

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

**HELD ON THURSDAY, 29 JANUARY, 2015 AT 4:00 P.M.**

**IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK**

**PART 1**

PRESENT: Councillors:

Adamson, G.	Leader of the Council
Holder, M.J.	Deputy Leader and Crime and Partnerships Portfolio Leader
Mitchell, Mrs. C.	Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader
Bennett, C.	Environment Portfolio Leader
Davis, Mrs. M.A.	Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Leader
Allen, F.W.C.	Housing Portfolio Leader
Todd, Mrs. D.M.	Town Centre Regeneration Portfolio Leader

**101. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors G. Alcott, Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader, and A. Lovell, Corporate Improvement Portfolio Leader.

**102. 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.

**103. Updates from Portfolio Leaders**

**Leader**

"Mercian Eagle" – The Leader advised that a double page photo spread had appeared in the "Mercian Eagle", the regimental magazine of the Mercian Regiment showing pictures of the first Freedom of the District March that had taken place on 27 June, 2014. The magazine was then circulated for Members to look at.

Stephen Brown, Chief Executive – The Leader reminded members that the meeting was the last one that the Chief Executive would be attending. On behalf of Cabinet, the Leader thanked Mr. Brown for his contribution to the Council over the preceding nearly 13 years and wished him well for the future. He commented that, in spite of the difficulties facing local government, the Chief

Executive could consider himself to be leaving on a high, with the Council able to present a balanced budget without the need for cuts to services or increases in Council Tax or Council house rents.

Mr. Brown thanked the Leader and Cabinet, and said that it had been both an honour and a pleasure to serve as the Council's Chief Executive since taking up the post in 2002, and he wished the Council well for the future.

### **Culture and Sport**

Stadium Site Play Areas – The Portfolio Leader advised that representatives from the Council and its contractor, Wicksteed Playgrounds, had visited local schools to seek views and comments from the children on the proposed designs for the new play areas planned within the Stadium site. She said it had been a pleasure to visit the schools and she was delighted that the children had been able to see the designs, which had received really positive comments.

Works on the play areas would commence in March 2015.

Artificial Grass Pitch, Bradbury Lane – The Portfolio Leader advised that a bid had been submitted to Sport England for additional funding to support the project, the outcome of which is likely to be known by the end of February / early March, 2015.

New Cemetery Site, Adjacent to Cannock Road, Heath Hayes – The Portfolio Leader said she was pleased to report that a planning application had been approved by the Council's Planning Control Committee on 28 January, 2015. The next steps in the process would be to acquire the land, assess the revenue and capital implications, and resolve any outstanding planning conditions, and further reports to Cabinet would follow.

### **Housing**

Provision of Photovoltaic Panels to Council Owned Bungalows - The Portfolio Leader advised that Central news would be running a local news feature about the scheme that evening.

#### **104. Minutes of Cabinet Meeting of 18 December, 2014**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 December, 2014, be approved as a correct record and signed.

#### **105. Forward Plan**

The Forward Plan of Decisions for the period January to March, 2015 (Item 5.1 of the Official Minutes of the Council) was considered.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period January to March, 2015, be noted.

**106. Recommendations and References for Determination and Minutes of Policy Development and Other Committees**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the following Policy Development Committees be received for information:

- (i) Culture and Sport – 16 October, 2014
- (ii) Town Centre Regeneration – 8 October, 2014

**107. General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2015-16 to 2017-18**

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Finance (Item 7.1 – 7.81 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the following be recommended to Council for approval at its meeting to be held on 11 February, 2015, as part of the formal budget setting process:

- (A) The level of net spending for the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2015-16 be set at £12.702 million; with indicative net spending for 2016-17 and 2017-18 of £12.769million and £13.085 million respectively;
- (B) The detailed portfolio budgets as set out in Appendix 2 of the report;
- (C) The forecast outturn net budget of £14.391 million including a Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay of £1.5 million;
- (D) The use of Government Grants in 2015-16 of £1.347 million with indicative figures of £1.512 million and £1.661 million for 2016-17 and 2017-18 respectively;
- (E) The working balances be set at £0.698 million; £0.879 million and £1.040 million for 2015-16 to 2017-18 respectively;
- (F) A Council Tax freeze for 2015-16; with indicative increases of 1.95% to the level of Council Tax for 2016-17 and 2017-18;
- (G) The Council's Tax base be set at 26,902.88;
- (H) The revised capital programme, including new schemes, as set out in Appendices 3 and 4 of the report.

