

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE

CABINET

HELD ON THURSDAY, 18 APRIL, 2013 AT 5.45 P.M.

IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors:

Adamson, G.	Leader of the Council
Toth, J.	Deputy Leader of the council and Environment Portfolio Leader
Dixon, D.I	Corporate Improvement Portfolio Leader
Holder, M.J.	Crime and Partnerships Portfolio Leader
Mitchell, Mrs. C.	Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader
Alcott, G.	Economic Development and Planning 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

181. Apologies

None.

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

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

183. Updates from Portfolio Leaders

Economic Development and Planning

Road Improvements – A5 Churchbridge / A460 - The Portfolio Leader advised that £2m of Pinchpoint funding had been secured for improvements to increase capacity on the roundabouts at the junction of the A5 and the A460.

The Portfolio Leader also advised that preparatory surveying work had commenced for the dualling of the A460 between the junctions with the A5190 Lichfield Road and Hayes Way.

Crime and Partnerships

Meeting with Police and Crime Commissioner - The Portfolio Leader advised that he had met with the Police and Crime Commissioner to discuss relationships between the PCC's office and District Councils. The Commissioner appeared to have been impressed by the positive District Council / Police working relationships already in place at Cannock Chase.

Police and Crime Plan – First Draft – The Portfolio Leader advised that the PCC had produced a first draft Police and Crime Plan, but advised that this was effectively a holding document and would be subject to further review.

Health and Wellbeing

The Portfolio Leader advised that, in her personal capacity as a Governor of the Board of the local hospital, her position had been suspended following the Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust entering into administration.

184. Minutes of Cabinet Meeting of 21 March, 2013

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March, 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed.

185. Forward Plan

The Forward Plan of Decisions for the period April - June, 2013 (Item 5.1 of the Official Minutes of the Council), was considered.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period April - June, 2013, be noted.

186. Minutes of Policy Development Committees

RESOLVED:

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

- (i) Housing – 19 March, 2013
- (ii) Town Centre Regeneration – 5 March, 2013
- (iii) Environment – 25 October, 2012
- (iv) Health and Wellbeing – 18 December, 2012 and 20 March, 2013

187. Provision of a Gas Supply – Lomax Road Flats

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Housing (Item 7.1 – 7.4 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) A gas supply be provided to the Lomax Road flats as part of the 2013-14 Central Heating Replacement/Upgrading Programme at an estimated cost of £62,000.
- (B) The agreed 2013-14 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme Central Heating Replacement / Upgrading budget be increased by £62,000, funded through virement from the 2013-14 Housing Revenue Account Capital Contingency Reserve.

Reason(s) for the Decision

The electric storage heaters in the Lomax Road flats were due to be replaced as part of the 2013-14 Central Heating Replacement/Upgrading Programme. In accordance with the agreed service standard, tenants may choose to have gas central heating installed unless the cost of providing a gas supply is uneconomic. The majority of tenants had requested this option.

There was no gas supply to the flats and the cost of providing one was estimated to be £62,000. Whilst this was not considered to be uneconomic, the cost of the gas supply could not be accommodated within the approved 2013-14 Central Heating Replacement / Upgrading Programme, if the agreed 265 central heating improvements were to be delivered.

It was, therefore, proposed that the agreed Central Heating Replacement / Upgrading budget be increased by £62,000 to meet the additional cost of providing a gas supply to the flats. The additional £62,000 would be met through virement from the agreed £100,000 contingency reserve which also formed part of the approved HRA Capital Programme.

188. A World Class Rail Network for the West Midlands, West Midlands Regional Rail Forum, January, 2013

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration (Item 8.1 – 8.15 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) Centro / WMRRF be informed that the Council supported the broad

objectives of the document but considered that it lacked detail on future development of the Chase Line and would be better expressed on a route basis, as in previous versions of the document.

- (B)** Centro / WMRRF be asked to incorporate the changes detailed in section 5.5 and Appendix 1 of the report and the other potential developments along the Chase line, in a future version of the plan.

