

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 4 DECEMBER, 2012 AT 4.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK
PART 1

PRESENT:
Councillors

Ball, G.D. (Vice-Chairman – in the Chair)

Allt, Mrs. A.	Jones, R.
Anslow, C.	Todd, Mrs. D.
Freeman, Miss M.	Whitehouse, Mrs. L.

(In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor Mrs. A. Spicer, the Vice-Chairman, Councillor G.D. Ball took the Chair).

18. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. A. Spicer (Chairman) and Mrs. D. Grice.

Councillor Mrs. D. Todd agreed to convey the Committee's best wishes to the Chairman for a speedy recovery.

19. 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.

20. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 October, 2012 be approved as a correct record.

21. Update from The Town Centre Regeneration Portfolio Holder Councillor Mrs. D.M. Todd

The Town Centre Regeneration Portfolio Leader provided the Committee with the following update:

With regard to Hednesford town centre she advised that the new Tesco store opened

on 26 November and marks an important milestone in the Council's efforts to secure the regeneration of Hednesford Town Centre. Over 250 jobs have been created in the new store with about 100 jobs secured by previously unemployed people through the Tesco Partnership and open recruitment campaigns.

A number of other retailers were also expected to start trading in the pre-Christmas period; these included Lloyd's Pharmacy, Pets Corner, Costa Coffee and Phones 4 You. She further advised that marketing on the remaining units on Phases 1 and 2 continued. Whitehouse Brothers Butchers and Barnardo's have agreed to take space in the retail block built next to Hednesford Park.

It was explained that work on preparing the site for the new Aldi on Rugeley Road was expected to commence within the next couple of weeks. Council Officers were in discussion with a number of potential operators for the new community building which has been erected at first floor level next to Market Street Bridge. The preferred operator should be announced early in the new year. Additionally, contractors were completing the installation of the new railings alongside Hednesford Park.

With regard to Rugeley town centre she commented that Tesco had recently indicated that their proposed Rugeley store appears in their latest building programme with a projected November 2013 opening, and in the meantime work to resolve ecological issues remains in progress.

Finally, in relation to Cannock town centre Members were informed that a soft market testing exercise was in progress to identify the potential for development of the Beecroft Road car park site. The consultants working on behalf of the Council were due to report back in the early part of the new year and a report to Cabinet would follow.

Councillor Ball asked whether the new Aquarius building was to be named. The Planning and Economic Development Services Manager advised that this would be discussed between the Council and the operator.

22. Performance Outturn Update

The Head of Planning and Regeneration advised Members that the Performance outturn information was not discussed at the previous meeting as it had not been considered by the Scrutiny Committee. However, Quarters 1 and 2 were included on the agenda for consideration at today's meeting.

With regard to Quarter 1 he explained that the action in respect of the construction of new commercial floorspace was the responsibility of another PDC albeit that the town centre developments which were the responsibility of this PDC contributed significantly to the achievement of the new floorspace targets.

With regard to Quarter 2 he advised that the scheme to construct the new Market Street retail units in Hednesford Town Centre had been achieved ahead of schedule and was completed in Quarter 1 as opposed to Quarter 2.

In response to a question from a Member about the planning and marketing process to secure a development for Cannock town centre, it was explained that, due to the

poor economic climate for town centre developments, the Council had previously decided not to pursue a comprehensive development scheme for the Beecroft Road/Market Hall Street area and only progress the Beecroft Road site at this time. A soft market testing exercise had commenced to test the potential for the Beecroft Road site, and if viable, start the process of seeking a potential development partner. Consultants working on behalf of the Council would report back to Cabinet in the new year.

Councillor Anslow asked whether Market Hall Street would remain the same if/when the Beecroft Road scheme was developed. The Head of Planning and Regeneration advised that the previous administration had decided that the Beecroft Road site was more viable than the Market Hall Street site. The new administration had now agreed to go to the market to see whether a scheme could be achieved. It was considered more viable to develop new retail space on Beecroft Road rather than knocking down the existing facilities and rebuilding in the Market Hall Street/Church Street area of the town centre. It was also considered that some redevelopment activity would be beneficial to the perception of Cannock town centre as a place to invest.

AGREED:

That the performance outturn for Quarters 1 and 2 be noted.

23. Town Centre Traders Associations Issues

The Head of Planning and Regeneration explained that representatives from the Traders Associations had attended the previous meeting to inform Members of the issues they wished the Committee to consider. He outlined the main actions arising from the discussions which were supported by Members and provided Members with the following update:

AGREED ACTION	UPDATE
That Cannock Traders Association should engage with Members and Officers of the Council to consider methods of securing funding and improved engagement with retailers to support events being held in the town centre.	S106 monies were available to support certain activities and Officers would engage with Cannock Traders Association and the Portfolio Leader in accordance with the agreed protocol.
That Cannock Traders Association be requested to formally invite Councillor Mrs. M. Freeman and Councillor C. Anslow to attend their next meeting as part of the above.	Councillor Anslow attended the recent Traders Association meeting to offer support. It was agreed that a survey be undertaken which Councillor Anslow would distribute to the traders. Sheila Dunning would contact him in the new year with the questions to be included in the survey. Council Officers would provide assistance to progress this action if required.
That Officers engage with Hednesford Traders Association as part of the review of the car parking at Rugeley Road once the Tesco store has opened.	Officers would be looking at this in the new year.