Reason for Decision

The report set out a draft standstill budget for 2015-16 as well as indicative budgets for 2016-17 and 2017-18 and associated issues and also included current indications of the impact that this will have on Council Tax. It also set out the updated capital programme, and the capital resources available to the authority to finance the capital programme.

**108. Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Annual Investments Strategy, 2015-16**

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Finance (Item 8.1 – 8.28 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That Council, at its meeting to be held on 11 February, 2015, be recommended to approve:-

- (A) The Prudential and Treasury Indicators;
- (B) Thee Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement;
- (C) The Treasury Management Policy;
- (D) The Annual Investment Strategy for 2015/16.

Reason for Decision

The Council was required to approve its treasury management and investment strategies to ensure that cash flow was adequately planned and that surplus monies were invested appropriately.

**109. Review of the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2014-15**

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Housing and Waste Management (Item 9.1 – 9.14 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The position regarding the estimated availability of Housing Revenue Account capital resources as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted.
- (B) The position regarding actual and estimated expenditure in respect of the 2014-15 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 2 to the report be noted, and approval be given to incur £120,000 of additional scheme costs in respect of the following schemes:-
  - (i) Central Heating Up-grading Programme - £50,000
  - (ii) Void Properties (Decent Homes) - £50,000
  - (iii) Asbestos Testing and Removal - £20,000
- (C) The position regarding uncommitted Housing Revenue Account Capital Resources be noted and that £3,017,658 of uncommitted resources be carried forward to 2015-16.
- (D) The following targets in respect of dwelling improvements within the 2014-15 "Place" Priority Delivery Plan be revised:-
  - (i) Central Heating Up-grades - 350
  - (ii) Kitchen Replacements - 65

(iii)	Electrical Up-grading	-	580
(iv)	Double Glazing and Window Refurbishment	-	1090

### Reasons for Decisions

The report presented the quarter three review of the 2014-15 HRA Capital Programme.

Estimated resources for 2014-15 were now forecast to be £14,501,418 as set out in Appendix 1. This compared to the estimate of £17,610,418 when the programme was last reviewed on 20 November 2014. The reasons for the £3,109,000 reduction in resources were set out in Appendix 3. The reduction primarily related to a re-phasing of the £3.022m borrowing to later years as advised by the Head of Finance reflecting the prevailing conditions in relation to Treasury Management.

Actual expenditure at 31 December 2014 totalled £6,121,547 and represented 53.4% of the previously agreed expenditure target.

Estimated expenditure for 2014-15 was now forecast to be £11,483,760. This compared to the estimate of £11,460,290 when the programme was reviewed on 20 November 2014. The reasons for this net increase of £23,470 were set out in Appendix 4. Approval was sought for £120,000 of additional expenditure in respect of three schemes.

Following the financing of the estimated 2014-15 HRA Capital Programme it was now anticipated that £3,017,658 of uncommitted resources would be available. This compared to the estimate of £6,150,128 when the programme was reviewed on 20 November 2014, a decrease of £3,132,470. The £3,017,658 of uncommitted resources would be carried forward to assist in financing the HRA Capital Programme for 2015-16 and future years.

As a result of the expenditure variations and other factors set out within the report it was necessary to amend certain dwelling outputs within the 2014-15 "Place" Priority Delivery Plan.

