

**CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**ACCESS TO SKILLS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE SELECT COMMITTEE**  
**TUESDAY, 26 JUNE, 2007 AT 4.00 P.M.**  
**IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK**

**PART 1**

PRESENT: Councillors

Ansell, Mrs. P.A. (Chairman)

Carr, I.R.

Holder, M.J.

Dixon, D.I.

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

**1. Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Access to Skills and Economic Development Select Committee held on 30 April, 2007 be received for information subject to noting that the Chief Executive would be sending the letter to the Learning and Skills Council and not the Chairman as indicated in the last paragraph of the minutes.

**2. Presentation on the Role and Functions of the Children and Young People Select Committee**

Mr. Bob Phillips, Head of Regeneration, and Mr. Glenn Watson, Economic Development Manager, provided a presentation outlining the role and functions that fall within the remit of the Select Committee.

Mr. Phillips explained that the role of the Select Committee was to deal with matters that contribute towards creating a thriving economy, offering diverse employment opportunities to a workforce that is increasing its skills, knowledge and value through making the area more competitive and attractive to investors. This included:-

- Measures to alleviate unemployment and create new employment opportunities.
- The provision of services and facilities to support tourism, town centre and other regeneration schemes.
- Town centre and industrial estate management.

Members recognised that this did not incorporate the entire functions undertaken but noted that the Committee would not be constrained by this and would apply a broad thinking in this respect.

Mr. Watson then advised that the services provided by the Economic Development Unit were:-



- Benefit claimants - 8,700 (15%) of working age population are claiming benefits. (Comparable to the GB average).
- Travel to work - 33% of the working age population live and work in the District.
  - 32% commute outside the District to work.
  - 34% live in the District but do not work.

With regard to local issues the following representations were made:-

- (i) Employment structure - Retail, distribution, public services and manufacturing representing 71% of all employment.
  - Higher proportion (18.1%) in manufacturing than in the County and the Region (17%) and GB (12%)
  - However, manufacturing lost 1,400 Jobs (net) 1998-2003.
- (ii) Job growth - 1997-27, 700 jobs  
2004-33, 700 jobs  
Overall trend is increasing faster than in the County, Region and GB
- (iii) Strength (relative to UK) - Building technologies
  - Environmental technologies
  - Transport technologies
- (iv) Weakness (relative to UK) - Finance and Business Sector
  - ICT
  - Tourism & Leisure (not relative to West Midlands)
- (v) Others - Defence equipment
  - Retail and consumer services
  - Logistics services
- (vi) Earnings - Local average earnings (mean gross weekly wage) are 12% lower than in GB, 8% less than in the County (£391 compared to £444)
- (vii) Businesses - High proportion of small to medium size enterprises
  - VAT registrations higher than in the Region
  - Investment (gross valued added) is about 30% less than GB
- (viii) Education & training - GCSE results have improved but are still below the County and England averages. CCDC 50.2% Staffs 54.9% (2006 data)

- Number of school leavers continuing into further education and structured learning has increased, CCDC 87.9% (compared to County figure 90.1%) (2006 data)
  - 22% of working age population have no qualifications (14% GB, 16% Staffs)
- (ix) Skills
- Significantly fewer residents have Level 3 & 4 qualifications than in the County, Region and GB
  - LSC have identified a basic skills problem within the District

It was explained that the state of Cannock Chase 2005/06 document outlined that people's top five actions to strengthen the District's Economy were:-

1. Attracting more businesses (60%)
2. Securing Local Jobs for Local People (52%)
3. Tackling youth unemployment (37%)
4. Improving the town centres (37%)
5. Improving the skill levels of local people (31%)

With regard to the LAA Block - Economic Development and Enterprise, the following areas applied:-

- EDE 1 - Increase the levels of new business formation and survival, especially in the higher value added clusters and the other locally important sectors.
- EDE 2 - Increase the proportion of high value added economies in Staffordshire.
- EDE 3 - Improve skills levels, especially to support growth in high value added businesses.
- EDE 4 - Develop vibrant and sustainable town centres, markets towns and surrounding villages.
- EDE 5 - Ensure that those in the most deprived communities can access the economic opportunities created throughout Staffordshire.

