

Cannock Chase Council
Minutes of the Meeting of the
Cabinet

Held on Thursday 28 January 2021 at 4:00 p.m.

Via Remote Access

Part 1

PRESENT: Councillors:

Adamson, G.	Leader of the Council
Alcott, G.	Deputy Leader of the Council and Town Centre Regeneration Portfolio Leader
Pearson, A.R.	Community Safety and Partnerships Portfolio Leader
Preece, J.P.T.L.	Corporate Improvement Portfolio Leader
Mitchell, Mrs. C.	Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader
Johnson, T.B.	Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader
Newbury, J.A.A.	Environment and Climate Change Portfolio Leader
Martin, Mrs. C.E.	Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Leader
Kraujalis, J.T.	Housing Portfolio Leader

62. Apologies

None received.

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

No other Declarations of Interest were made in addition to those already confirmed by Members in the Register of Members' Interests.

64. Updates from Portfolio Leaders

Community Safety and Partnerships

The Portfolio Leader updated on the following matters:

- **“12 Days to a Safer Christmas” Campaign-Overview of communication and engagement activity:**
 - The campaign was launched on 7 December and ran until 23 December.
 - 9 short videos were created.
 - 8 local organisations / partner agencies took part in the campaign, including: Staffordshire County Council's Trading Standards Team; Illegal Money Lending Team; Citizens' Advice; Communities Against Crimes of Hate (CACH); New Era; South Staffordshire Council; Staffordshire Police

(Local PCSOs, Cyber Crime Unit, Road Safety Team); and Cannock Chase Council (Covid Support Team and Young People – ASB Worker).

- A press release was issued to the local media on 7 December.
- A webpage was created on the Council's website with links to videos and support information.
- All the videos produced were accessible on the Council's YouTube Channel.
- A total of 11 posts were promoted on Facebook, reaching 13,200 Facebook users and making 14,400 impressions. This equated to a 1.66% engagement rate for each post. A hashtag was also created #12DaysToASaferChristmas.
- South Staffordshire Council also rolled out the same campaign and provided a financial payment to the Partnership Team to use the concept and resources.
- It was hoped that campaign would be delivered again in 2021 with improvements to video concepts and themes.

Culture and Sport

The Portfolio Leader updated on the following matters:

- **Extension to the Artificial Grass Pitch at Rugeley Leisure Centre:**

As Members were aware, the Council was successful last year in securing a grant from the Football Foundation to construct a new full-sized third generation artificial grass football pitch (AGP) at Rugeley Leisure Centre.

Despite the pandemic, it was pleasing to report that work was likely to be starting on this project in Spring 2021 and should be completed before the start of the 2021/22 football season.

- **The Cema, Norton Canes:**

Consultation on proposals for the new play equipment and art works at The Cema, Norton Canes, closed on 11 January. 132 responses were received, and these were currently being complied and would inform the tender specification to be issued to bidding contractors in the next couple of months. It was hoped that works would start in the first quarter of the next financial year.

- **New Cemetery:**

Work on the new Cannock Chase Cemetery continued despite some issues with delivery of materials caused by the pandemic. The civil works would be completed and the Reception building installed by the end of February, subject to favourable weather conditions. Currently, the entrance gates works were underway, and highway works to install a refuge crossing point should be starting on 1 February. All being well, the cemetery should be open sometime in the first quarter of 2021-22.

- **Parks:**

The Leader advised that he had received a lot of compliments from members of the public about the general standard of the parks in the District; and he asked that Officers pass on the positive feedback to the Parks and Open

Spaces team for their work.

Economic Development and Planning

The Portfolio Leader updated on the following matters:

- **Unemployment data:**

Unemployment figures for December 2020 were published on 26 January and showed that the rate of claims in the District had fallen amongst claimants aged 16-64 overall, from 5.5% (3,475 claimants) in November 2020, to 5.3% (3,385 claimants) in December 2020. The District rate continued to run below the regional and national averages of 7.2% (West Midlands) and 6.3% (Great Britain), and whilst these rates remained static between November and December 2020, the rate in Cannock Chase fell by 0.2%.

The picture for young people was, however, less positive. In Cannock Chase the rate of claims for out-of-work benefits amongst residents aged 18-24 increased from 10.2% in November to 10.4% in December.

- **Recruitment and Local Job Opportunities:**

On a positive note, the Council would be holding a virtual job fair with McArthurGlen, via Twitter, on Wednesday 3 February from 1pm to 3pm. The fair would showcase the many jobs available at the new McArthurGlen Designer Outlet in Cannock, including full and part-time, management and shop floor positions, from a wide range of well-known brands alongside other content provided by McArthurGlen, such as Frequently Asked Questions.