Reason(s) for the Decision

Improving Chase Line rail services was a Council transport priority and it had provided funding to maintain services to Rugeley since 1997-2008 and from 2010 to the present, in partnership with Centro and Staffordshire County Council. The Council's short term priority was to secure the continued operation of the additional 'incremental' services, the remainder of the West Midlands franchise to September 2015 and the restoration of half hourly off-peak services in a future franchise funded by the DfT, together with the completion of route electrification.

Walsall-Rugeley electrification in 2018, would have a transformational impact on the District in terms of regeneration, job creation and increased property values and was estimated to create 1,370 new jobs as well as a WM Regional Gross Value Added (GVA) Benefit per annum of £113m. There is a need to build on this success by further incremental improvements identified in 5.5 and Appendix 1 of the report, to improve the passenger experience and continue growth.

189. 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(s) 1, 2, and 3, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

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PART 2

190. Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Service

Consideration was given to the Not for Publication Report of the Head of Environmental Services (Item 10.1 – 10.27 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the Grounds Maintenance & Street Cleansing service should be provided in-house for a period of up to 5 years during which time market conditions, benchmarking and budgetary provision would be regularly monitored.

Reason(s) for the Decision

The Council had previously experienced unsustainable contract provision by two external providers since 2005 in respect of both service areas. On 15 March, 2012, Cabinet gave approval to the services being provided in-house whilst a full evaluation of the service provision was undertaken. The two previous external appointed contractors failed to provide the full contract specification within the Council's allocated budget provision, despite both strongly indicating they could at the tendering / pre-contract stage.

Additionally, it was considered that the tendering processes, on both occasions, cost over £50,000; a sum that would be likely to be required again if the services were to be once more fully retendered.

The current In-House service provides grounds maintenance to the Cannock Golf Course and other Leisure Services sites outsourced to Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust (WLCT). As part of the ongoing monitoring process, if the service was retained in-house, the Council would regularly review if it continued to be economically advantageous to the Council to provide this maintenance. However, if at any stage WLCT expressed an interest in directly providing this element of the grounds maintenance service, then further advice would be required, as this might necessitate a separate procurement process for provision of that service.

191. Former Tenants Arrears Recommended for Write-Off

Consideration was given to the Not for Publication Report of the Head of

Housing (Item 11.1 – 11.7 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the former tenants' arrears detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved for write-off.

Reason(s) for the Decision

Appendix 1 to the report presented nineteen former tenants' arrears cases of £1,000 or above which could not be collected for the reasons stated. The arrears totalled £33,768.54 and were recommended for write-off in accordance with the Council's policy.

192. Proposal to Change Senior Management Structure of the Council

Consideration was given to the Not for Publication Report of the Chief Executive (Item 12.1 – 12.8 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That payment of the actuarial strain in the 2013/14 financial year as set out in the Financial Implications of the report be approved.

Reason(s) for the Decision

The Council had had an extremely challenging Local Government Financial Settlement this year with further significant reductions in formula grant funding over the next 3 years.

The Chief Executive and Senior Officers were identifying areas where efficiency and other savings may be delivered in the short and medium term so that the Council could continue to deliver balanced budgets in the future in a difficult financial context.

As part of this process, the Chief Executive in January, 2013, sought expressions of interest from all Chief Officers for a managed exit from the Council, such as voluntary redundancy or early retirement. Four expressions of interest were received. There was no obligation on the part of the employer to agree to an expression of interest, but it allowed the Council to assess the implications of doing so in light of the business needs of the Council.

The expressions of interest were assessed and the implications considered carefully by the Chief Executive in conjunction with Cabinet. The conclusion reached was that, subject to consultation and voluntary agreement to accept additional responsibilities from other Officers, the expression of interest for voluntary redundancy from the Head of Environmental Services could be accepted.

Following consultation with those affected, a way forward was identified to

redistribute the service responsibilities of the Head of Environmental Services.

The recommendations had been brought forward to Cabinet in order that Members could formally determine, in light of the decision of Council on 10 April, to approve the payment of actuarial strain in the 2013/14 financial year associated with the deletion of the Head of Environmental Services post.

The meeting closed at 6.00 p.m.

LEADER