In addition to 'fostering' three targets from the Children and Young People Block, which related to decreasing the number of people not in education and training.

The strategic context for delivering the services were outlined as follows:-

- Economic Regeneration & Tourism Strategies - review of priorities
- Regional Economic Strategy - review process underway
- Southern Staffordshire Tomorrow - Southern Staffordshire Partnership
- Local Strategic Partnership - Learning, Education, Employment & Prosperity (LEEP)
- Local Area Agreement: Transforming Staffordshire - (Block 4) Economic Development & Enterprise

With regard to the work programme considered by the Select Committee during 2006-07, it was explained that the topic chosen was Local Jobs for Local People. The following issues had been considered:-

- Local Jobs for Local People: Establishing the context - presentation from representatives of Job Centre Plus and Connexions.

- Education, Training and Employment - Update from Cannock College, presentations from Coalfield Communities Campaign and presentation of key statistics relating to benefit claimants and youth unemployment.
- Education & Investment - Update on Chase Collegiate, presentation from InStaffs (UK) Ltd and progress report on LAA Block 4 (Economic Development and Enterprise).
- Strategic Context - presentation from AWM re WMES Review.
- Promoting Good Practice - presentation from Staffordshire DMP and presentation on local training initiatives and best practice.
- Best practice and reporting back - presentation on topics covered by the Select Committee and agree recommendations for consideration by Cabinet.

A copy of the presentation was circulated to Members at the meeting.

Arising from the presentation it was noted that a copy of the Southern Staffordshire Partnership newsletter would be forwarded to all Members of the Select Committee.

It was further noted that information outlining the qualifications gained by people in the Cannock Chase District could be provided to the Select Committee at a future meeting if necessary

### **3. Development of the Work Programme 2007/08**

Mr. Watson outlined the following potential issues for inclusion within the work programme for 2007/08:-

- Local Jobs for Local People/Modern Facilities for a Modern Economy - potential issues raised by Cabinet for consideration by Select Committee.
- Implementing the LAA - establishing baselines/key data and targeted interventions.
- Strategic Context - Regional Economic & Spatial Strategy Reviews and Review of District Strategy.
- Skills & Education - College Collegiate Update and extended Learning Centre in Rugeley/Enterprise Centre on Kingswood Lakeside Business Centre.
- Accessing Employment Opportunities - Green Travel and employment growth and sustainable transport solutions.
- Developing Town Centres for the Future - promoting investment in the District's main centres.
- Developing the local visitor economy - tourism infrastructure & signage.

Members noted that there was a need to consider and monitor the outcome of the review undertaken during 2006/07 on Local Jobs for Local People prior to developing a Work Programme for 2007/08. Members also considered it was important for a date to be confirmed for Cabinet to receive the presentation on the recommendations on the review of Local Jobs for Local People. The Head of Regeneration explained that it was anticipated that the recommendations would be considered by Cabinet on 19 July, 2007.

Additionally, it was noted that the Scrutiny Committee on 25 June, 2007 had been requested to determine the topic of the Fundamental Service Review for 2007/08. The suggested topic was Skills for Future Needs which the Scrutiny Committee considered had been covered by the work of the Access to Skills and Economic Development Select Committee last year. This matter had therefore been deferred.

Members considered that feedback from Cabinet on the review of Local Jobs for Local People should be submitted to the Select Committee. In addition, the Select Committee wished to receive further information outlining the issues arising from implementing the LAA and information outlining the issues relating to Regional Strategies.

It was noted that the remainder of potential issues outlined for inclusion in the Work Programme for 2007/08 could be addressed by the Select Committee as necessary throughout the year.

RESOLVED:

- (A) That the initial Work Programme of the Access to Skills, Economic Development and Enterprise Select Committee for 2007/08 consider the following:-
- The outcome of the review of Local Jobs for Local People undertaken by the Access to Skills and Economic Development Select Committee during 2006/07 including any feedback from Cabinet.
  - Information outlining the issues arising from implementing the LAA.
  - Information outlining the issues relating to the Regional Strategies
- (B) That the Work Programme for the remainder of the year be reviewed following the above.

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CHAIRMAN