### **110. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budgets 2014-15 to 2017-18**

Consideration was given to the Joint Report of the Head of Housing and Waste Management and the Head of Finance (Item 10.1 –10.14 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The revised position with regard to estimated income and expenditure in respect of the 2014-15 Housing Revenue Account Budget and base Housing Revenue Account budgets for the period 2015-16 to 2017-18 as summarised in Appendix 1 to the report be noted.
- (B) Council, at its meeting to be held on 11 February, 2015, be recommended

to:-

- (i) Determine a minimum level of working balances of £1,551,180 for 2015-16 and indicative working balances of £1,559,630 and £1,705,770 for 2016-17 and 2017-18 respectively.
- (ii) Not implement any rent increase for 2015-16.
- (iii) Enhance the base three-year Housing Revenue Account budgets through the provision of:-
  - (a) £400,000 for interest and loan repayment charges for additional potential borrowing approval;
  - (b) An additional £1,940,000 Revenue Contribution to Capital outlay.
- (iv) Approve the Housing Revenue Account Revenue Budgets for 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 (and note the estimated outturn for 2014-15) as summarised in Appendix 2 of the report.

#### Reasons for Decisions

The report considered proposed three-year HRA budgets for 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18, which had been formulated within the framework provided by the revised HRA Business Plan considered by Cabinet on 20 November 2014.

A review of the 2014-15 HRA budget, together with base HRA budgets for the period 2015-16 to 2017-18 were attached as Appendix 1. The base budgets had been formulated in accordance with the assumptions set out in the HRA Business Plan, with projected levels of income and expenditure as summarised below.

	<u>2015-16</u> <u>£000's</u>	<u>2016-17</u> <u>£000's</u>	<u>2017-18</u> <u>£000's</u>
Estimated Income	20,782	21,132	24,413
Estimated Expenditure	20,584	20,444	20,587
Surplus (Deficit) in year	198	688	826
Working Balance	3,853	4,051	4,740
Minimum Working Balance	(1,551)	(1,559)	(1,706)
Estimated Surplus	2,500	3,180	3,860

In view of the risks associated with the management of the HRA under self-financing, minimum working balances of 10% of net operating expenditure had been assumed throughout the three-year budget period.

A total estimated cumulative surplus of £3,860,000 was available over the three-year budget period and can be utilised to :-

- (i) Reduce the rent increases which have been assumed within the base

budgets.

And/or

- (ii) Enhance the provision of the Council's Housing service.

Following consultation with the Housing Portfolio Leader, it was proposed that the surplus be utilised as follows:-

- (i) The 2.5% rent increase included in the base budget of 2015-16 be not implemented. This would result in a reduction in income (and in the cumulative surplus) of £1,520,000;
- (ii) Additional provision was made for:-
  - (a) Interest and loan repayment charges in respect of additional potential borrowing approval (£400,000);
  - (b) Revenue contribution to Capital outlay (£1,940,000).

The financial impact of the above proposals were set out within proposed HRA budgets for 2015-16 to 2017-18 attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

#### **111. Housing Revenue Account Capital Programmes 2015-16 to 2017-18**

Consideration was given to the Joint Report of the Head of Housing and Waste Management and the Head of Finance (Item 11.1 –11.9 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The estimated availability of Housing Revenue Account capital resources for the period 2015-16 to 2017-18 (as set out in Appendix 1 to the report), the base three year Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme for the period 2015-16 to 2017-18 (as set out in Appendix 2 to the report), and the estimated additional expenditure capacity of £1.94 million during the three year programme period be noted.
- (B) Council, at its meeting to be held on 11 February, 2015, be recommended to:-
  - (i) Enhance the base three year Housing Revenue Capital Programme through:-
    - (a) A further £1,940,000 for the provision of additional Council housing;
    - (b) Re-phasing the double glazing and window refurbishment programme for completion in September 2017.

#### Reason for Decisions

The report considered the formulation of a proposed three year HRA Capital Programme for the period 2015-16 to 2017-18, within the financial framework

provided by the revised HRA Business Plan.

