

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
HEDNESFORD COMMUNITY FORUM
THURSDAY 10 JUNE, 2010 AT 7.00 P.M.

AT THE MUSEUM OF CANNOCK CHASE, VALLEY ROAD, HEDNESFORD

PRESENT: Councillors

Adamson, G. (Chairman)
Cartwright, Mrs. S.M. (Vice-Chairman)

Ball, G.D.	Grice, Mrs. D.
Burnett, G.	Yates, Ms. W.
Burnett, J.	

Other Councillors present:

County Councillor J. Bernard, Hednesford & Rawnsley Division
Councillor Mrs. A.F. Bernard

Officers:

T. McGovern, Corporate Director
B. Phillips, Head of Planning and Regeneration
G. Watson, Economic Development Manager
J. Tunnicliffe, Senior Committee Officer

Also present:

Members of the Public – approximately 3
Councillor A. Pearson, Hednesford Town Council
Mr. D. Wright, Staffordshire County Council
Inspector Pat Shannaghan, Staffordshire Police, Chase Division
Chief Superintendent Nick Baker, Staffordshire Police, Chase Division
Mr. D. Pearsall, Chairman of the Police Authority
Press

Prior to commencement of the meeting a document was circulated which provided detailed information on the Cannock Chase Local Development Framework Core Strategy – Pre Publication Consultation.

Illustrations were also supplied of the Hednesford Town Centre Regeneration Scheme for the public to view.

1. Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Councillor G. Adamson was appointed Chairman and Councillor Mrs. S.M. Cartwright was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Hednesford Community Forum for the municipal year.

2. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Mr. A. Evans, local resident.

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

No declarations of interests were received.

4. Notes

The Notes of the meeting held on 11 March, 2010 were agreed as a correct record subject to Councillor A. Pearson being present, and Item 6 on the Agenda - accidents on Rose Hill, Hednesford being discussed under Minute 33 Pendle Hill – Gritting.

5. Cannock Chase Local Development Framework – Core Strategy – Pre Publication Consultation

Mr. B. Phillips, Head of Planning and Regeneration informed the Forum that the Core Strategy was the key planning policy document in the Local Development Framework which would replace the existing Cannock Chase Local Plan. It would shape the way the District accommodated new development and determine how the existing natural and built heritage could be preserved and enhanced between now and 2026.

There were 14 policy topics which covered:-

- the overall strategy
- design of new development
- social inclusion and health living
- housing land provision
- housing choice
- employment land provision
- a balanced economy
- sustainable transport
- town centres
- biodiversity and geodiversity
- Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation
- landscape character and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- historic environment
- climate change and sustainable resource use

The consultation period commenced on 1 June 2010 for a period of 6 weeks and responses should be received by 13 July 2010. Exhibitions would be held at 13 venues throughout the District from 3 June until 28 June 2010. The Core Strategy Pre Publication Draft and supporting documents would be available for inspection at the Civic Centre during normal office hours. They could also be viewed and downloaded from the Council's website, www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/planningpolicy and comments could be submitted online via this address as well as by post or email.

A Ward Member referred to the policy topic on housing land provision and asked if in

light of the coalition it was the Government's intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies, and also whether the figure identified for new homes between 2009-2026 (4660) should remain. Mr. Phillips advised that there would be an opportunity to review this although the Council had indicated previously that it was content with this scale of growth. He stated however that it was important to receive responses from members of the public, particularly on the proposals in the draft Core Strategy on where the housing should be located.

Mr. Phillips advised that there was a housing need in the District and the planned new housing number would have to be supported by evidence and would be considered at an examination in public with the Core Strategy. As a result of this final consultation, the Council would be asked to determine its housing numbers before submitting the strategy for examination.

6. Questions for Staffordshire Police and Mr. D. Pearsall (Chairman of the Police Authority)

The Chairman welcomed Staffordshire Police and Mr. Pearsall to the meeting.

Question received from local resident Mr. A. Evans and Councillor D. Ball

In response to the question, Inspector Pat Shannaghan, Staffordshire Police, Chase Division stated that there were 2 beat officers who were Graham Aries and Mark Follows, 3 Police Community Support Officers in the Hednesford area and a response team which was available 24 hours per day 7 days per week in which to report incidents. He advised the Forum that they were previously based at the old admin office which was now closed and had been relocated to Pye Green Community Centre, although they were currently looking at other locations and were using the pavilion once per month for holding meetings. He stated that the Police were more than willing to hold meetings with the public in a location suitable for them.

Question received from Councillor G. Burnett

In response to the question, Inspector Pat Shannaghan advised that statistics had shown that there had been no increase in crime and anti social behaviour. He stated that although statistics had shown no increase, crime could still be occurring. He explained that Graham Aries and Mark Follows currently provided policing in the town centre.

He explained that the Police worked with drug and alcohol agencies and advised that teams of Officers would try and educate individuals and bar staff within the town centre in respect of alcohol related problems. He also advised that the Council's Licensing Authority and the Fire department would carry out late night checks on establishments.

A Ward Member referred to savings that needed to be made and asked what impact this would have on the Police.

Chief Superintendent Nick Baker stated that more information on the Police's budgetary position would be available on 22 June, 2010 although there was a commitment to neighbourhood policing.

Mr. D. Pearsall, Chairman of the Police Authority stated that an additional £1.2 million needed to be saved over the next few years.

A Ward Member referred to the recent arson attacks on business premises within the Hednesford area and the lack of policing at this time. Inspector Shannaghan stated that there was a possible link with all 3 fires that had occurred and would provide further information at a future Forum.

