

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET

HELD ON THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 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

18. Apologies

None.

19. 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.

20. Updates from Portfolio Leaders

Leader of the Council

The Leader advised that the Council was continuing to press the Government to honour the promise it made at the start of the Coronavirus pandemic that local authorities would be fully compensated for all costs incurred from responding to the pandemic; a promise they had since backtracked on.

Community Safety and Partnerships

- **Case referrals:** The Portfolio Leader advised that there had continued to be an increase in the number of cases of both Community Safety Hub referrals (+38% (7 cases)) and Adult and Child Safeguarding referrals (+55% (6 cases)) in the year to date for the period 21 July to 21 August 2020.

- **Community Safety Hub Terms of Reference:** The Portfolio Leader advised that as the Hub had made a shift to holding virtual meetings via Microsoft Teams, the Terms of Reference for the Hub had been revised to reflect this change and take into account extra data protection challenges that the Hub may face.
- **Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC):** The Portfolio Leader advised that the local MARAC launched on 15 September, with chairing responsibilities jointly held between Staffordshire Police and the Council.
- **Adult Specialist Worker Model:** The Portfolio Leader advised that a pilot scheme had been launched, and the roles were intended to be specialist workers with expertise in domestic abuse, substance misuse, mental health and financial inclusion. They would work alongside children's social workers to offer parents support with: mental health issues; domestic abuse; substance abuse; and debt and housing support.

Economic Development and Planning

- **Economic picture:** The Portfolio Leader advised that the Covid-19 pandemic continued to have an effect on the District's economy and communities. Claimant count data for August was published on 15 September by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). There were 3,815 residents claiming benefits, which was 6% of the District's working age population, an increase on the July figure of 5.7%. The total claimant count included those residents that were currently claiming job seeker's allowance as they were out of work and looking for a job, but also those on low incomes who were now claiming Universal Credit. As had been said previously, the true unemployment should be known at the end of the year, as the impact of the Furlough was taken account of. The Council continued to work with key partners to help local residents who were affected by redundancy and get them back into training or work as quickly as possible.

In terms of the UK economy, there had been some signs of a 'V-shaped recovery', with UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growing by 6.6% in July. However, the ONS stated that the UK had only recovered half of the GDP lost by the Coronavirus pandemic so there was still a long way to go.

- **Job announcements:** The Portfolio Leader advised that unemployment was a big concern in the District, but there were some glimmers of hope with a number of local businesses announcing that they were expanding and creating new jobs:
 - Amazon had announced 7,000 new jobs in the coming months at sites across the UK, including more than 800 seasonal jobs at Rugeley;
 - APC Overnight (based in Cannock) were looking to create 100+ jobs, some of which would be based at their Cannock HQ;
 - Allpack Packaging (Allpack Group) had taken the last plot on Kingswood Lakeside (Barberry 60) – a 60,000 sq. ft. unit that would become their new HQ, and they would be relocating from Aldridge. Barberry Group was doing the build and practical completion of building expected during the second quarter of 2020/21. Allpack had also signed a three-year lease for 48,632 sq. ft. unit at St. Modwen's Watling Street Business Park in Cannock in August 2020. This should create new jobs and was

welcome investment in the District.

- **Cannock Railway Station enhancements:** The Portfolio Leader advised that work was continuing to develop proposals to carry out a number of improvement works on and around Cannock Railway Station, to improve and enhance the facility ahead of the opening of the McArthurGlen Designer Outlet Village in early 2021. The proposals would include the installation of new displays, wayfinding totems, footpath repairs and car park repair works. A report would come to Cabinet in November 2020 to provide further details.

Health and Wellbeing

- **Covid-19 Update:** The Portfolio Leader advised that the local testing site (LTS) at the Civic Centre was now restricted to bookings only, following large numbers of people turning up last week. The LTS could accommodate around 300 tests per day, but was restricted to 150 at present as there wasn't enough lab capacity to process any more than this. As Members were aware, there was a national issue with the Pillar 2 (community) testing programme and locally, arrangements were in hand to try and supplement capacity. All capacity nationally was being directed to those areas with greatest need, i.e. those areas subject to intervention from Government, which in the West Midlands region were Birmingham, Solihull and Sandwell.

