

**CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**ACCESS TO SKILLS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE**  
**WEDNESDAY, 27 NOVEMBER, 2006**  
**IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK**

**PART 1**

PRESENT: Councillors

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

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

Also present:

Councillor Mrs. P. A. Ansell – Access to Skills & Economic Development  
Leader  
Mr. John Howard and Mrs. Margaret Cross – Chase Collegiate  
Mr. John de Kanter – InStaffs (UK) Limited

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M J Holder and G R Martin).

**14. 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

**15. Update on Chase Collegiate**

Members received a presentation from Mr. John Howard and Mrs. Margaret Cross of the Chase Collegiate, outlining the progress of the Collegiate.

Mr. Howard reported that he had recently been appointed Chief Executive of the Collegiate following the retirement of Mr. David Johnson. Mr. Howard indicated that he intended to reassure Members regarding the sustainability of the Collegiate, following concerns expressed at a previous meeting of the Select Committee and that he also intended to provide information in relation to the significant improvements that the Collegiate has made throughout the District over the past few years.

Members were advised that the main aim of the Collegiate was to prepare 14-19 year olds for further education or employment and that the Collegiate was funded by the Learning & Skills Council (LSC). The Collegiate was made up of a number of partners from across the County including schools, colleges, Connexions, local authorities and other organisations. In recent times a total of over £1million of funding had been invested in the District, although it was recognised that there were still a number of significant challenges facing the area. In particular, the number of young people within the District achieving Key Stage 4 in addition to the achievement of NEET targets. Mr. Howard highlighted that fact that failure to meet such targets not only impacted upon the ability of young people to find employment after leaving school, but also impacted on the ability of employers within the District to find local employment with the necessary qualifications.

At this point, Mr. Howard circulated a copy of the Chase Collegiate Prospectus for 2007-08.

With regard to the sustainability of the Collegiate, Mr. Howard reported that additional funding had been secured from national sources until 2008, meaning that the work of the Collegiate to reform the curriculum and develop the "employability" of young people could continue.

He also reported that over the next three years, the Collegiate would be looking to introduce 'specialised diploma' qualifications. The diplomas related to 14 vocational areas and would compliment academic courses provided by local Colleges, rather than compete with them. The Collegiate were currently in the process of seeking approval to run the courses from the Department for Education and Skills (DFES) West Midlands, who were the responsible body, and it was anticipated that a decision would be made in February 2007.

Following the presentation, Members sought clarification as to the level of contribution that the employment sector had made to the development of the diplomas, together with the need to ensure that the qualifications were nationally recognised by employers. Mr. Howard advised Members that each specialist diploma had been developed in partnership with the relevant employment sector and that the Collegiate were working hard to ensure that the qualification would be recognised by employers.

Members were also advised that it was envisaged that the DFES West Midlands would only allow for specialised diplomas to be run by those training organisations with 'Centre of Vocational Excellence' status. In view of this, the Collegiate had applied to the DFES to run those diplomas relevant to vocational strengths of the area and that at this stage it was not intended to apply for the diploma in engineering due to the fact that Cannock Chase Technical College was not a Centre of Vocational Excellence.

## **16. Inward Investment as a Tool for Securing Local Jobs for Local People**

Members received a presentation from Mr. John de Kanter, Chief Executive of InStaffs (UK) Limited providing information on the role of InStaffs in securing inward investment, together with details of the experiences the organisation has had in trying to secure local jobs for local people.

As part of the presentation, Mr. de Kanter highlighted a number of potential obstacles to the approach of local jobs for local people. These included:

- Companies did not consider the recruitment of staff early enough in the process when relocating to another area.
- There were a number of 'disclosure issues' facing companies who relocated particularly whenever an operation closed in one area and relocated in another.
- Some companies were difficult to engage.
- Some companies were reluctant to use Job Centre Plus as a method of recruiting employees locally. Often this was as a result of the companies experience of using the service in other areas of the Country.
- Some companies use private sector recruiters who may not share the philosophy.
- Ensuring job advertisements were placed in the local media.

Following the presentation, Members discussed the methods by which the opportunities to secure local jobs for local people could be maximised. Mr. de Kanter indicated that local authorities could have greater influence over recruitment and training strategies where they were the landowner and could impose conditions on developers/businesses. He observed that customised training packages used to be supported by the Training and Enterprise Council, but following their abolition and replacement by the Learning and Skills Council's, no funding was available. State aid restrictions had also limited the level of funding. Members noted the potential of customised training packages as a method of securing local people for local jobs in the context of Kingswood Lakeside and Towers Business Park.

#### 17. Progress Report on LAA Block 4 (Economic Development and Enterprise)

The Select Committee received a presentation from the Head of Planning & Regeneration seeking Members views on the Local Strategic Partnership's (LSP) proposed outcome and measures for the Local Area Agreement (LAA) Block 4, Economic Development & Enterprise. Members were asked to consider those areas which were considered to be important and requiring intervention, and the measures that can be employed to measure progress. A range of indicators were presented for discussion including those relating to:-

- business formation/survival rates
- employment secured through targeted clusters
- educational attainment levels
- take up on higher education opportunities
- increase in employment rates in targeted wards
- adult literacy/numeracy rates
- rates of retail development in centres

RESOLVED:

That the outcome and measures proposed by the LSP for the LAA Block 4 (Economic Development and Enterprise) be supported.

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CHAIRMAN