

**CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOWN CENTRES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**TUESDAY 12 DECEMBER, 2017 AT 4.00 P.M.**  
**IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK**

**PART 1**

PRESENT: Martin, Mrs. C. (Chairman)  
Councillors

Buttery, M.S.	Sutton, Mrs. H.M.
Foley, D.	Tait, Ms. L.
Johnson, T.B.	Witton, P.T.

**7. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. P.Z. Stretton (Vice-Chairman), Miss J. Cooper, W.T.A. Hardman, M. Sutherland and Miss S. Whitehouse.

**8. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restrictions on Voting by Members and Party Whip Declarations**

No declarations of interests or party whip declarations were received.

**9. Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 July, 2017 be approved as a correct record.

**10. Scrutiny Review of Transport and Update on Work Programme 2017/18**

The Chairman advised that items 4 and 5 on the agenda would be considered together.

The Interim Head of Economic Development explained that at the previous meeting on 4 July, 2017 Members had agreed to undertake an in depth review of transport, including buses and rail, to determine whether it was fit for purpose. He also explained that at the last meeting Members had noted that Staffordshire County Council was undertaking a consultation on bus services across the County and Members had requested that a representative from Arriva attend the next Scrutiny meeting. Arising from the last meeting it had been agreed that a Working Group of four Members of the Scrutiny Committee should be

established.

The Working Group met on 22 November, 2017 and Jeff Tucker from Staffordshire County Council attended. Arriva had been invited to the Working Group but they were unable to attend that meeting or the Scrutiny meeting today. However, a further Working Group meeting had been arranged for 18 January, 2018 and a representative from Arriva would be attending along with Jeff Tucker from Staffordshire County Council.

At the Working Group meeting Jeff Tucker had explained that Staffordshire County Council's consultation on bus services across the County was undertaken between 24 July - 17 September, 2017. As part of the process Cannock Chase Council had been consulted on the four options which were outlined in the document attached to the Agenda (Item 4.1 - 4.2 refers). Cannock Chase Council had supported Option 1 of the County's consultation; although their preference would have been to have "no cuts". It was also the preferred option of the County Council.

It had been anticipated that the County would have approved the revised supported bus funding by the time the Working Group meeting was held. However, the Cabinet decision had been called in and this was not considered by the County's Corporate Scrutiny until 5 December, 2017. At this meeting Members had upheld the Cabinet decision; therefore Option 1 would be progressed and the revised supported bus funding would be in place by April 2018.

The Interim Head of Economic Development explained that Officers from the County Council had been in discussions with Arriva who had been asked to confirm which bus routes would continue to be provided and which would be withdrawn. Additionally, County Officers would be engaging with District and Parish Council's, Community Transport Operators and businesses to ascertain whether any of the withdrawn bus routes could be provided by them. All options would be explored.

The Working Group had also noted that the use of Section 106 monies to support the revised budget was being considered. The Interim Head of Economic Development commented that the development of Tesco in Rugeley had a Section 106 attached for a contribution of £30,000 towards public transport. There was potential that this money could be used but further work would need to be undertaken. He would provide an update on this at the next Working Group on 18 January, 2018 and then at the next Scrutiny Committee meeting.

The Committee noted that a representative from Arriva would be attending the Working Group on 18 January and this would be an opportunity for Members to ask questions about their plans for which bus routes they would continue to provide and which they would be withdrawing. Jeff Tucker from the County Council would also be in attendance and Members may wish to ask about how the delay due to the call in of the Cabinet decision would affect the delivery of the new revised budget. Members who were not on the Working Group and wished to ask any questions should email the Interim Head of Economic Development direct.

John Morgan, Planning Policy Officer added that it was likely that it would be around February/March when Arriva had decided which bus routes would be maintained or withdrawn. He added that the approval of Option 1 (outlined in the document attached to the agenda) would mean that there would be no bus service at all to Longford Estate/Shoal Hill area of Cannock or Slitting Mill in Rugeley unless alternative provision via Community Transport could be developed. However, evidence suggested this would be difficult to secure due to profitability.

The Chairman commented that the Working Group meeting had been useful and she was pleased Jeff Tucker from the County would be in attendance at the next Working Group to clarify how things would be progressing following discussions with the various partners.

Members noted that the details of the bus routes that would be maintained or withdrawn would not be known when the Working Group met in January. The Planning Policy Officer confirmed that the West Midlands Traffic Commissioner published proposed bus service changes on a weekly basis and 6 weeks notice had to be given to register or de-register bus routes. He would be able to advise Members of any changes that were registered.

With regard to rail transport the Interim Head of Economic Development advised Members that the electrification of the Chase Line was continuing following a short delay. On 10 December 2017 Abellio, West Midlands Trains, took over the franchise from London Midland. The new operator would be improving stations and investing in new carriages; trains would have 4 carriages creating more space for passengers.

The Planning Policy Officer confirmed that Network Rail would be completing the line speed upgrade and trains would travel at 60 mph instead of 45 mph. This would produce a saving of 4 minutes from Rugeley to Birmingham and allow the trains to return to Birmingham rather than sit at the station for 34 minutes. This would create a two trains per hour service between Rugeley and Birmingham via the Chase Line (stopping at all stations). Additionally there would be a service from Rugeley to London along the Chase Line which would provide direct services beyond Birmingham New Street to Birmingham International/Airport/NEC, Coventry, Rugby and Northampton.

The Interim Head of Economic Development added that the new operator was to improve customer train information and ticket machines as part of the new franchise.

Members welcomed the news of the new operator and the planned improvements.

RESOLVED:

That the Interim Head of Economic Development provide an update to the Working Group on 18 January 2018 and to the next Economic Development and Town Centres Scrutiny Committee on 22 March, 2018 on the potential use of the

Section 106 monies in relation to the Tesco development in Rugeley.

**11. Quarters 1 and 2 Performance – Economic Development and Town Centres PDP 2017/18**

Consideration was given to the performance information (Item 6.1 - 6.10 refers).

The Interim Head of Economic Development led Members through the information advising on those actions where targets had not been met. Members noted that the action to set up a Retail Skills Academy for the Mill Green Designer Village was being reviewed as the Cannock College campus had now closed. Officers would be reviewing the strategy and delivery arrangements with the developer and would be having discussions with South Staffordshire College and Walsall College. If the Academy could not be provided within the Cannock Chase District area it would need to be accessible by those who lived in the District.

The Committee noted that the action in relation to developing an Asset Management Plan had been transferred to the Head of Housing and Partnerships due to changes in the Senior Management Structure. It would therefore be removed from the performance information in relation to this Committee.

With regard to the action to start charging for pre-application advice on major planning applications Members noted that this would be in place by Quarter 4 and included in next years fees and charges.

The action to deliver the Civic Centre car parking scheme had been delayed; however a contractor would be appointed via a tender process and it was anticipated the scheme would be delivered in 2018 within the approved budget.

The meeting closed at 4.30pm.

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CHAIRMAN