.

In respect of local level contact tracing, no information had as yet been made available by the Government on how this would work.

## **Housing**

### Hawks Green Depot Site Rationalisation Scheme

The Portfolio Leader talked through four photos that showed current progress in respect of the rationalisation scheme that had taken place at the Council's Hawks Green Depot site to allow for a house building scheme to take place.

Secure storage facilities had been set up on the part of the site which was still to be used by the Council for its operations. The waste skips had been relocated, and it was hoped that going forward recycling would be sorted by the Council's own staff, which would save money and improve green credentials.

Of the 44 homes to be built on a site, 22 would be Council housing and the remaining 22 private homes for sale on the market. The development would be called 'Old Hednesford Road', with site access coming off what is the Od Hednesford Road.

The contractor, which was a local business, had confirmed that as many workers and suppliers as possible for the development would be sourced from the local area.

## **Town Centre Regeneration**

### 'ShopAppy'

The Portfolio Leader advised that in Cannock, the 'ShopAppy' system was going at a slow pace but apparently this week had picked up. Cannock was up and running on the website, photos etc. just needed to be uploaded by the ShopAppy team. Ten businesses were now fully signed up. ShoAppy was arranging a meeting soon to engage with the businesses and answer any questions or reservations they had.

Rugeley was now on the system as well, but only had their first meeting last week so it was too soon to tell how many had signed up.

Hednesford was due to have its meeting next week to explain how the scheme worked, but they happy to join it.

The scheme worked by looking on the website for a particular item or store, with a description of the store, as well as details of its history, pictures, opening hours and any available offers or promotions. The customer could arrange click and collect if they saw something they wanted, pay online with a credit or debit card and then the funds were transferred to the business at the end of each week.

The system could also be used to book seats at the theatre, cinema, restaurants and cafes, as well as booking appointments at dentists, hairdressers etc. Basically, every business could use it.

The platform was free to use for twelve months, sponsored by the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership. There was no obligation to sign up after that. If any businesses wished to stay on the system, it would be at a cost of £19.99 per month, which was cheaper than general advertising, and even free advertising for the first twelve months. The scheme was used in a lot of town centres across the country and seemed very popular with businesses, who were stating that their sales had improved and it was worth it. ShopAppy was sponsored by, and worked with, VISA. VISA often promoted different businesses and areas in their newsletters, and if they thought the story was really good then they promoted it in the national press.

It was an exciting scheme, and support was needed from everyone to promote and support the platform, as how often did businesses get offered free promotion and advertising.

### Cannock Chase Markets

The Portfolio Leader advised of the following updates in respect of the various markets operating across the District:

- *Cannock Street Market*: this was popular with both traders and the public, with a good variety of stalls. It was currently only trading on a Friday, but Officers were in discussion with the operators (Sketts) regarding the possibility of restarting a Tuesday street market for the remaining period of the existing contract.

The contract was due to be re-tendered this year, and the tender documentation would go live next week. The re-tendered contract would be for a period of three years, with an opportunity to extend for up to a further two years. The new contract would start on 19 November 2020 and would require the chosen operator to run a street market in Cannock on both Tuesdays and Fridays.

- *Rugeley Outdoor Market*: this was a relatively small market of 6 to 7 stalls, operated by Darren Clapham on licence from the Council. The market recommenced successfully on 2 June and continued to trade as normal.
- *Cannock Indoor Market*: following the announcement of the closure of the Cannock indoor market hall from November 2020, seven indoor market traders had moved to the indoor market within Cannock shopping centre. As a consequence of the Covid-19 outbreak a further four stallholders had not reopened their businesses, thus meaning there were now only three indoor traders remaining in Cannock indoor market. All three traders had moved to stalls at the entrance to the market and advised that they were trading well.
- *Prince of Wales Market*: prior to the Covid-19 outbreak there were two stallholders in the Prince of Wales market. One of the traders gave notice during the lockdown period, so there was now only the flower seller operating from this site.
- *Rugeley Indoor Market*: including the tearoom, there were currently four stalls trading at the Rugeley indoor market. In addition, Officers were currently processing an application from a potential new stallholder. There was also three previous stallholders that had expressed an interest in returning to this site in September.

As Cannock indoor market was closing, promotion and marketing of the Council's market service was focussed on attracting new stallholders to the Rugeley indoor market.

## 12. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 July, 2020, be approved as a correct record.

## 13. Forward Plan

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

The Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader advised that in respect of the item listed for September Cabinet ('Commonwealth Games 2022: Legacy Project'), Officers were continuing to work with the Games organisers on the mountain biking event due to take place during the games on Cannock Chase.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period August to October 2020 be noted.