Question received from Councillor Mrs. D. Grice

In response to the question, Inspector Shannaghan advised that he would make the necessary arrangements for the police to use the appropriate speeding device in order to ascertain the speed of traffic in the location.

At this point, the Chairman agreed to take Item 7. Hednesford Town Centre Regeneration – Update and Item 8. Hednesford Town Centre Regeneration – Question together

7 and 8 Hednesford Town Centre Regeneration – Update and Hednesford Town Centre Regeneration – Question

Mr. G. Watson, Economic Development Manager reported that revised proposals for Phase 1 of the scheme had been approved subject to a S106 agreement, which was currently in the process of being completed. He advised that site assembly was continuing although there were still 3 pieces of land where negotiations were being had with 2 parties and 1 piece of land where the owner was unknown. A vesting order would be made shortly to bring any outstanding ownership into Council control.

He advised that 'Furniture 4 Less' had now closed given that the business was on a short term lease with St Modwen Developments, although they had were now located on Cedars Business Park, Cannock.

Mr. Watson reported that accommodation works would commence in the next few months with work commencing on the boundary between Graenar and the site.

With regard to Phase 2, a planning application was now in and reference was made to the information which would be distributed to Hednesford Library, Hednesford Town Council and the Civic Centre. He stated that the information would also be contained on the Council's website. This application would be subject to call-in by Government Office.

Mr. Watson advised on what would be incorporated in the development and for example stated that the Chase Heritage Trail would be re-aligned on Victoria Street. He also advised that a planning application would be submitted in the next month for proposals for the access arrangements to Hednesford Park. There would also be a separate planning application for a new bungalow to relocate the residents of Greenslade.

In response to a question raised by a Ward Member, Mr. G. Watson advised that consultation was undertaken a number of years ago and as a result, St Modwen was appointed as the preferred developer.

A Ward Member asked where views could be made in order that development funding continued to be used for Hednesford. Mr. Phillips stated that the use of S106 funding would have to be related to and proportionate in scale with the development. As such, this would be a matter for the Council's Planning Control Committee although it was likely that funds related to the development would, by definition support Hednesford interests.

In response to a question raised by a Member, Mr. Watson stated that there was an agreement that the new food store would provide public conveniences when the store was open, and stated that there was no provision in the scheme for conveniences whilst the development was in progress.

Mr. Phillips referred to the Scheme and the proposed car park and advised that the expectation was that it would be free to use for a period of up to 3 hours. However, the operator would acquire the car park and would insist on being able to manage the car park in the interests of their customers.

A ward Member suggested that the proposed bus lay-bys would not be large enough to cope with the number of bus services accessing the town centre. Mr. D. Wright, Staffordshire County Council advised that he would investigate this issue with his colleagues.

9. Question received from Councillor Mrs. D. Grice

In response to the question, Mr. David Wright, Staffordshire County Council reported that the problem at Hillside Close, Hednesford in respect of driveways being blocked had been reported to the Joint Parking Committee, and although this was on the current work programme it was likely to be some time before the issue was resolved.

The representative for Hednesford Town Council reported on the problem with refuse vehicles being unable to access the road especially in the mornings due to driveways being blocked.

Mr. Wright advised the Forum that he would take this issue up with Inspector Shannaghan.

10. Question received from Councillor G. Adamson

Councillor Ms. W. Yates, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Leader provided the following response to the Forum:-

"Following Cabinet's decision to fund investigations into a new cemetery site for Cannock, a review of sites available for a new cemetery was undertaken. Drawing from the work from a previous Health Select Committee Report, five sites were considered of which three have been shortlisted.

Tier 1 assessment of these sites has been arranged.

The Tier 1 assessment will be a desktop study to review the potential pathways for

contamination of soil water and atmosphere from human remains. Depending on the outcome of the Tier 1 assessment it is proposed to move to Tier 2 assessments which would involve trial pits being excavated and soil type at different levels assessed. There would also be the need to install drip tubes over the winter period to establish the movement of water through the soil/subsoil. This process could take up to 6 months and needs to be done over a winter period.

This information is essential to undertake a risk assessment as required by the Environment Agency who will be interested in the movement of water through the burial site in case of contamination of water sources.

Once the results of the Tier 2 assessments are known, a District Valuer's valuation of the sites will be sought and this with the set up costs of a cemetery would be estimated before seeking a Cabinet resolution.

All of the investigative works can be funded via the budget established by Cabinet as part of the 2010-11 budget setting process.

The Council's three year planned budget allows for funding in 2012-13".

Mr. T. McGovern, Director of Organisational Improvement explained that the first year would be to carry out investigative work to check to see if any of the 3 sites were suitable, should one of the sites be suitable then negotiations would commence in respect of purchasing the site and finally the site would be brought into use as a cemetery. He reported that the Council planned to make £1.5 million available to support the purchase of a site and to bring it into use in the 2012/13 year.

A Ward Member referred to 'green' burial sites and asked if this could be considered under any proposals. Mr. T. McGovern stated that there was a fixed amount of finance and although consideration could be given within the investigation, he could not confirm this would happen.

11. Forward Agenda for Future Meetings

The Chairman reported that the next Forum was scheduled for Tuesday 21 September, 2010 and questions from members of the public should be submitted by Friday 3 September, 2010 on the forms supplied.

12. Date of Future Meeting

The Chairman confirmed the following dates of the Hednesford Community Forum:-

- Tuesday 21 September, 2010
- Tuesday 30 November, 2010
- Thursday 10 March, 2011

CHAIRMAN

The meeting closed at 8.25 p.m.