As many people as possible were asked to join in by just going to @JCPIInStaffs on Twitter to take part in the jobs fair and use the hashtag #McArthurGlenJobs. A Twitter account did not need to be created to access the vacancies; attendees would just need to type "twitter.com/JCPIInStaffs" into Google.

- **Business Support:**

The Council was also working hard to support local businesses affected by the tier 4 and current lockdown restrictions, and in particular, paying out grants to those businesses that had been mandated by law to close or had seen their trade adversely affected by the lockdown. The Council had paid out just under £6million of grants to more than 3,000 businesses and was continuing to process payments as quickly as possible.

Health and Wellbeing

The Portfolio Leader updated on the following matters:

- **Covid-19 Update:**

Overall rates were on a downward trajectory, however there was concern that the West Midlands rate would continue to impact through Staffordshire. 80% of cases were related to the new variant, so this would impact on the decline in cases or even produce a new spike.

This was still apparent in the north and south difference in rates in the County, with South Staffordshire and Cannock Chase being considerably higher than Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire Moorlands.

Environmental Health continued to respond to ongoing notifications of affected settings and workplaces across the District, with enquiries, complaints and

visits to businesses having increased over the last week.

Compliance remained high overall, but the Covid Support Team had taken enforcement action in a small number of cases, including issuing a £1,000 Fixed Penalty Notice to a mobile hairdresser, and immediately closing a restaurant take-away operation due the failure of a worker to isolate.

- **Licensing:**

Consultation on the Council's revised Taxi Policy had commenced and would run until 21 February. All Members were encouraged to review the Policy and submit any comments accordingly.

Members would have also seen the Council had licensed its first all electric vehicle, for which further details would be provided by the Environment and Climate Change Portfolio Leader.

The Environment and Climate Change Portfolio reported that he was pleased to see the licensing of the first electric taxi vehicle in the District, owned by a Mr Leigh Andrews who worked for AJ's Taxis in Rugeley, as this was an import step in helping to meet the challenges of the Climate Emergency declared by the Council in July 2019.

- **Food and Safety:**

Focus remained on surveillance of businesses that were open or changes of operation. Officers could now carry out essential on-site visits (where for example a business required a rating to access online delivery platforms) but were encouraged to carry out remote assessments prior to arriving on site.

65. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2020 be approved as a correct record.

66. Forward Plan

The Forward Plan of Decisions for the period January to March 2021 (Item 5.1 – 5.2 of the Official Minutes of the Council) was considered.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period January to March 2021 be noted.

67. Car Parking Charges - Rugeley

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles (Item 6.1 – 6.6).

RESOLVED:

That as part of the action in the Council's proposed new Corporate Plan for 2021-24 to 'review the Council's car parking strategy', a feasibility study be undertaken to look at the implementation of a trial scheme whereby people visiting shops or hospitality venues in Rugeley town centre could have their car parking refunded.

Reasons for Decisions

Information in respect of the request received from Rugeley Town Council to

provide free car parking in Rugeley for a 12-month period was set out in the report for consideration, along with the available options for consideration by Cabinet.

It was felt that the request from Rugeley Town Council could not be accepted at this time, but it was important to acknowledge that they were engaging with the Council on work to improve Rugeley town centre.

As such, it was considered the agreed option could provide the benefits hoped for by the Town Council, but also avoid the unintended downside of people using free car parking provision without using the facilities in the town centre.

68. General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2020-21 to 2023-24

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Finance (Item 7.1 – 7.71).

The Leader of the Council reported that a sum of £346,000 had been set aside for works to footbridges in the District and the Rugeley Boardwalk, to recognise concerns raised by a number of Councillors. The schemes would need to be costed by Officers and a report brought forward to Cabinet at a later date for consideration.

RESOLVED:

That the following be recommended to Council, at its meeting to be held on 10 February 2021, as part of the formal budget setting process:

- (A) The level of net spending for the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2021-22 be set at £14.664 million; with indicative net spending for 2022-23 and 2023-24 of £14.364 million and £14.529 million, respectively.
- (B) The detailed portfolio budgets as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.
- (C) The forecast outturn net budget of £15.408 million be approved.
- (D) The use of Government Grants in 2021-22 of £2.261 million.
- (E) To note that although indicative figures existed for the use of Government Grants for 2022-23 and 2023-24, they could not be accurately determined at this stage with each element of Government funding being subject to review.
- (F) The working balances be set at £0.812 million, £1.147 million and £1.176 million for 2021-22 to 2023-24, respectively.
- (G) A Council Tax of £225.64 be recommended for 2021-22, with indicative increases of 1.95% to the level of Council Tax for 2022-23 and 2023-24.
- (H) The Council's Tax base be set at 29,136.82.
- (I) The revised Capital Programme as set out in Appendices 3 and 4 of the report.