Details of the estimated availability of HRA capital resources during the three year period were set out in Appendix 1 to the report, whilst a base three year HRA Capital Programme was set out in Appendix 2.

A comparison of estimated resource availability with the proposed HRA capital expenditure programmes was also set out below:-

	<u>2015-16</u> £000's	<u>2016-17</u> £000's	<u>2017-18</u> £000's
Resources Brought Forward	3,018	1,956	167
New Resources	11,562	10,108	10,593
Total Resources:	14,580	12,064	10,760
Less:			
(i) Base Expenditure Programme	(12,379)	(10,692)	(10,270)
(ii) Agreed resources carried forward to future years	(1,956)	(167)	-
Additional Expenditure Capacity	245	1,205	490

A total of £1,940,000 was available to enhance the base three year HRA Capital Programme. Following consultation with the Housing Portfolio Leader, it was suggested that this be utilised for the provision of additional Council housing potentially by providing “matched funding” for any increases to the national HRA borrowing limits.

It was also suggested that the Council’s double glazing and window refurbishment programme be completed six months earlier and that the agreed base programme budgets be re-phased to achieve this.

The financial impact of the above proposals were set out within a proposed HRA Capital Programme for 2015-16 to 2017-18 attached as Appendix 3 to the report.

## **112. Redevelopment of Garage Sites and Other Council Owned Land**

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Housing and Waste Management (Item 12.1 – 12.25 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The Development Brief for the Redevelopment of Garage Sites and Other Council Owned Land (as attached to the report as Appendix 1) be agreed.
- (B) The Head of Housing and Waste Management, following consultation with the Housing Portfolio Leader, be authorised to amend the Development Brief to address any issues as a result of completing the tender

documentation.

- (C) Cabinet receive a further report on the proposed scheme following the selection of a development partner.

#### Reasons for Decisions

The report presented a proposed Development Brief for the redevelopment of 11 garage sites and other areas of Council owned land. These proposals were to be used to procure the Council's Development Partner and develop a proposed scheme.

The development brief would be accompanied by a tender document providing details of the procurement process. This was currently being formulated and would be finalised following approval of the development brief. It may, however, be necessary to amend the brief to address issues which arise from the completion of the tender document and it was proposed that the Head of Housing and Waste Management following consultation with the Housing Portfolio Leader, be authorised to make such amendments.

A further report on the proposed scheme would be submitted to Cabinet following the selection of a development partner.

### **113. Single Fraud Investigation Service**

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Finance (Item 13.1 – 13.18 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The transfer of the Housing Benefit Fraud service to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) from 1 July, 2015, be noted.
- (B) Authority be delegated to the Head of Finance to develop and in-house capability (shared with Stafford Borough Council) for a compliance team to investigate eligibility for Council Tax and Business Rates discounts and exemptions; to strengthen fraud prevention activity in Cannock Chase and to pursue prosecutions where necessary.
- (C) The in-house capability be contained within the constraints of the existing budget whereby any reduction in Admin Grant is offset by compensating savings within the Revenues and Benefits Service, although the objective of the team will also be to maximise Council Tax and Business Rates income.
- (D) The Local Taxation and Benefits Compliance Policy appended to the report be adopted.

#### Reasons for Decisions

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 led to the creation of the Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS), which would combine present arrangements for

investigation of benefit fraud, which would be brought together under one organisation managed by the DWP.

This would involve the transfer of existing council fraud investigation staff to SFIS with effect from 1 July 2015.

The investigation of other types of eligibility based discounts such as Council Tax Single Person Discount would remain with the Council.

The Council could now either transfer the existing Fraud Investigation team to the DWP on 1 July 2015 in whole or in part or make a decision to develop an in-house capacity to:

- maximise the Council's income from Council Tax and Business Rates in the context of the new local government finance regime; and
- strengthen prevention/compliance and ultimately fraud activity in Cannock Chase to signal a tougher approach to fraudsters and claimants who incorrectly claim discounts and exemptions.