That Council Officers commit to working with the Hednesford Traders Association (along with other stakeholders) with regard to progressing the Community Toilet Scheme in Hednesford.	Interests in the Community Toilet Scheme were currently being explored.
That, in accordance with the protocol agreed by Cabinet, where resources are available, Officers and the Portfolio Leader work with Hednesford Traders Association to determine how any funding should be spent.	S106 monies were available to support certain activities and Officers would liaise with the Traders Association and the Portfolio Leader in accordance with the agreed protocol.
That Rugeley Traders Association be involved in the discussion on the proposals to implement a scheme to link the Tesco store to the town centre.	S106 monies were available to provide the link and the Traders Association would be involved in its design.
That the issues raised in respect of car parking in Rugeley town centre be considered and discussed in more detail with Rugeley Traders Association.	Information was being gathered from the car parking machines. A meeting would be arranged with Angi Cooney to discuss this further.
That Cabinet be recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the views of Rugeley Traders Association be taken into account in any Council decision on the siting of the proposed Miners Memorial. • That Rugeley Traders Association be involved in discussions regarding the provision of street furniture in Rugeley town centre. 	These two actions would be included on the Cabinet Agenda for consideration at the meeting on 20 December 2012.

Arising from the update Councillor Ball asked whether the opening of the new Tesco store in Hednesford had affected trade in the town centre. The Planning and Economic Development Services Manager explained that it was a little early to draw a conclusion on the affect the opening of the Tesco store was having on trade in the town centre. However, it appeared that the Tesco store was trading well and shoppers were making the connection to go into the town centre once they had shopped in Tesco.

Councillor Whitehouse advised that she had a business in the Hednesford town centre and the town appeared busier since the Tesco store had opened.

Councillor Jones asked whether there was a time restriction on the Tesco car park in Hednesford. The Planning and Economic Development Services Manager advised that there was a three hour time limit in the legal agreement between St Modwen and the Council and that this was reflected in the car park management arrangements agreed under the planning conditions. However, there was no signage on the car park indicating a time limit and his view was that Tesco wished it to be a town centre shopper's car park and would be reluctant to introduce any formal management

arrangements.

With regard to Rugeley, Councillor Jones advised that Rugeley Trader's Association had produced a 2013 Calendar to promote the town centre and this included photographs of the Rugeley area. These were selling for £5.00 each. He asked whether the District Council could promote this Calendar on the Council's website. The Head of Planning and Regeneration advised that he would liaise with the PR & Marketing team and advise the Traders Association.

Councillor Jones reiterated the concerns raised by Rugeley Traders Association at the previous meeting with regard to street furniture and sought an assurance that the Traders Association would be involved in any discussion regarding the provision of street furniture. There was concern that street furniture taken out of Cannock town centre would be used in Rugeley town centre.

The Head of Planning and Regeneration advised that street furniture from Cannock would not be used in Rugeley. He confirmed that, if funding became available, he would recommend that the Traders Association be involved in any discussion regarding the provision of street furniture in Rugeley town centre.

AGREED:

That the Head of Planning and Regeneration liaise with the PR & Marketing team regarding support for the promotion of the Rugeley Traders Association's 2013 Calendar on the Council's website.

24. Work Programme Review

Consideration was given to the Committee's Work Programme for 2012-13 (Enclosure 6). The Head of Planning and Regeneration advised the work programme would be amended to include feedback of Traders Associations issues at the meeting on 5 March, 2013.

AGREED:

That the Work Programme be amended to include feedback of Traders Associations issues at the meeting on 5 March, 2013.

25. Exclusion of 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 3, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

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PART 2

26. Progress on Town Centre Regeneration

Members were provided with an update on the latest position with regard to confidential matters for town centre redevelopment schemes in all three of the District's town centres.

Rugeley

The Committee was advised that good progress had been made with the conservation area scheme and it was possible that additional funding would be available from Staffordshire County Council.

Hednesford

Members were updated on the progress made with the letting of units in the town centre. Additionally, it was explained that discussions were ongoing with J.D. Wetherspoon with reference to their potential acquisition of Anglesey Lodge. It was anticipated that a planning application would be submitted in the near future.

Councillor Anslow asked whether the units had attracted interest from national or regional companies. It was explained that the block of units adjacent to Hednesford Park had attracted interest from both; however, the Market Street units had received local interest.

Cannock

The Head of Planning and Regeneration explained that Cannock town centre had been given a boost with the opening of Costa Coffee and the discount card shop. Six applications were in the process of being considered for the Business Rate Discount Scheme.

Councillor Anslow considered that certain types of businesses were needed in Cannock town centre to boost trade. He was in the process of compiling a list of operators that he considered were needed in the town centre. He suggested that the Council could contact these operators and offer letting opportunities to them. The Head of Planning and Regeneration explained that normal procedure for new development schemes was that once a scheme had been confirmed for Cannock, the developer would appoint an agent to secure a line of retailers to occupy the units.

The procedure for existing units not in the control of the Council would be more complex. However, Councillor Anslow's advice would be welcomed.

The meeting finished at 4.50 p.m.

CHAIRMAN