

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK
AT 4:00 P.M., WEDNESDAY, 23 JANUARY, 2019

PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors:

Witton, P.T. (Chairman)	
Stretton, Mrs. P.Z., M.B.E. (Vice-Chairman)	
Adamson, G.	Johnson, J.P.
Alcott, G.	Johnson, T.B.
Allen, F.W.C.	Kraujalis, J.T.
Allt, Mrs. A.	Lyons, Miss O.
Bennett, C.	Mitchell, Mrs. C.
Bowater, J.L.	Peake, Mrs. C.L. (late)
Buttery, M.S.	Pearson, A.R.
Cartwright, Mrs. S.M.	Preece, J.P.T.L.
Cooper, Miss J.	Smith, C.D.
Crabtree, S.K.	Snape, D.J.
Davis, Mrs. M.A.	Snape, P.A.
Dudson, Miss M.J.	Startin, P.D.
Fisher, P.A.	Sutherland, M.
Foley, D.	Sutton, Mrs. H.M.
Freeman, Miss M.A.	Tait, Ms. L.
Grice, Mrs. D.	Todd, Mrs. D.M.
Hewitt, P.M.	Wilkinson, Ms. C.L.
Hoare, M.W.A.	Woodhead, P.E.

57. Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillors A. Dudson; C.I. Lea; Mrs. C.E. Martin; and Mrs. C.L. Peake (late arrival).

Apologies were also received on behalf of the Managing Director who was attending a meeting in Birmingham to discuss the Commonwealth Games. The Deputy Managing Director supported the Chairman.

58. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members

No other Declarations of Interests were made in addition to those already confirmed by Members in the Register of Members' Interests.

59. Minutes

Council Services Cuts (Minute 51(iii))

The Corporate Improvement Portfolio Leader noted that it was gratifying to note that, in response to public outcry, Staffordshire County Council had reconsidered its plans to significantly cut the budget for school crossing patrols.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 November, 2018, be approved as a correct record and signed.

60. Chairman's Announcements and Correspondence

(i) Chairman's Charity Collection

The Chairman advised that a collection box was circulating for Members to make a donation to support his fundraising. At the meeting held on 28 November, 2018 a total of £51.00 was received, and he thanked Members for their donations.

61. Questions Received under Council Procedure Rule 8

No Questions had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 8.

62. Changes to Membership of Committees etc. 2018/19

The Leader of the Council, Councillor G. Adamson, advised of the following changes to membership of Committees for approval by Council:

Community Scrutiny Committee

Councillor A. Dudson to be replaced by Councillor Mrs. P.Z. Stretton

Corporate Scrutiny Committee

Councillor A. Dudson to be replaced by Councillor Mrs. P.Z. Stretton

Promoting Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

Councillor A. Dudson to be replaced by Councillor P Witton; Substitute: Councillor T.B. Johnson

Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Councillor A. Dudson to be replaced by Councillor P Witton; Substitute: Councillor F.W.C. Allen

West Midlands Combined Authority Scrutiny Committee

Councillor A. Dudson to be replaced by Councillor T.B. Johnson. The position of Substitute was offered to the Conservative Group and Councillor M. Sutherland was appointed.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee changes, as advised by the Leader of the Council, be approved.

63. Recommendations Referred from Cabinet, Committees etc.

Consideration was given to the following recommendation to Council agreed by Cabinet at its meeting held on 13 December, 2018, in respect of:

20/24 Anson Street, Rugeley (Draft Minute No. 88)

“That Council, at its meeting to be held on 23 January, 2019, be recommended to allocate £85,000 into the capital programme to fund the necessary works, subject to planning permission, to create office accommodation and interview rooms within Rugeley Market Hall to enable the relocation of the existing Local Taxation and Benefits Service and Housing Options for 20/24 Anson Street, Rugeley.”

RESOLVED:

That £85,000 be allocated into the capital programme to fund the necessary works, subject to planning permission, to create office accommodation and interview rooms within Rugeley Market Hall to enable the relocation of the existing Local Taxation and Benefits Service and Housing Options for 20/24 Anson Street, Rugeley.

64. Motions Received under Council Procedure Rule 6

Consideration was given to the following Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 6 by Councillor F.W.C. Allen, Chairman of the Community Scrutiny Committee:

“That this Council should write to the Secretary of State expressing our concern the H.M. Government have missed the point by considering the imposition of a two pounds (£2) limit on punters using gaming machines in betting offices.

It is our belief that online gambling via mobile phones is out of control, and more of a threat to the more vulnerable element of our society, particularly youngsters, some as young as eleven, who gain access illegally.