## 14. Final Accounts 2019/20

Consideration was given to the Report of the Finance (Item 6.1 – 6.34 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The final accounts position for the year ending 31 March 2020 be noted.

(B) The financing of the capital programme as outlined in the report be approved.

#### Reasons for Decisions

The overall revenue account position showed a transfer from balances of £292,000 as compared to a Revised Budget transfer of £227,000, which represented an increase in the Transfer from Balances of £85,000.

The portfolio outturn for 2019/20 showed an unfavourable variance of £76,000, which consisted of a number of minor variations.

Investment income in the year increased by £85,000. Technical items showed a variance of £834,000, however this primarily related to a reduction in the transfer to the Business Rates Equalisation Reserve as a result in contribution to reserves of additional Business Rates income of £818,000.

Income from the Business Rates Retention Scheme was some £805,000 higher than anticipated due to changes in the distribution methodology for both the Central Investment Fund and Contingency Fund that formed part of the revised governance arrangements for the 2019/20 Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Business Rates Pool (Pilot).

The Council Tax rate in year position showed a deficit of £125,000; however this was after a distribution of previous year surplus of £468,000. This, combined with the surplus brought forward, would provide a distribution to the Council of £133,000.

#### **15. Housing Revenue Account – Final Accounts 2019/20**

Consideration was given to the Joint Report of the Head of Finance and the Head of Housing & Partnerships (Item 7.1 – 7.7 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

- (A) The final accounts position of the Housing Revenue Account for the year ending 31 March 2020 be noted.
- (B) The financing of the capital programme as outlined in the report be approved.

#### Reasons for Decisions

The overall revenue account position showed net expenditure increased by £0.072 million when compared with the budget agreed by Council.

Income at 31 March 2020 was £19.976 million, broadly in line with the revised budget position of £19.788 million reported to Cabinet in February 2020.

Expenditure at 31 March 2020 was £19.706 million compared to the revised budget position of £19.626 million reported to Cabinet in February 2020. The £0.080 million increase in expenditure related primarily to savings in supervision and management, repairs and maintenance and bad debts provision offset by an additional Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay contribution.

The final accounts therefore showed a transfer to working balances of £0.090 million, compared with a planned transfer of £0.162 million, a reduction of £0.072 million.

Working balances at 31 March 2020 were now £1.663 million, compared to the £1.735 million reported to Cabinet in February 2020.

The report set out the capital outturn of £2.678 million, compared to a budget of £3.901 million, a reduction of £.1223 million. Details of financing for the current year and resources available were also included.

**16. 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).

**CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**CABINET**

**HELD ON THURSDAY 13 AUGUST 2020 AT 4:00 P.M.**

**VIA REMOTE ACCESS**

**PART 2**

**17. Cannock Town Centre – Current Position and Future Options**

Consideration was given to the Not for Publication Report of the Head of Economic Prosperity (Item 9.1 – 9.16 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The report outlining the current position on the Cannock town centre re-development scheme on the Multi-Storey Car Park and Market Hall site, and the developer interest on the Avon Road car park site be noted.
- (B) The procurement process for a development partner for the Cannock town centre re-development scheme be paused until market conditions improved.
- (C) The Council should seek to progress technical work to inform the business case to progress the full demolition of the Multi-Storey Car Park / Market Hall site.
- (D) The revenue allocation of £40,000 that was previously approved by Cabinet in March 2019 for technical work for the partial demolition of the Multi-Storey Car Park, should be now utilised for support technical work for full demolition.
- (E) Authority be delegated to the Head of Economic Prosperity, in consultation with the Town Centre Regeneration and Economic Development & Planning Portfolio Leaders, to commission any necessary work to take forward decision (D), above, and on completion of the technical work, present a business case to Cabinet to enable a final decision to be made on whether to proceed with full demolition.

Reasons for Decisions

To address the Council's potential risks associated with the ongoing maintenance of the Multi-Storey Car Park in Cannock town centre.

It was considered that a cleared site would potentially be more attractive to the market place once the economic climate improved.

To adjust the Council's strategy to reflect the current market conditions and interest shown in the Avon Road site.

In response to a concern raised by the Deputy Leader about an email received from a local resident on this agenda item, the Managing Director advised that he was satisfied none of the confidential information included in the report had been released into the public domain, and the information to which said resident referred was included on the agenda for the meeting and the Cabinet's Forward Plan, both of which were publicly accessible documents.

The meeting closed at 5:15 p.m.

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LEADER