By granting Council Tax discounts and exemptions in accordance with either statute or a local scheme, precepting authorities forego income because the amount of Council Tax to be collected is reduced. Similarly the claiming of reliefs or exemptions for Business Rates will impact upon the amount of Business Rates retained by the Council.

The business case for retaining a compliance capacity after the transfer of Housing Benefit Fraud investigation and prosecution work to the Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) was therefore to ensure that Council Tax discounts and exemptions e.g. Single Person Discount (SPD) and Local Council Tax Scheme (LCTS) awards and Business Rates reliefs and discounts were correct and that we did not award or continue to award discounts/ exemptions/reliefs where it was not appropriate to do so.

There was potential for a retained compliance team to investigate other types of fraud or failure to declare a change of circumstances. Although officers were currently of the view that there was only a very limited business case apparent to pursue types of corporate fraud such as insurance fraud, and employee related frauds, there was a stronger case, for the team to deal with tenancy fraud.

The Head of Housing and Waste Management had agreed to support the resource required within a Compliance Team, from the Housing Revenue Account, to investigate Tenancy Fraud. This was estimated to be around 0.5 full time equivalent staff.

#### **114. Quarter 2 Performance Review of Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust 2014-15**

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Commissioning (Item 14.1 – 14.67 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust (WLCT) performance in delivering the

Culture and Leisure Services for the period 1 July 2014 to 30 September 2014 be noted.

### Reasons for Decision

The performance review was an integral part of the Council's contract monitoring arrangements with WLCT, enabling the Council to review the Trust's performance and commitments set out in the contract and method statements.

Appendix 1 attached to the report provided a detailed breakdown of WLCT's performance against performance targets for the second quarter of the financial year, 1 July, 2014 to 30 September, 2014.

During this quarter there were a number of key highlights:-

- Of a total of 63 performance measures and targets WLCT met or exceeded performance in 51 (81%) of its targets and not met target in 12 (19%), albeit that 3 (5%) were within the 5% tolerance threshold. The other 9 (14%) were considered red.
- The Council's culture and leisure facilities and services were being used more this quarter than they were during the same period last year. (212,492 visits compared to 211,016 visits).
- The two leisure centres had also exceeded their target for junior visits (16 years and under) attracting 67,900 junior visits (16 years and under), which represented a slight increase (0.6%) when compared to the same quarter last year.
- Leisure Centre Memberships had increased by a further 0.2% from 3.7% to 3.9% during this quarter. Concessionary card holders were currently showing a reduction of 5% with 3,893 live card holders.
- Swimming lesson usage at both centres continued to grow with 21,900 attendances this quarter. Swimming lesson usage had increased significantly at Chase by over 37% and by 5% at Rugeley when compared to the first quarter this year.
- Golf course performance for the year to date was in line with that achieved during the first 6 months of 2013-14. (15,632 rounds compared to 15,615).
- The theatre continued to perform well with the total number of visits and attendances this year showing a 21% increase above target. (23,985 visits compared to a target of 19,706).
- Sensory Room participation remained strong with over 300 attendances during the quarter, benefiting 40 families within the district.
- The number of school visits to the Museum of Cannock Chase was 13% above target for the second quarter and 32% above the performance achieved during the same quarter last year.
- Commencement of the 'Chase Active' project which assists adults with learning difficulties to become involved in sport and physical activities. Official launch took place in November 2014.

- The Arts had used £5k of funding to deliver a Youth Project at the Prince of Wales to develop young peoples' engagement in the theatre. This quarter had also seen the commencement of the 'My Family Fitness' project targeted at encouraging parents with busy family lives to get more active, either with or at the same time as their children. To date 703 children and their families have engaged in this project against a target of 500.
- Investment in £50k in new training equipment at Chase Leisure Centre and new till system at the Prince of Wales Theatre.
- There had been no default notices issued and the contract had been delivered within budget.

However, the aim of the report was also to present a balanced picture of achievements and performance against the targets set, including where performance needed to be improved.