Staffordshire now had 272 open incidents, compared with 170 last time Members were updated on 8 September. The Staffordshire 7 day rate was now 15.2 cases per 100,000 populations; this compared with 22.5 cases per 100,000 for England and 27.3 for 100,000 for the West Midlands region. In comparison, Birmingham's current 7 day rate was 58.2 per 100,000.

On 1 September the Cannock Chase 7 day case rate was 1 case per 100,000 people; on 16 September this had risen to 21.8 per 100,000, the highest in Staffordshire at the time. This emphasises how quickly these things could change and that we must remain vigilant.

There were currently 27 open incidents in Cannock Chase District, 8 of which were associated with adult care settings, 13 associated with education, 1 in community healthcare and 5 with workplaces. There were no major concerns over Cannock Chase District at present as the reasons behind all of the above incidents were understood and being managed.

- **Licensing update:** The Portfolio Leader advised that some improvement had been seen in one of the problem venues that Members had been updated on last week, and were reviewing what action to take with the other, which was much slower to respond to the Council's advice. The Council continued to work closely with public health colleagues.
- **Events:** The Portfolio Leader advised that Members may wish to be aware that there was an event planned for Hednesford Raceway for Sunday 20 September. The organisers had provided a comprehensive Covid-19 risk assessment, detailing strict social distancing and hygiene precautions, and had given assurances that ticket sales would be strictly limited, with no "walk-ins" on the door permitted and contact details taken of the lead booking name for test and trace purposes. Similar events had been and were being held at various venues around the country.

Town Centre Regeneration

- **Markets update:** The Portfolio Leader provided the following updates in respect of the various markets that currently operated in the District:

- **Cannock Street Market:** The Council's current Friday street market operator, Sketts, had now relaunched the Tuesday street market which was trialled last summer. The Tuesday market had now been operating for three weeks and proved very popular with both traders and the public. The Friday street market also continued to maintain its popularity. The operator had expressed the view that the relocation of the street market from Market Hall Street to Market Place alone had had no adverse affect on the market's popularity and did, in fact, improve the look of the market.

The Cannock street market contract was currently out to tender with a closing date for tenders of Friday 18 September 2020. The retendered 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 a Tuesday and a Friday.

- **Rugeley Outdoor Market:** This small outdoor market continued to trade as normal with regular traders and customers.
- **Cannock Indoor Market:** Following the announcement of the closure of Cannock Indoor Market Hall in November 2020 three traders remained at the Market and they were expected to continue to trade up to the market hall closing date.
- **Prince of Wales Market:** There was currently only the flower seller operating at the Prince of Wales market, occupying a significant area within the market, however there were a small number of available stalls should the Council receive any interest in the market from potential new traders.
- **Rugeley Indoor Market:** Including the Tea Room there were now five stalls trading at Rugeley Market Hall. One of these was a new sweet stall, Peaky Sweets. A previous stall holder had also expressed an interest in returning and the Christmas Charity Stall was also planning on returning to the Market again this year.

The Markets Officer was working on marketing ideas with the assistance of the Council's Promotions Team. In addition, adverts for new traders would be placed in the Market Trade News in the near future as traditionally the quarter prior to Christmas was when most interest was received from potential new traders.

Christmas events to attract shoppers and traders would, by necessity because of Covid-19 guidelines, be more low key than usual this year.

As yet, there was no date for the re-opening of the Local Taxation and Benefits Office within the Market Hall but when it did re-open, footfall into the Market was expected to increase.

- **Cannock Town Centre Shutter Art Project:** The Portfolio Leader advised that the painting of the roller-shutters on the Prince of Wales theatre and vacant shop units was now complete. The work had been undertaken by a

locally based artist, and the Council had consulted on the proposed works. A number of photos had been taken and posted on Facebook before the project had finished, so they did not show the true picture of what had been done. The public had the right to access information about what the Council was doing, via watching the live streams of this meeting and other means, as long as the matters to be discussed were not of a confidential nature.

21. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 August, 2020, be approved as a correct record.

22. Forward Plan

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

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period September to November 2020 be noted.

23. Summary of Complaints Received: April 2019 to March 2020 (Annual Report)

Consideration was given to the Report of the Managing Director (Item 6.1 – 6.6 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the information about complaints received by the Council during 2019/20 and lessons learnt be noted.

Reason for Decision

The Council's Customer Feedback and Complaint Policy contained a commitment to report complaints information to the Cabinet.

