

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET
HELD ON THURSDAY 20 JULY 2017 AT 4:00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK
PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors:

Adamson, G.	Leader of the Council
Alcott, G.	Deputy Leader of the Council and Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader
Kraujalis, J.T.	Corporate Improvement Portfolio Leader
Bennett, C.	Crime and Partnerships Portfolio Leader
Mitchell, Mrs. C.	Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader
Preece, J.P.T.L.	Environment Portfolio Leader
Allen, F.W.C.	Housing Portfolio Leader
Todd, Mrs. D.M.	Town Centre Regeneration Portfolio Leader

17. Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillor Mrs. M.A. Davis, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Leader.

18. 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.

19. Updates from Portfolio Leaders

Culture and Sport

Green Flag Awards

The Portfolio Leader reported that the Council had achieved Green Flag status for six parks and open spaces within the District. Particularly pleasing was that Hednesford Park had re-achieved this status, which was a condition of the Heritage Lottery Fund grant awarded for redevelopment of the park.

Environment

Staffordshire Joint Waste Management Board

The Portfolio Leader reported on two specific issues which had been discussed at the recent Board meeting held on 18 July, namely the “tip tax” (waste disposal charges) and the current study being undertaken by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP). The study was looking into a number of scenarios including charging for garden waste and the introduction of food waste collection. The study was also looking into the impact these scenarios may have on future recycling rates and PFI credits. There was concern however that the study would not account for potential increases in fly-tipping rates and those who could/could not pay for such a service.

20. Minutes of Cabinet Meeting of 15 June 2017

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June, 2017, be approved as a correct record and signed.

21. Forward Plan

The Forward Plan of Decisions for the period July to September, 2017 (Item 5.1 – 5.2 of the Official Minutes of the Council) was considered.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period July to September, 2017 be noted.

22. Recommendations of Scrutiny Committees

None received.

23. Final Accounts 2016/17

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Finance (Item 7.1 – 7.31 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That

(A) The final accounts position for the year ending 31 March, 2017, 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 increasing by £34,000 when compared with the budget agreed by Council. The overall impact after taking into account changes in Financing was a reduction in Transfer to Balances of £51,000.

The 2016/17 accounts however included provision for severance costs arising from the Financial Recovery Plan of £247,000 for which budgetary provision existed within the 2017/18 Budget. The net impact was therefore an additional transfer to balances of £196,000 over the two year period.

The portfolio outturn for 2016/17 showed a favourable variance of £274,000, consisting of the actual outturn saving of £27,000 and the £247,000 severance costs. This primarily related to higher than expected income from the main streams of £219,000.

Income from the Business Rates Retention Scheme was £40,000 lower than anticipated. This was primarily to do with exemptions or voids being higher than anticipated.

Council Tax rate collection rates continued to improve and combined with additional properties a surplus of £112,000 occurred for this Council and in accordance with regulations would be included in the 2018/19 Budget.

24. Housing Revenue Account – Final Accounts 2016/17

Consideration was given to the Joint Report of the Head of Finance and Head of Housing & Partnerships (Item 8.1 – 8.7 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That

- (A) The final accounts position for the year ending 31 March, 2017, 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 reducing by £0.256 million when compared with the budget agreed by Council.

Income at 31 March 2017 was £20.079 million line broadly in line with the revised budget position of £20.042 million reported to Cabinet in February 2017.

Expenditure at 31 March 2017 was £19.928 million compared to the revised budget position of £20.147 million reported to Council in February 2017. The £0.219 million decrease in expenditure related primarily to savings in supervision and management and repairs and maintenance.

The final accounts therefore showed a contribution to working balances of £0.151 million compared with a planned use of £0.105 million, a reduction of £0.256 million.

Working balances at 31 March 2017 were now £1.780 million compared to the £1.525 million reported to Council in February 2017.

The report set out the capital outturn of £8.999 million compared to a budget of £11.428 million a reduction of £2.429 million. Details of financing for the current year and resources available were also included.

25. Update on the Council's Membership of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire and Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnerships since 2010.

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Economic Development (Item 9.1 – 9.15 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The investment of circa £8,816,787 gross (£6,286,281 net – grant drawn down) into the District from the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnerships (GBSLEP) since 2010 be noted.
- (B) The investment of circa £4,263,610 gross (£2,010,810 net – grant drawn down) into the District from the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP) since 2010 be noted.
- (C) The Council's continued membership of both the GBSLEP and the SSLEP be confirmed.
- (D) Should Cabinet decide to change current Local Enterprise Partnership membership arrangements in any way, the Managing Director be delegated, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to implement the decision.

Reasons for Decisions

There was a marked difference between the SSLEP and the GBSLEP in the level of engagement available to the Council and the amount of funding drawn down to achieve economic development objectives.

The report set out the investments made by both LEPs since the District joined both in 2010 and set out information on engagement and governance issues.

26. Heritage Trail Bridge Rebuild, Rising Brook, Rugeley – Application for Permission to Spend (Revised Costs)

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Economic Development (Item 10.1 – 10.7 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That permission to spend a further £17,000 towards the reinstatement of the Cannock Chase Heritage Trail Bridge over the Rising Brook, Rugeley, be granted.

Reasons for Decision

In 2012 the bridge which spans the Rising Brook collapsed. The bridge formed part of the Cannock Chase Heritage Trail forcing this section of the trail to be closed and temporarily diverted over County Land.

The bridge was made safe in 2012 by propping up the structure and using rock armour boulders as a temporary measure. At that time the Rugeley Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS) had not been approved or fully designed. The decision was taken to not carry out any permanent repairs as the design of the FAS may have had major implications on the bridge in its current location.

Now that the Flood Alleviation Scheme had been fully designed and approved by the Environment Agency there was a need to undertake the reinstatement of the bridge. It was critical that the reinstatement of the bridge was completed as access for any works of this nature would be impossible once the Flood Alleviation Scheme was in place.

The cost for the bridge works had varied due to the estimates largely being prior to a physical on site inspection being carried out. This was prohibited by the rock armour being in situ. Since the removal of the rock armour the bridge had totally collapsed and the abutments had been assessed as being not fit for purpose. Therefore, in order to provide a functional bridge as close as possible to the £100K budget (as approved by Council 6 July 2016) a new pre-cast concrete solution was proposed as a brick built replacement bridge would be over budget.

The current cost estimate from the Environment Agency for building the new bridge, which included a weir structure, with brick facing was in excess of £111,000. It was worth noting that these costs hadn't been scrutinised by the independent Environment Agency Engineers and were predicted to reduce post this exercise to within the £100,000 budget.

Council (6 July 2016) approved a maximum budget of £100,000. Cabinet of 20 October approved initial spend of £83,000. This report was now seeking the approval to spend the remaining £17,000.

It was proposed that the £100K remained a fixed maximum budget for the reinstatement of the bridge i.e. any remaining gap in funding to enable the work programme to be met would have to be provided by the Environment Agency or the bridge would not be able to be rebuilt.

Efforts to provide an aesthetically similar finish (appearance of brick) could be achieved by the installation of brick slips to the facing down stream exterior wall. Unfortunately, this would be at an extra cost which may exceed any approved budgets and therefore be cost prohibitive.

It was noted that Rugeley Town Council had a strong desire for the bridge to be rebuilt to its former state and officers had noted their views and endeavoured to reach a compromised design within the available budget. If the Town Council would like to fund the installation of brick slips an approach to the Town Council could be made (should these brick slips exceed the £100K budget).

The meeting closed at 4:13 p.m.

LEADER