- There were (12) 19% of targets that had not been met and where improvement were required. 9 (14%) were rated Red. 2 related to Chase Leisure Centre and usage levels in respect of the dry side activities and health and fitness. There was one red indicator reported for Rugeley Leisure Centre which related to the level of health referral activity and 3 for the Museum of Cannock Chase which related to the level of volunteer hours, junior participation and visits in person. Junior participation on the golf course and at the Theatre was also red against target as is the level of volunteer hours in the Arts team. The remaining 3 (5%) are rated Amber (within 5% tolerance threshold of the target set), 1 of which related to the level of education visits and 1 to the level of club usage at Rugeley Leisure Centre and 1 to the number of rounds played on the golf course. Results against these measures would continue to be monitored over the coming months.

Key issues the year included the following:

- WLCT would need to ensure that the culture and leisure facilities and services continued to:-
  - be in line with the Council's Priorities and objectives,
  - be evidence driven and aligned to the needs of the community,
  - contribute to meeting the health needs of the District,
  - influence decision makers and fund holders (Local Strategic Partnership, Health and Well Being Boards, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Arts Council, Heritage Lottery Fund etc), and
  - demonstrate where and how culture and leisure services could make an impact on a range of outcomes (e.g. Preventative – role of physical activity in health prevention).
- Greater use needed to be made of geographic data and information in order to target and promote culture and leisure facilities to under represented groups (young people, people with disabilities, over 60's etc).

- WLCT to continue to explore opportunities to provide play over the next year.

Performance achieved to date continued to be good, particularly in respect of attendances to the Council's culture and leisure facilities when compared to the same period in the previous year.

### **115. Introduction of the Living Wage**

Consideration was given to the Report of the Corporate Director (Item 15.1 – 15.4 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The Living Wage be introduced for Cannock Chase Council from 1 April 2015 at a total cost of £25,200 in the 2015/16 financial year.
- (B) The National Apprenticeship Scheme and similar national employment schemes be omitted from the Living Wage Policy for the reasons stated in paragraph 5.7 of the report.

#### Reasons for Decisions

The Living Wage was calculated by the Minimum Income Standard Research Project on how much a worker needed to avoid the effects of poverty. It was based on a couple with two children both working 37.5 hours a week. The current UK Living Wage was set at £7.85p per hour outside of London and if introduced, applies to all employees over the age of 18 years. The current legal minimum wage was £6.50p per hour.

From January 2015 the lowest paid employee in Cannock Chase Council was on an hourly rate of £7.00 (scp 5). The introduction of the Living Wage would then increase the hourly rate to £7.85p for the lowest paid employees of the Council.

Independent research on the impact of the introduction of the Living Wage had found that reductions in turnover and absenteeism could occur as well as increases in productivity.

Employers opt on a voluntary basis to pay the Living Wage. The purpose of the report was for Cabinet to determine if they wish to voluntarily adopt the Living Wage policy for Cannock Chase Council as employer.

### **116. Accommodation Review**

Consideration was given to the Report of the Chief Executive (Item 16.1 – 16.6 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the current position be noted, actions taken to date be endorsed and the further accommodation sharing initiatives outlined in the report be agreed to.

### Reasons for Decision

As part of an ongoing drive to reduce costs and maximise income, the Council had sought to review its public assets, rationalising and maximising potential use wherever possible with other partners in the public sector. Other public sector partners have endeavoured to do the same.

The Council successfully negotiated with the Partnership Trust to move 80 of their employees from Ivy House, which had subsequently closed, into the building.

The County Council's Independent Futures Service, with around 20 staff, also moved into the building.

To accommodate the changes it was necessary to redesign the internal layout of the building to open plan, and the opportunity was taken to modernise that part of the building layout and provide kitchen facilities and breakout areas which had been requested by staff.

Cabinet on its meeting on 25 July 2013 recommended that Council at its meeting on the 7 August 2013 set a capital budget of £500,000 for the project, with half to be met by the County Council. The anticipated income from the sharing of accommodation was expected to be in excess of £200,000 per annum.

