

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ACCESS TO SKILLS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE SELECT COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 18 MARCH 2008 AT 4.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK
PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors

Ansell, Mrs. P.A. (Chairman)

Alcott, G.	Holder M.J.
Dixon, D.I.	Thomas, D.
Faulkner, B.J.	Yates, Ms. W.

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K.L. Bennett and D.N. Davies).

19. 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>
Holder, M.J.	Governor - Cannock Chase College	Personal
Ansell, Mrs. P.A.	Governor – Cannock Chase College	Personal

20. Minutes

AGREED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 January, 2008 be approved as a correct record.

Mr. G. Watson, Economic Development Manager reported that discussions had taken place with representatives of Staffordshire County Council and as a consequence they had suggested an informal meeting be arranged with Members to discuss issues with Kingswood Lakeside.

21. The Chase Collegiate – Current Initiatives and Proposals for the Future

The Chairman welcomed Mr. J. Howard, Collegiate Director to the meeting.

Mr. Howard provided information to Members on the Staffordshire 14-19 Partnership,

Implementation Plan (Chase District) Review September 2007-13.

Mr. Howard reported that the Chase Collegiate was a partnership with a number of providers that allowed 14-19 year olds access to qualifications through vocational programmes. There were approximately 350 people on the programmes who take courses in their own school or travel to alternative venues.

Members were keen to know how long the Collegiate had been in existence, whether or not the Collegiate was working and what the benefits were. Mr. Howard reported that the Collegiate was starting to work, however in order to achieve sustainable improvements there was a need to move towards a tertiary system. He suggested that the needs of young people would be better served by a tertiary system which would appeal to less academically minded students.

Clarification was sought with regard to the grant that the Collegiate would receive and whether students would benefit from increases in funding to bring it in line with the rest of the Country. Mr. Howard stated that increased funding would help however current resources were sufficient to allow people to gain access to the right courses.

Members were keen to know how the work of the Collegiate linked in with the Local Area Agreement. Mr. Howard stated that the Staffordshire 14-19 Partnership valued the support of the Council and other local partners and would continue to provide a focus on such issues via the LEEP Strategy Group.

22. Proposed Merger of Cannock, Tamworth & Lichfield and Rodbaston Colleges

The Chairman welcomed Mr. G. Morley, Principal of Cannock Chase College to the meeting.

Mr. Morley reported that enrolment at Cannock Chase College was good, however there had been a fall in 19 plus adult learners which was potentially due to changes in Government funding and priorities. Furthermore, the college success rate was now up to 76 per cent.

He reported that the accommodation strategy was nearing submission which would involve demolishing the building in Cannock and building a new college. He stated that issues which were previously raised by the Learning Skills Council had now been resolved, however there was now the potential merger proposal with Tamworth and Lichfield and Rodbaston Colleges and a consultation document was out to the public.

Mr. Morley stated that due to the change in Government priorities it would be difficult for Cannock Chase College to thrive in the long term; therefore a proposal for a merger between the colleges was instigated and it was hoped that local people would use the new College given that it would serve the District. He also indicated that plans in relation to Rugeley were progressing. Mr. Morley emphasised that a fundamental aspect of the merger discussions was that learning opportunities need to be delivered as locally as possible to the communities served by the new College. This principle supports the re-provision of modern college facilities in both Cannock and Rugeley.

Members were keen to know where the College would be located whilst demolition work

was being carried out to the existing College. Mr. Morley indicated that a local developer would be keen to help in securing temporary accommodation whilst works were being carried out.

Mr. Morley stated that any comments in relation to the consultation on the merger should be forwarded to the Learning Skills Council by Monday 31 March, 2008. Mr. B. Phillips, Head of Planning and Regeneration indicated that the Council would respond to the document on behalf of the Select Committee.

Members were supportive of the principle of the merger of the Colleges, however felt that the Select Committee should have been informed earlier on the consultation document in order for Members of the Select Committee to discuss and possibly make recommendations to Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

That the Access to Skills, Economic Development and Enterprise Select Committee expressed their support for the principle of the merger of the Colleges and recommend that Cabinet respond to the Learning Skills Council consultation document on the proposed merger of Cannock, Tamworth and Lichfield and Rodbaston Colleges.

23. Local Educational Performance

The Economic Development Manager provided Members with an update in respect of the Local Educational Performance and reported that the gap between local pass rates at GCSE (5 passes A* C) and that of the County had narrowed over the last six years or so. However a new measure which included Maths and English had been introduced. In this respect the gap between District and County rates remained wide.

Members discussed the educational performance and the aspirations and achievements of young people as well as family learning opportunities.

The Economic Development Manager reported that community learning partnerships had been set up which focused on working with parents in schools to widen their perspective on education.

CHAIRMAN