

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
HEDNESFORD COMMUNITY FORUM
TUESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER, 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 P. Jones, Hednesford Division

Officers:

- T. McGovern, Corporate Director
- B. Phillips, Head of Planning and Regeneration
- G. Watson, Economic Development Manager
- Miss. J. Tunnicliffe, Senior Committee Officer
- Miss. K. McBey, Marketing Officer
- Mr. D. Edwards, Information Manager

Also present:

- Members of the Public – approximately 50
- Councillor A. Pearson, Hednesford Town Council
- Mr. D. Wright, Staffordshire County Council
- Mr. D. Powell, Staffordshire County Council
- Mr. J. Neary, Balfour Beatty
- Inspector Pat Shannaghan, Staffordshire Police, Chase Division
- Press

Prior to commencement of the meeting the Chairman stated that he would be moving Item 8. Pye Green Valley – Presentation forward on the Agenda.

The Chairman then read out the following statement:-

“From April 2011, because of a reduction in the amount of funding we will receive from the Government, Cannock Chase Council needs to make savings of £2 million.

This is a huge challenge and some difficult decisions will have to be made. We do not believe it is right to make these kinds of changes without involving our residents.

Officers are here tonight with questionnaires. We'd really appreciate you sparing 5 minutes to give your views. They really do matter".

13. Apologies

There were no apologies received.

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

No declarations of interests were received.

15. Notes

The Notes of the meeting held on 10 June, 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

16. Pye Green Valley – Presentation

The Chairman welcomed Mr. D. Powell, Staffordshire County Council and Mr. J. Neary, Balfour Beatty to the meeting to give a presentation regarding the Pye Green Valley.

Mr. Powell provided the Forum with background information regarding the distributor road and reported that 300 houses would be built as part of the proposed development. He advised that the County Council and District Council would plan the way in which the houses were built, and a number of areas would be landscaped with a further area being restored to heath land. He also advised that developments for the area around Stanley Road, Hednesford were being undertaken and would be complete by June, 2011.

He reported that the current contractor on site operated between the hours of 7.30 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. during the weekdays, and that noise and vibration measurements had been taken on the site. The outcome showed that the noise was below the limits allowed by the Council.

The Chairman then allowed members of the public and residents to ask questions.

Members of the public raised concern and were unclear as to the number of houses proposed for the development. Mr. Phillips, Head of Planning and Regeneration advised that planning consent had been given to 300 houses only. However members of the public were still unclear and were under the impression that 1,500 would be built.

A discussion then took place between the public concerning the amount of money being spent to build both the new road and the proposed development and questions were asked as to where the money had come from for the schemes.

A number of questions were asked by the public about the footpath on Stanley Road and Western Road, Hednesford. Mr. Powell explained that Stanley Road would remain as a footpath and Western Road's boundary would remain the same.

A member of the public referred to the presentation and was keen to know what the 'red area' on the map referred to. It was explained that this was currently a compound/site

office and it would eventually be built on. Concern was then raised amongst the public that there would be a lack of facilities such as schools, GP surgeries and hospitals to cope with the high capacity of people when the houses were built.

A local resident then referred to the stream which ran through the proposed development and was keen to know if any works would be undertaken. Mr. Powell advised that landscaping works would be undertaken.

A local resident then raised concern on behalf of other local residents and stated that work commenced on site well before the prescribed time and her child was being affected by both the noise and vibration from vehicles. She also raised concern with 'orange' coloured dust in gardens and talked about health concerns.

A resident asked if there were any plans to compensate people if their properties were damaged by the work from the development not just now but in the next 5-10 years time. He asked for a guarantee and reassurance from the County that they would pay compensation. Following this a resident stated that his property was structurally damaged and asked if the repair bill would be paid. Mr. J. Neary agreed with the resident to a joint survey on the property.

Residents raised concern that the new road was too high and it had originally been proposed to be ground level. Concern was also raised with the amount of traffic the new development may bring to the area. Mr. Powell stated that the road was at ground level and traffic calming on Stafford Lane had been introduced in an attempt to reduce speed of traffic.

Residents asked if there were any plans to improve Greenheath Road due to speeding vehicles at the top of it, and also how the new road would serve the houses. Residents were advised that there were no plans at this time for Greenheath Road and it was explained that the new houses would be served from a new roundabout, although the layout would depend on what was contained within the planning application.

A resident was keen to know about any Maintenance plans for the valley. Mr. Powell explained that there would be a long term maintenance plan put in place although residents raised concern that bikers would use the bank and asked how this could be prevented. Inspector Shanaghan, Cannock Police advised the Forum that it was difficult to enforce anything although the Police would respond to complaints. He stated that there was a need for a long term joint plan with the Council.

A resident raised concern that the site was not sealed and there was no barrier to the entrance of the site by Greenheath Road where the footpath was being built. Mr. Neary explained that the road had been built through there in order to reach the compound but agreed that he would make sure a barrier was installed this week.

A local resident asked if there would be a further meeting to discuss residents concerns. The Chairman advised that he would liaise with the appropriate Officers and arrange a public meeting for residents' issues to be aired.