The Partnership Trust currently occupied the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> floors of the building at an agreed rent of £40,236 per annum and an estimated service charge of £67,990 pa.

Independent Futures currently occupied a part of the first floor of the building and pay an annual rent of £7,470 and an estimated service charge of £11,852 pa.

The Capital cost of carrying out the necessary redesign of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> floors to date was around £177,000.

Arrangements were put in place to allow senior managers from the Partnership Trust, to park on the Members car park, and c.30 passes were issued for the staff car park. Arrangements were made to allow the Partnership Trust to rent 40 spaces on a floor of the town centre multi-storey car park. Unfortunately that arrangement had proved unpopular with Partnership Trust staff, and in particular nursing staff, who had found it intimidating to walk to/from that car park alone and in uniform, carrying medical supplies. The Royal Wolverhampton Hospital Trust have asked to rent these spaces for their staff as part of the changes being introduced at Cannock hospital.

Although the County Council were invoiced for £130,000 as a first contribution to the capital costs in March of this year (at their request), by early October the invoice remained unpaid. However, an agreement was reached whereby 49 additional car parking passes would be issued to the Partnership Trust for the staff car park (for nursing and social care staff), and in return the invoice would be paid; this was paid in full on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014. The result of this was that the staff car park was at maximum capacity at peak times and overflows at very busy periods. The ongoing situation would be carefully monitored.

Members were aware that for many months the Council had been in negotiation with the Police, again at their request, to allow for front line police services to move into the building, and specifically the ballroom.

Members were aware that the Police and Crime Commissioner recently determined that he no longer wished to pursue this option.

Officers were also in negotiation for the possible transfer of County Council Families First Services into the building, but due to an imminent review of that service, the County had also determined not to pursue that option.

No steps had been taken to carry out the necessary redesign works of the remaining floors of the building whilst these negotiations were underway, as they may have fundamentally changed any design layout.

Many staff had been working in extremely cramped conditions for some time and so the works to rest of the building would now be carried out without any further unnecessary delay.

### **Further sharing opportunities.**

An agreement had been reached with the County Council to provide some services from the Council's reception including the issuing of blue badges. The County would pay an annual fee of £5,000 for this service which would be kept under review.

The County had also expressed a wish to see their Registrars service move into the building and at their expense would be refurbishing the Jack Holsten room to provide Registry Office marriages; and two small offices were to be provided in the reception area for Registration Services.

The County would pay a rental fee of £4,643 and estimated service charges of £3,907.

Further, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) had confirmed they wish to move 11 staff into the building plus provision for an office for the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chairman. The standard agreed rent of £4,392 and an estimated service charge of £8,500 had been proposed though terms had not yet been finalised. Provision was made for the CCG to move in on 1<sup>st</sup> December and they have been in occupation since this date.

It was possible therefore to site the District Commissioning Lead and her Commissioning staff together with this Council's Partnership Team to create a "commissioning hub".

Royal Wolverhampton Hospital Trust expressed an interest in moving back office staff from the hospital into the Ballroom, but had since written to say that this was no longer a viable option for them.

### **Reception**

The redesign and modernisation of the Reception area had also been put on hold pending decisions by the Police and Families First, however account could now be taken of the extra footfall being experienced due to sharing of the building, and steps would be taken to ensure the area provided a better experience for the public.

Concerns had been raised about staff security in the area, and CCTV had now been installed in this area. The CCTV system would also cover the Members entrance, as this would be open to the public for the Registrars.

### **Hospital Car Parking**

The CEO of Royal Wolverhampton Hospital Trust had written to the Council expressing his concern that Cannock Hospital car parking provision was inadequate given the extra volume of service that he will soon be providing from that hospital.

The Council's staff car park was just across the road from the hospital and therefore he has sought the Council's help in trying to address the problem.

Meetings had been held between the Council and the hospital, and it was hoped a solution could be found that would involve no expense to the Council and may even provide a future revenue stream.