Furthermore, to consider with the utmost urgency ways of imposing a levy on firms that deal online in order to try and protect our high streets, and hopefully limit the amount of shop closures in our towns and cities.”

Members debated the Motion and it was moved and agreed that, in addition to the substantive Motion, the matter should also be referred to an appropriate Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The Council should write to the Secretary of State expressing the Council’s concerns that H.M. Government has missed the point by considering the imposition of a two pounds (£2) limit on punters using gaming machines in betting offices. It was the Council’s belief that online gambling via mobile phones was out of control, and more of a threat to the more vulnerable element of our society, particularly youngsters, some as young as eleven, who gained access illegally.
- (B) Furthermore, that with utmost urgency, consideration be given to ways of imposing a levy on firms that dealt online in order to try and protect our high streets, and hopefully limit the amount of shop closures in our town and

cities.

- (C) The matter be referred to an appropriate Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

Councillor Mrs. C.L. Peake joined the meeting at this point.

65. Comments and Questions on Part 1 Minutes of Cabinet, Committees, Sub-Committees and Panels under Rule 9

The following Question on Part 1 Minutes was submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9 by Councillor P.E. Woodhead:

“Can Portfolio Holder please advise Council of the rationale not to accept the recommendations from the Promoting Prosperity Scrutiny Working Group in respect to the Outcome of their Review of the Policy for the Commercial Use of the Highway?”

Cabinet minutes from 13th December minute 81 (i) page 57.”

In the absence of the Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder, the Leader of the Council read out the following statement to address the Question:

“Firstly I would like to record my thanks to the Scrutiny Committee and in particular the members of the Review Working Group for carrying out such a thorough review in such a short timescale. I appreciate and acknowledge the efforts of both members and officers in this process.

The Scrutiny Committee’s recommendation was considered at Cabinet on 13/12/18. Cabinet is mindful of the concerns expressed by some over the impact of the Policy, in relation to the costs to business and its application only to certain parts of the District, which are both considered by some to be inequitable.

Cabinet believes the aspirations behind the introduction of the Policy as still worthwhile and what the Council should be aiming to achieve. The Policy aims to ensure that businesses can use the highway to their advantage whilst ensuring obstructions cause no danger to highway users, in particular to those with visual impairment or mobility difficulties.

Cabinet determined (Minute 81(i)):

“That, having carefully considered the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee Working Group, Cabinet wished to balance the needs of businesses with the needs of those who suffered from mobility or visual impairment issues and to create fairness. Accordingly, Cabinet agreed that:

- (i) Officers should review the current fee structure and look at expanding the application of the Policy to cover the whole District.
- (ii) Officers should investigate whether the enforcement of highways obstructions covered by the policy could be delegated from the County Council to the District Council, in order that matters are simplified.”

Subsequently, Officers will report their findings to Cabinet and the matter will then be considered by Council.”

Councillor Woodhead stated that he was disappointed at how long it had taken to address the matter and that he considered the Cabinet’s decision ignored the views of the Review Working Group. Traders were asking him what restrictions applied to them putting out ‘A’ boards and he was unable to answer with any certainty. He

then asked for clarification on the following points by way of a supplementary question:

- (i) A clear timeframe to the conclusion of Cabinet's requested review.
- (ii) A commitment from Cabinet to support the role of Scrutiny Committees.

The Leader addressed the points in reverse order, advising first that, while Cabinet would always consider the views of Scrutiny Committees and their working groups, it would not always be appropriate to enact their recommendations. To do so would effectively mean that the Scrutiny Committees were running the Council; not the Executive.

With regard to the policy itself, nothing had changed at the present time, so the current policy stood until such time as Officers reported back to Cabinet and agreement was reached with the County Council in respect of potential delegations regarding the enforcement of highways obstructions.

The scale of charges was fair and reasonable and should not impact unduly on any business that already had in place all of the required paperwork, such as public liability insurance. Nonetheless, the review would look at the fee structure and, in order to ensure that all parts of the District were treated the same, look at expanding its application across the whole District.

66. Calendar of Meetings 2019-20

The Leader requested that the Report be deferred for consideration at a later meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the matter be deferred to a later meeting.

67. Compulsory Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations

Consideration was given to the Report of the Managing Director (Item 11.1 – 11.12 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The review process be noted.
- (B) A further report be brought back to Council on completion of the review.

68. Comments and Questions on Part 2 Minutes of Cabinet, Committees, Sub-Committees and Panels under Rule 9

No comments or questions on Part 2 Minutes had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.

The meeting closed at 4:45 p.m.

CHAIRMAN