Questions were then asked about the 'The Spinney' and what would happen with the trees located in this area. Mr. Powell advised that the trees would remain however they would

form part of the future planning permission.

A local ward Member stated that there had been a lack of communication and suggested a separate meeting to discuss Pye Green Valley issues, and also suggested a display in Hednesford Library. Mr. Powell advised that he would be able to arrange a visit to the site to show local residents how it was progressing and also discuss future plans..

Local residents then discussed the need for pedestrian lights on Cannock Road, the frequency of the road sweeper on Pye Green Road and information boards located on lamp posts which had no contact details on. Mr. Neary explained the current situation with regard to BT and advised that information would be supplied on the boards shortly.

Following discussions, the Chairman agreed the following:

- that a public meeting be arranged which should be attended by appropriate officers from the County Council
- that a display showing plans be arranged in the Hednesford Library
- that a site visit take place for local residents at the development

17. Questions for Staffordshire Police

The Chairman welcomed Officers from Staffordshire Police.

Question received from Councillor G. Ball

In response to Councillor Ball's question Inspector Shanaghan advised that this issue would need to be taken up by the Council although all the cars parked in Eskrett Street when Officers were patrolling the area were that of disabled badge holders. He explained that the Police could deal with obstructions on the highway although the Council would need to deal with off street parking.

A number of other issues were raised which are outlined below.

A member of the public raised concern and stated that anti-social behaviour which included drinking alcohol and setting trees on fire was occurring within the vicinity of Chalcott Drive, Hednesford. The resident was advised that the Protection Liaison Officer was moved from the area in order to deal with problems in Bond Way, Hednesford. Inspector Shanaghan advised that he would make the necessary arrangements for the Protection Liaison Officer to visit the area.

Inspector Shanaghan updated the Forum and advised that the theft of metal had increased and reported on a recent operation to target scrap metal merchants. He also advised the public that there was an ongoing operation between the police and the Council to monitor noise.

Inspector Shanaghan reported that the Police had secured funding to establish a boxing club which would be free for children to attend and also advised that the Chief Constable had stated that neighbourhood policing would not be affected by budget cuts.

A member of the public reported on problems in the Rosehill vicinity with youths and

asked if it was possible for the Police to visit the area. Inspector Shanaghan advised that Officers usually patrolled the area in the afternoon and asked if residents did experience any problems that they contact the Police.

Information was provided to members of the public regarding Section 30 dispersal orders where anti-social behaviour was taking place. The order gave the Police the power to disperse of groups and remove persons committing offences.

18. Victim Support

There was no one in attendance from Victim Support to present this item.

19. Check the Label (Video Presentation)

The Chairman welcomed Miss. K. Mcbey and Mr. D. Edwards from the Council's PR and Marketing Department to give a short video presentation.

The video was called 'Check the Label' which aimed to challenge stereotypes and promote positive perceptions of what young people were involved in. It was explained that less than 1% of Staffordshire's young people were involved in offending.

Everyone involved in the campaign lived in Staffordshire and examples were given of what they did in their daily lives.

Comments were made by members of the public in respect of the presentation and it was noted that negative items were always reported about but not the good things that had happened or taken place.

20. Hednesford Town Regeneration - Update

Mr. G. Watson, Economic Development Manager referred to the Notes of the previous meeting and advised the Forum that planning permission for Phase 1 had been agreed. Currently the Council were completing the CPO (vesting process) which had commenced on 23 August, 2010 and would be complete by 30 September, 2010. Three pieces of land would then transfer into the Council's ownership.

He reported that accommodation works had been completed and construction of a fence around the site of the former Pool Cottage would take place which would help prevent some of the anti-social behaviour problems that had been occurring.

Mr. Watson referred to Phase 2 and advised that the Planning Control Committee would be considering an application tomorrow for a new superstore with additional units and parking on Victoria Street, Hednesford. Should the Planning application be approved by the Committee the matter would then be required to be referred to Government Office and the Council would know in approximately 1 month whether or not the decision would be called in.

The scheme was generally well received by the Forum although there had been some concern that local shopkeepers would see a loss of trade. A local ward Member stated that in order to encourage passing trade, it would be a good idea to offer free car parking

at the bottom of Hednesford. She was also keen to know how the length of time that motorists parked their vehicles would be controlled.

Mr. Watson stated that there were no proposals for free parking in Hednesford Town Centre however there would probably be a free 3 hour period as part of the parking management policy, and was of the opinion that there was a need for a single management policy for all of the parking in Hednesford. He stated that when the outcome of the planning application was received, talks would then commence with the operator on such matters.

A local ward Member highlighted the need for additional bus parking. Mr. Watson advised that extensive negotiations had taken place between St Modwen Developments and Staffordshire County Council who were satisfied with the proposals in the application.

21. Forward Agenda for Future Meetings

The Chairman reported that the next Forum was scheduled for Tuesday 30 November, 2010 and questions from members of the public should be submitted on the forms supplied.

22. Dates of Future Meetings

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

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

CHAIRMAN

The meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.