24. Commonwealth Games 2022 – Legacy Project

Consideration was given to the Joint Report of the Head of Economic Prosperity and the Head of Environment & Healthy Lifestyles (Item 7.1 – 7.29 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The proposal from Forestry England for the Council to participate in a partnership project aimed at creating a new high quality off-road cycling trail at Cannock Chase Forest, to improve cycling experiences for local residents and visitors to the area and to create a legacy from the Commonwealth Games 2022 Mountain Biking event hosted at Cannock Chase, be noted.
- (B) The Council be authorised to allocate £50,000 of capital funding from the Council's District Investment Fund toward the capital cost of the project (£912,774), subject to the conditions outlined in report paragraph 6.9 and

any other conditions proposed by the Cabinet.

- (C) A further £50,000 of capital funding from the Council's District Investment Fund be authorised, which would be earmarked to support future projects, opportunities and initiatives in the Cannock Chase District that could arise from hosting the Commonwealth Games Mountain Biking event.
- (D) Authority be delegated to the Head of Economic Prosperity and the Head of Environment & Healthy Lifestyles to enter the Council into a funding agreement with Forestry England and to manage the Council's input into the delivery of the project, in consultation with the Portfolio Leaders for Economic Development & Planning and Culture & Sport.
- (E) Authority be delegated to the Head of Economic Prosperity and the Head of Environment & Healthy Lifestyles to explore and develop any future projects, opportunities and initiatives in the Cannock Chase District that may arise from hosting the Commonwealth Games Mountain Biking event, in consultation with the Portfolio Leaders for Economic Development & Planning and Culture & Sport.

Reasons for Decisions

It was decided that the Council should contribute financially to a Commonwealth Games 2022 legacy project led by Forestry England.

25. 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

26. Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles Capital Investment in Rugeley Leisure Centre – Financial Lease Agreement

Consideration was given to the Not for Publication Report of the Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles (Item 9.1 – 9.5 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) Cabinet agree to act as guarantor for Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles for up to £495,000 in respect of the capital investment made to provide new fitness equipment at Rugeley leisure centre.
- (B) Authority be delegated to the Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles, in conjunction with the Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader, to facilitate all actions required to implement the guarantor step-in agreement and revised bond agreement.

Reasons for Decisions

Given Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles' current funding arrangement and request for the Council to act as guarantor for up to £495,000, Cabinet was asked to consider the implications and confirm their agreement to this request.

The full legal and financial implications were set out in the appropriate sections of the report and it was proposed that the refundable pension bond to be repaid to Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles was now rescheduled to reflect the lease period for the Rugeley leisure centre equipment.

27. Disposal of Land at Avon Road Car Park

Consideration was given to the Not for Publication Report of the Head of Economic Prosperity (Item 10.1 – 10.23 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The freehold interest in Council owned land at Avon Road (as identified in Appendix 1 of the report) be disposed of to Deeley Properties on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Head of Economic Prosperity in consultation with the Town Centre Regeneration Portfolio Leader and the Economic

Development & Planning Portfolio Leader.

- (B) Authority be delegated to the Head of Economic Prosperity to instruct agents to market the land at Avon Road for sale in the event that the proposed sale did not proceed, and to take all other actions required to implement the decision.
- (C) Any capital receipt generated from the sale of the land at Avon Road be deposited into the Council's District Investment Fund for future investment in Cannock town centre.

Reasons for Decisions

To take forward regeneration on a key site in Cannock town centre at the same time as ensuring the Council received best value for its assets.

28. Proposal to Support the Expansion of Super Smart Limited in Cannock Chase

Consideration was given to the Not for Publication Report of the Head of Economic Prosperity (Item 11.1 – 11.17 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) A variation to the existing Council 'Discretionary Business Rates Relief Growth and Inward Investment Policy', in order to support expansion of a local business, be approved. This was on the basis of a compelling job creation case being made by the business and being state aid compliant.
- (B) That a Discretionary Business Rate Relief Growth award of £178,979.21 (maximum payment to be compliant with state aid) over the period of 24 months to Super Smart Services Ltd., be approved.
- (C) It be noted that, with the agreement of the Group Leaders and the Chairman of the Promoting Prosperity Scrutiny Committee, call-in would not apply to this item as any delay caused in implementing the decisions would seriously prejudice the Council's and the public's interests.

Reasons for Decisions

The application was contrary to the existing policy as Super Smart Services Ltd was not an SME (i.e. a business that employed less than 250 employees).

The meeting closed at 4:45 p.m.

LEADER