

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
PERFORMANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 14 JANUARY, 2009 AT 4.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK
PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors

Mawle, D.L. (Chairman)
Yates, Ms. W. (Vice-Chairman)

Ansell, Mrs. P.A. Jones, R.
Beddows, J. Morgan, C.W.J.
Bernard, J. Thomas, D.

By Invitation: Colin Salt, Technical Director, Hestia in respect of Minute 28 –
Energy Efficiency Schemes

23. Declaration of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members

<u>Member</u>	<u>Nature of Interest</u>	<u>Type</u>
Jones, R.	Employed by City of Wolverhampton College and Sutton Coldfield College	Personal

24. Minutes

Arising from consideration of the Minutes, the Performance Manager clarified the query raised at the previous meeting in relation to the target set for National Indicator 15, Serious Violent Crime Rate for Cannock Chase. She stated that a Countywide target of a 4% reduction in serious violent crime had been set which had been disaggregated for Cannock Chase; the target was based on sound, statistical evidence. She confirmed that this target had also been agreed by Government Office.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November, 2008 be approved as a correct record.

25. Brown Wheeled Bin Collection Service - Costs

Consideration was given to the Briefing Note of the Waste and Engineering Services

Manager (Enclosure 4.1 – 4.2 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Waste and Engineering Services Manager reported on the amount of recycling credits generated and the figures and costs for collection of brown bins during the period of April to August, 2008.

Members referred to the briefing note and requested an explanation of the 'Less Compost Waste gate fee'. The Waste and Engineering Services Manager explained that there would be a payment to the contractor which was a processing fee for taking in the waste.

Members were of the opinion that savings could be generated should the brown bin collection be suspended between the months of November and January. Reference was made to a previous budget proposal which detailed that £40-60K in savings could potentially be made by not collecting brown bins during the months of November, December and January.

The Waste and Engineering Services Manager reported that if a suspension of the brown bin collections was undertaken during the winter months, fixed operational costs such as vehicles and crews would still remain.

The Executive and Policy Manager reported that the details of the previous budget savings option would need to be reviewed to establish whether a comparison could be drawn on the figures provided in the report. This information would be obtained and provide for the next meeting.

The Waste and Engineering Services Manager reported on "single stream" dry recyclable collections, which allowed the contractor to sort all the materials at the contractors Materials Recycling Facility (MRF). He also stated that a trial will be taking place from late February 2009 where 200 households will be trialing using a wheelie bin for dry recyclables.

RESOLVED:

- (A) That the briefing note be noted.
- (B) That details of the previously proposed budget saving option in respect of the suspension of the brown bin collection be reviewed to establish whether a comparison could be drawn on the figures outlined in the report and that this be provided for the next meeting on 11 February, 2009.

26. Attendance of Representatives at Community Forums

Consideration was given to the Briefing Note of the Director of Governance (Enclosure 5.1 – 5.3 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

Members were concerned with the same non attendance of partner organisations at Community Forums and expressed concern that they were only in attendance if there was a specific Agenda item. It was reported that on some occasions it was only apparent at the Forum that certain items could be cross-cutting and may need the attendance of other partners to become involved.

The Executive and Policy Manager reported that it was not compulsory for partner organisations to attend Community Forums under the current Terms of Reference. She also stated that the new Comprehensive Area Assessment encourages enhanced partnership working and explained that rather than Council Community Forums, in some areas of the Country, full Partnership Forums were in operation. Members were advised that in accordance with the Council's constitution, any amendments to the format and/or structure of Community Forums would need to be agreed by full Council.

RESOLVED:

- (A) That the outcome of monitoring the attendance of representatives at meetings of the Community Forums during November/December 2008 be noted.
- (B) That the Forums arranged during February/March are monitored for the attendance of representatives and reported at a future meeting of the Sub-Committee..

27. Strategic Housing Service Improvement Plan 2008-09 – Quarter 3 Update

Consideration was given to the Strategic Housing Service Improvement Plan 2008-09 – Quarter 3 Update (Enclosure 8.1 – 8.17 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Head of Planning and Regeneration reported that the Improvement Plan was produced as a result of the Audit Commissions inspection. He reported on areas of improvement such as homelessness prevention (122 cases between April and October, 2008), disabled facilities grants and requests in respect of healthy homes grants.

