

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ACCESS TO EDUCATION, SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 23 MARCH, 2010 AT 4.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors

Mawle, D.L. (Chairman)

Davies, D.N.	Thomas, D.
Dixon, D.I.	Williams, Mrs. P.
Holder, M.J.	

13. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G. Burnett and M.R. Green.

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

No declarations of Interests were submitted.

15. Minutes

AGREED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 January 2010 be approved as a correct record.

16. Matters arising

The Head of Planning and Regeneration reported that a number of matters were arising from the previous meeting. Some had been dealt with by circulating information to Members and others were to be discussed later on the agenda. With regard to the other matters arising he stated that in relation to the schools and education issues, it was proposed to convene an additional meeting of the Committee on 28 April 2010. Anne Birch and Richard Worth from Staffordshire County Council would be invited to the meeting to talk about the proposals for educational improvements in the District. Members were invited to advise Officers of any questions or issues they wished to raise at the meeting by the end of March.

A Member asked for a comparison between KS2 and KS3 results and a breakdown of the scores. Robert Lamond, Policy and Performance Manager advised that he had attempted to obtain the information without success but was hopeful that the figures would be available for the next meeting. Additionally the Staffordshire Observatory would be approached to establish

if there were any links between school exclusions and benefits dependency.

The Head of Planning and Regeneration further advised that work was progressing on the Blake Community Action Plan in conjunction with Blake High School and the local Primary Schools in the area. The Action Plan had not yet been signed off by the relevant Head Teachers. A decision had been made at County LSP level to convene a Local Public Service Board for the Blake catchment area and Partners would be working together to develop a plan for action in the area over the next three months. It was likely that the work of this Board would build on and replace the work of the Community Action Plan.

The Policy and Performance Manager circulated information outlining the school GCSE attainment for 2006-09. He stated that the County Council average was not yet available but it was expected to be above the Cannock Chase average at approximately 45%.

The Head of Planning and Regeneration stated that the list of partners, organisations and abbreviations had previously been circulated to Members of the Committee.

17. 2009/10 Quarter 3 Performance and Finance Report

Consideration was given to the Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Enclosure 5.1 – 5.6 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Head of Planning and Regeneration referred Members to Annex 1 and explained that 6 of the indicators and actions were rated as Amber. Two of these related to unemployment performance indicators.

The remaining 4 Amber actions related to the progression with regard to the provision of effective business support pages on the Council's website to local businesses, the staging of an event on worklessness and two linked to the Hednesford Town Centre Regeneration proposals. He made reference to a worklessness event which had been held in the Ballroom earlier in the day focussed on youth unemployment.

He then referred to the Future Jobs Fund (FJF) and reported that a total of 36 people had been employed under this initiative, 30 being employed at the Council. He commented that it had been an intense process working in conjunction with Job Centre plus and he explained that there were proposals to repeat this initiative in July.

He referred to the delivery of the Hednesford Town Centre Regeneration projects which were rated as Amber. The projects had been delayed but it was expected that a planning application for the Phase 2 proposals would be submitted before the end of March. Cabinet had agreed that Phases 1 and 2 would be linked and it was anticipated that work would commence on Phase 1 in this calendar year.

With regard to the Future Jobs Fund Initiative the Head of Planning and Regeneration confirmed that those people taken on had been unemployed for at least 6 months. He explained that they needed close support and were provided with training and advice on skills for the workplace. Additionally, there were a number of social issues affecting these people, for example, some were responsible for ill parents/siblings which restricted their ability to attend work, some had difficulties getting into work and required bus passes and others had

health issues. He confirmed that the people employed under the FJF would be able to apply for any permanent vacancies that were available. He explained that a number of partners including Chase CVS (Home Comforts Scheme), Business Enterprise Support and the College, had employed or were in the process of employing people under the FJF initiative.

The Chairman referred to progress with the provision of effective business support pages on the Council's website and the delay in updating the information. It was explained that due to work priorities elsewhere it had not been possible to complete this task. Members agreed that in order for this task to be completed consideration should be given to enlisting the assistance of the Council's PR & Marketing team.

Members then discussed the need to secure modern Further Education facilities in the District as the current College building was in need of refurbishment/redevelopment. The Head of Planning and Regeneration advised that with the collapse of LSC capital funding the College were having to review their accommodation strategy. Also, since the College merger there were severe financial constraints on the College and there was a need to increase student intake significantly and at least maintain this year's numbers in future years. However, there were less resources available to do this. He suggested that Graham Morley, the College Principal be invited to attend a future meeting to provide Members with an update on the current position with regards to the College.

Reference was made to the CPO in respect of the Avon Plaza development. Members noted that the Cinema had re-opened and the Padma restaurant would shortly be re-opening. Officers were asked to confirm the current position regarding the proposed development. The Head of Planning and Regeneration stated that progression of the development had been affected by the recession. The developer was committed to delivering the scheme once the market conditions had improved sufficiently, however, in the meantime, the developer wished to obtain an income by re-opening and renting out some of the current buildings on site.

AGREED:

- (A) That the performance outturn for Quarter 3 as detailed in Annex 1, be noted.
- (B) That the exception reports, as detailed in Annex 2, which describe the actions taken and actions proposed to be taken by Lead Officers for any action or performance indicator classified as red or amber, be noted.
- (C) That the financial outturn for Quarter 3 as detailed at Annex 3, be noted.
- (D) That the update of the business support pages on the Council's website should be undertaken without further delay.
- (E) That Graham Morley, College Principal, be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee to provide Members with an update on the current position regarding the College.

18. Actions related to the Recession – Update

The Head of Planning and Regeneration referred Members to the list previously circulated which outlined the recession led actions.

He referred to the worklessness event held earlier in the Ballroom and explained that those who had attended the event were being asked for their views on how the agencies they represented provided their help and how it could be improved.

He commented that the work being progressed in the Cannock North area around Blake School was intended to make a significant difference to the most disadvantaged area of the District.

AGREED:

That the list of recession led actions be noted.

19. Exclusion of the Public

AGREED:

That the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3, Part 1, Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

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PART 2

20. Update: Development of Enterprise and Enterprise Centre

Consideration was given to the Briefing Note of the Head of Planning and Regeneration (Enclosure 8.1 – 8.7 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Head of Planning and Regeneration outlined the background and current position with regards to the development of an Enterprise Centre which had been ongoing since 2004. He explained that an Enterprise Sub Group had been established to drive forward enterprise growth in the District and a draft action plan was being produced.

Members agreed that a physical presence for an Enterprise Centre within the District in an accessible location with a good business profile should remain on the Council's agenda. Potential location options for an Enterprise Centre were discussed in general.

The Head of Planning and Regeneration explained that work was progressing to secure more Enterprise Coaches within the District to offer advice to those looking to start a business. Business Enterprise Support was leading on this project and was working with the District Council to find suitable premises. Consideration was being given to providing support to businesses "virtually" through the use of the internet.

AGREED:

That the Briefing Note on the development of enterprise and an Enterprise Centre within the District be noted.

CHAIRMAN