

**CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**ACCESS TO SKILLS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE**  
**MONDAY, 30 APRIL 2007 AT 4.00 P.M.**  
**IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK**

**PART 1**

PRESENT: Councillors

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

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

Also present:

Councillor Mrs. P. A. Ansell – Access to Skills & Economic Development  
Leader

(An apology for absence was received from Councillor D.I. Dixon).

**25. Declarations 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.	Member of the Board of Cannock Chase Technical College	Personal
Jones, R.	Member on the Board of Rugeley CAB	Personal
Jones, R.	Employee of Sutton Coldfield College	Personal
Jones, R.	Employee of City of Wolverhampton College	Personal

**26. Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meetings held on 5 February and 26 February 2007 be approved as a correct record subject to Councillor R. Jones having declared a personal interest as an employee of City of Wolverhampton College at the meeting held on 26 February 2007.

## 27. Local Jobs for Local People: Best Practice and Reporting Back

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration (Enclosure 4.1 – 4.10 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

A presentation was given to Members of the Select Committee on Local Jobs for Local People – Best Practice and Reporting Back.

Mr. Watson, Economic Development Manager explained that despite significant job growth from inward investment from DHL, 3663 First for Food Service and Asda during 2005-06, unemployment levels had increased from 2.0 per cent (1,333 people) to 2.9 per cent (1,707 people) during the same period. This suggested that local people were not successfully competing in the jobs market. With regard to Young People/Youth Employment it was reported that Cannock Chase area had the second highest NEET's figure in the County (7.2 per cent compared to Staffordshire 6.2 per cent).

He also explained that there was a strong connection between NEET's (not in employment, education and training) and schools.

Mr. Watson reported a number of issues with regard to worklessness/hidden employment which highlighted that 3 x more people were claiming Incapacity Benefit than Job Seekers Allowance; there were problems with poor bus services providing a barrier to local job opportunities for those that did not have access to a car. It was noted that although programmes were being used to tackle worklessness such as New Deal.

An update was provided with regard to Cannock Chase College and it was reported that financially the college was now on par with other colleges and new courses were being introduced for students.

Members showed their support for Cannock Chase College and were of the view that the LSC (Learning Skills Council) should be invited to a future meeting.

Mr. Watson reported that with regard to the Coalfield's Perspective education and skills levels were lower compared to the national average in Coalfield areas.

It was reported that additional funding had been secured until 2009 for the Chase Collegiate 14-19 Programme and that continued support from the Council would be required at both strategic and operational levels.

With regard to good practice in the local visitor economy the tourism and visitor economy was very important with 4.9 per cent (3,000) jobs associated with the sector and a number of new developments supported the trend such as the M6 Toll/Rugeley By-pass.

Mr. Watson concluded his presentation by noting that local jobs for local people contained both demand side, (employment growth and inward investment) supply side considerations and (quality of local workforce and skills and educations levels). Furthermore, there appeared to be a need for Modern Facilities for a Modern Economy. These issues could form the basis of a presentation by the Chairman to the Cabinet.

## RESOLVED:

That the Select Committee noted the examples of best practice in supporting the principle of local jobs for local people, and that the following recommendations be presented to Cabinet for consideration.

- (i) That with regard to Young People/Youth Unemployment the Council and LEEP Strategy Group engage with Connexions and other key agencies to develop a series of initiatives to reduce the number of current and potential NEETS (not in employment education or training) in conjunction with the LAA, for example interventions in hotspot areas and working with vulnerable groups.
- (ii) That with regard to Worklessness/Hidden Unemployment the Council engage with Jobcentre Plus and other key agencies to develop a series of initiatives to reduce the number of benefit claimants in target wards (Cannock East, Cannock North, Cannock South, Hednesford North and Hagley) in order to increase local employment and income levels in conjunction with work or the LAA.
- (iii) That the County Council examine opportunities for improved public transport access to the Districts key employment locations.
- (iv) That with regard to Cannock Chase College the Council continue with their support of College initiatives to widen course provision and address future property requirements and that the two organisations work together to identify and plan for the future skill needs of the District.
- (v) That with regard to the Coalfield's Perspective the Council use its membership of the Coalfield Communities Campaign to continue lobbying for the education needs of the District to be recognised and for additional resources for training support to be made available and that discussions be held with English Partnership (soon to be merged with the Housing Corporation to form Communities England) and the Coalfield Regeneration Trust to establish the scope for the introduction of special training packages within Cannock Chase District
- (vi) That with regard to the Chase Collegiate 14-19 Programme the Council maintain its support of the Chase Collegiate in conjunction with the LEEP Strategy Group to improve the educational opportunities available to 14-19 year olds via enhanced links between schools and increased emphasis on vocational teaching.
- (vii) That with regard to the Role of Inward Investment the Council introduce a recruitment and training protocol in conjunction with significant new businesses investing in the District to ensure that the needs of the businesses are understood and local people are offered an enhanced opportunity to access the jobs associated with the development.
- (viii) That the Council through the LEEP Strategy Group, identify funding to provide bespoke training packages to ensure local people meet the skill needs of incoming businesses.
- (ix) That the Council maintain its role of facilitating inward investment into the District via site availability, targeted marketing and case officer support in conjunction with Instaffs UK Ltd and the LAA in order to increase the proportion of businesses within targeted sector, for example those in professional and businesses services.

- (x) That with regard to Good Practice in the Local Visitor Economy, through its membership of the Staffordshire Destination Partnership and the review of the Tourism Strategy the Council continues with its efforts to strengthen the local visitor economy through improved facilities, business support and promotion.
- (xi) With reference to Employer Engagement and 'Workbased' Training, that in conjunction with the LEEP Strategy Group and LAA the Council engages with local training providers and local organisations to promote the wide range of initiatives which are available to local employers and individuals to improve skill levels across the District such as Education to Employment, and the development of an employer engagement protocol.

Arising from the discussions associated with the above, the Select Committee also noted that a letter should be sent by the Chairman to the LSA confirming their continued support for the ambitions of Cannock Chase College with reference to course provision and teaching facilities.

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CHAIRMAN