Members were of the opinion that there were insufficient funds for disabled facilities grants. Mr. Dave Chaplin, Private Sector Housing Manager reported that this Council had available £481,000 for Disabled Facilities Grants in this current financial year and it was anticipated that a similar amount will be available for next year. He stated that the eligibility criteria for grants had changed and children under the age of 19 were no longer means tested. He stated that amongst other changes to the assessment criteria applicants would find it easier to receive assistance without means tests. He stated that the Strategic Housing Service Plan indicated a target of 62 grants for this year with between 30-35 people waiting for assessment by Social Care & Health (Staffordshire County Council). The Council had approved 62 grants between April and November, 2008 and much of the work had been completed.

He indicated that an application would take on average around 28 days to approve with work usually completed within 3 months.

The Executive and Policy Manager reported that South Staffordshire Primary Care Trust had recently confirmed that they were providing each LSP within South Staffordshire with £60K for disabled facilities adaptations.

RESOLVED:

That the Strategic Housing Service Improvement Plan 2008-09 - Quarter 3 Update, be

noted.

28. Energy Efficiency Schemes

Members welcomed Mr. Colin Salt, Technical Director from Hestia who gave a presentation on the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target.

He stated that the Government had imposed an obligation for carbon emissions to be reduced with a target for CERT of 154 million tonnes of carbon dioxide over the lifetime of installations, and the Programme would run until 2011.

He explained how CERT operated and reported that there was a requirement to provide 40% of funding to priority customers. The priority group would receive 40% of benefits and the group had been redefined to include over 70s.

Some of the factors that influenced demand included the economic downturn which stimulated a desire to reduce bills and energy saving which now had a higher profile.

He stated that waiting times were currently up to 12 weeks and some installers were not taking priority jobs, with no immediate prospect of improvement.

Members asked a number of questions around the varying levels of loft installation, cavity wall insulation for properties built before the 1930s and the costs associated with insulation where a property had a conservatory.

Mr. Salt reported that the most commonly used insulation for lofts was a thickness of approximately 10 inches. He stated that cavity wall insulation was available for older properties which consisted of dry lining internally and cladding on the outside of the property. In response to the question regarding the costs to a property with a conservatory, he reported that additional costs for example may be incurred due to the requirement to put scaffolding up in order to access a wall.

29. Healthy Homes Grants

Mr. Dave Chaplin reported that under the Housing Act 2004, urgent repair grants of a maximum of £10K for privately owned properties would be available where there were problems that affected owners in their own home. The Council would assess a home for problems such as condensation and mould, and a decision would then be made as to what work would be required. These would be undertaken through Spirita Home Improvement Agency for the owner. He also reported on the Decent Homes Standard and the requirement to bring properties up to the 21st Century standards.

30. Direction of Travel Improvement Plan 2008/09

Consideration was given to Report of the Chief Executive (Enclosure 6.1 – 6.12 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

(A) That the information and progress identified in the Direction of Travel

Improvement Plan 2008/09, be noted.

- (B) That the quarterly report on progress against the Improvement Plan be received at future meetings of the Committee.

31. District Education Improvement Plan 2008-09 - Update

Consideration was given to the Briefing Note of the Performance Manager (Enclosure 7.1 – 7.89 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Performance Manager reported on a recent meeting between the Chief Executive and, Mr. Richard Worth, District Strategic Improvement Manager. The meeting had resulted in a further meeting being scheduled for the 21st January between, the Chief Executive and Keith Cackett, Deputy Corporate Director of Children and Lifelong Learning at Staffordshire County Council. She stated that she was hopeful that the District Improvement Plan would be received soon.

It was reported that the Chairman of the Sub-Committee recently raised the issue of educational attainment within Cannock Chase at the County Council's Partnership Scrutiny and Performance Panel meeting on 9 January, 2009 and recently wrote to John Taylor, the County Council's Leader concerning the absence of the District improvement plan.

The Performance Manager made reference to the two plans which she had received from an officer at Staffordshire County Council, which were essentially Staffordshire County Council's business plans, and not improvement plans. Members briefly discussed the content of these Delivery Plans but it was felt that these plans were not user friendly and did not provide the information that Members of the Committee requested at their previous meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (A) That an invite be extended to Councillor Robert Simpson (Staffordshire County Council) to a future meeting of the Performance and Partnerships Scrutiny Sub-Committee, following receipt of the District Education Improvement Plan.

CHAIRMAN