

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ACCESS TO SKILLS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, 18 OCTOBER, 2006
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors

Jones, R. (Chairman)
Faulkner, B. (Vice-Chairman)

Dixon, D.I. Holder, M.J.
Hewitt, S.M. Thomas, D.

Also present:

Councillor Mrs. P.A. Ansell (Access to Skills & Economic Development
Leader)
Mr. G. Morley – Cannock Chase Technical College
Dr. Joan Dixon – Coalfield Communities Campaign

(An apology for absence was received from Councillor G. R. Martin).

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

<u>Member</u>	<u>Interest</u>	<u>Type</u>
Jones, R.	Member of Rugeley CAB	Personal
Jones, R.	Employee of Sutton Coldfield College	Personal
Jones, R.	Employee of City of Wolverhampton College	Personal

10. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 July, 2006 be approved as a correct record.

11. Benefit Claimants & Youth Unemployment

Members noted a presentation from the Economic Development Manager of selected statistics relating to benefits claimants and youth unemployment.

The presentation provided Members with information relating to the number of claimants who were in receipt of Severe Disablement Allowance within the District as at May 2005, the percentage of the working age population in receipt of benefits based on gender as at May 2005 and a summary of youth unemployment for the year 2005-06 in selected wards throughout the District.

12. Cannock Chase Technical College

The Select Committee received a presentation from Mr. Graham Morley of Cannock Chase Technical College outlining the latest initiatives currently being pursued by the College.

Mr. Morley circulated at the meeting details of the College's mission statement and strategic priorities, together with headline performance information.

The presentation highlighted the fact that although the actual number of LSC Funded Students at the College had fallen in 2005/06 compared with 2004/05, the College had exceeded its target for both 2004/05 and 2005/06. With regard to the number of students who had achieved their desired qualifications, performance had also improved year on year for the period 2003/04 to 2005/06.

Members sought clarification with regard to the provision of courses aimed at male students. Mr. Morley advised Members that the College now provided courses in relation to construction, and were also working in partnership with Stafford College to provide engineering courses.

It was reported that the College were working with a number of local schools within the District and that relationships with the schools had been improved as a result of the Chase Collegiate initiative.

Members were also provided with information in relation to the College's proposed strategy in reviewing accommodation throughout the District. It had been recognised that the existing accommodation did not meet the needs of learners at the College and that a strategy had been developed to investigate the provision of accommodation improvements in Cannock Town Centre and Progress Drive, as well as the provision of accommodation in Rugeley. Mr. Morley indicated that there were a significant number of learners in Rugeley who were unable to access further education and that the College had included the Rugeley area at the heart of its accommodation strategy in order that courses could be developed for the area.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Morley for his presentation.

13. Education, Training and Employment: The Coalfields Perspective

The select Committee received a presentation from Dr. Joan Dixon of the Coalfields Community Campaign examining the significance of education, training and employment issues in coalfield communities and the initiatives in place to deal with such issues.

It was reported that in many areas the historic legacy of mining associated with dereliction and tipping had now disappeared, but economic and social problems associated with poor educational attainment, health problems and worklessness/benefit claimants remained.

The presentation also highlighted some of the lobbying areas that Cannock Chase Council were pursuing; such as health, housing, transport, education and skills. It was noted that Cannock Chase District had a particular issue with education and skills. Dr. Dixon noted that the Extended Schools programme currently being proposed by the Government could make a positive contribution to community regeneration. Members observed that skills issues were also important to the local economy, and noted the special training packages which had been put in place via the Initiate programme at the former Shirebrook Colliery in Derbyshire. This joint initiative between the Coalfields Regeneration Trust and English Partnerships had been developed to ensure that local people could benefit from the creation of new job opportunities.

The Chairman thanked Dr. Dixon for her presentation.

CHAIRMAN