Any solution would however almost inevitably inconvenience staff, and of course the Council's tenants.

#### **117. Update on Partnership Activity**

Consideration was given to the Report of the Chief Executive (Item 17.1 – 17.6 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the update on Partnership Activity be noted.

##### Reasons for Decision

At the meeting of Cabinet on 21 June, 2012, the regular Partnership Update report was noted and it was resolved that, in future, an update would be required on a quarterly basis following the Local Strategic Partnership Board (LSP) Strategic Board meeting cycle.

The report provided an update on the key areas of focus for the Chase Community Partnership since the last report to Cabinet together with detailed information and case studies where relevant.

Cabinet recalled that the LSP had adopted its own governance structure and Terms and Reference, and therefore the quarterly update reports were intended to provide a summary of Partnership work for information. Any particular areas of interest to Cabinet could be reported in more detail in future reports.

#### **118. 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 Paragraphs 1, 2 and 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, 29 JANUARY, 2015 AT 4:00 P.M.**

**IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK**

**PART 2**

**119. Review of the Senior Management Structure of the Council – Actuarial Strain**

Consideration was given to the Not for Publication Report of the Leader of the Council (Item 19.1 – 19.18 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The payment of the actuarial strain as set out in paragraph 2.6 of the report to Council held on 14 January, 2015 (attached as Appendix 1 to the report), be approved.
- (B) The budget variations arising from the change to the Senior Management Restructure be noted, which would form part of the overall Budget to be recommended to Council as part of the '2015/16 to 2017/18 General Fund Revenue Budget' report.

Reason for Decisions

Under the Constitution the approval of the Council's senior management structure and the appointment or dismissal of the Chief Executive were reserved to the Council. The approval of the payment of actuarial strain to allow immediate access to pension entitlement for an employee made redundant or retiring early was reserved to the Cabinet.

**120. Compulsory Purchase Order – 79 Sharon Way, Hednesford**

Prior to consideration of the Not for Publication Report of the Head of Environmental Health (Item 20.1 – 20.12 of the Official Minutes of the Council), the Housing Portfolio Leader gave an update from the Head of Environmental Health.

The Head of Environmental Health had advised that, having notified the Leaseholder and Freeholder of the intention to pursue a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO), Officers had received a response from solicitors representing the Freeholder.

The solicitors had advised that they were commencing proceedings on behalf of the Freeholder to take possession of the property, following which the necessary repairs would be carried out. It was then intended to either let the property on an assured shorthold tenancy, or sell it.

Officers would closely monitor progress and if the Freeholder did not make

satisfactory progress, as advised, then it was recommended that the Compulsory Purchase Order be pursued.

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) Taking account of the information received from solicitors representing the Freeholder, Officers should closely monitor progress in respect of the promised repairs and future usage.
- (B) If the Freeholder did not make satisfactory progress, as advised, then the Compulsory Purchase Order should be pursued under section 17 of the Housing Act 1985, with an open market disposal of the property for the best price available be authorised and otherwise on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Head of Economic Development.

#### Reasons for Decisions

Empty properties could fall into disrepair and attract pests, graffiti and litter, becoming a target for anti-social behaviour, vandalism, squatting and arson.

Many people in the Cannock Chase District needed homes and there were approximately 1,375 applicants on the Council's housing waiting list. New house building rates were still low and reusing empty homes provided one of the few other sources of housing.

Other options to bring the dwelling back into beneficial use had been explored and found to be unsuccessful or inappropriate. The property was currently the subject of enforcement action under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 in respect of a rat infestation.

Having notified the Leaseholder and Freeholder of the intention to pursue a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO), Officers had received a response from solicitors representing the Freeholder. The solicitors had advised that they were commencing proceedings on behalf of the Freeholder to take possession of the property, following which the necessary repairs would be carried out. It was then intended to either let the property on an assured shorthold tenancy, or sell it.

The meeting closed at 4.55 p.m.

---

LEADER