Reasons for Decisions

The Council was required to set a balanced budget for 2021-22 set in the context of a sustainable medium-term financial plan.

69. Rent Setting Policy 2021

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Housing and Partnerships (Item 8.1 – 8.9).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The revised Housing Rent Setting Policy, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be agreed and a 1.5% increase be implemented with effect from 1 April 2021.
- (B) The Housing Service Team consult with tenants about future rent increases for the duration of the current National Rent Policy from 2021 until 2025.

Reasons for Decisions

The report confirmed the details provided in the Housing Revenue Account Draft Budget 2020/21 to 2023/24 report, as included elsewhere on the meeting agenda, which had been formulated within the framework set out in the Government formulated rent policy.

It was proposed that the report sought to continue to follow the formulated social rent policy implemented from 1 April 2020, and to continue with year 2 of the five-year national rent setting policy.

70. Housing Revenue Account Budgets 2020-21 to 2023-24

Consideration was given to the Joint Report of the Head of Finance and the Head of Housing & Partnerships (Item 9.1 – 9.8).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The revised position with regard to estimated income and expenditure in respect of the 2020-21 Housing Revenue Account Budget and Housing Revenue Account Budgets for the period 2021-22 to 2023-24, as summarised in Appendix 1 of the report, be noted.

That Council, at its meeting to be held on 10 February 2021, be recommended to:

- (B) Determine a minimum level of working balances of £1.866 million for 2021-22, and indicative working balances of £1.908 million and £1.970 million for 2022-23 and 2023-23, respectively.
- (C) Approve the Housing Revenue Account Budgets for 2021-2022, 2022-23, and 2023-24 (and note the estimated outturn for 2020-21), as summarised in Appendix 1 of the report.

Reasons for Decisions

Cabinet was required to propose a budget in relation to the Housing Revenue Account for submission to Council on 10 February 2021.

71. Housing Revenue Account Capital Programmes 2020-21 to 2023-24

Consideration was given to the Joint Report of the Head of Finance and the Head of Housing & Partnerships (Item 10.1 – 10.7).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The estimated availability of Housing Revenue Account capital resources for

the period 2020-21 to 2023-24, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be noted.

- (B) It be noted that a further £12 million investment fund was anticipated to be available up to and including 2027-28, with its implementation to be determined in accordance with a revised Housing Investment Strategy for the period 2023-24 to 2027-28.
- (C) Council, at its meeting to be held on 10 February 2021, be recommended to approve the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme for the period 2020-21 to 2023-24, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

Reasons for Decisions

Cabinet was required to propose a budget in relation to the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme for submission to Council on 10 February 2021.

72. Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy, Annual Investment Strategy and Capital Strategy 2021-22

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Finance (Item 11.1 – 11.38).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) Council, at its meeting to be held on 10 February 2021, be recommended to approve:
 - (i) The Prudential and Treasury Indicators.
 - (ii) The Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement.
 - (iii) The Treasury Management Policy.
 - (iv) The Annual Investment Strategy for 2021/22.
- (B) It be noted that indicators may change in accordance with the final recommendations from Cabinet to Council in relation to both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Revenue Budgets and Capital Programmes.

Reasons for Decisions

The Council was required to approve its treasury management, investment and capital strategies to ensure that cashflow was adequately planned and that surplus monies were invested appropriately.

73. Corporate Plan 2021-2024

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Governance and Corporate Services (Item 12.1 – 12.35).

RESOLVED:

That Council, at its meeting to be held on 24 February 2021, be recommended to approve the Corporate Plan 2021-24 and its inclusion in the policy framework of the Council.

Reasons for Decisions

Adopting a new Corporate Plan for 2021-24 would allow the Council to focus on actions to deal with the impact that Covid-19 had had on the District and provide a medium-term focus on key recovery areas. It would lead to a longer-term and ambitious approach to the future of the District following on from this recovery.

74. Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and Self-Assessment Form

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Housing and Partnerships (Item 13.1 – 13.31)

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The implications of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and the outcome of the self-assessment form be noted; and
- (B) It be noted that the self-assessment form was to be published on the Council's website.

Reasons for Decisions

To adhere to membership requirements of the Housing Ombudsman and its Complaint Handling Code by reporting the outcome of the self-assessment to Cabinet and it being published on the Council's website.

75. Cannock Railway Station

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Economic Prosperity (Item 14.1 – 14.109).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The Strategic Outline Business Case for the transformational upgrade of Cannock Railway Station, as attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be noted.
- (B) Options A and C as set out in the Strategic Outline Business Case be selected as the two shortlisted options to be developed further.
- (C) The Head of Economic Prosperity, in consultation with the Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader, be authorised to work in partnership with West Midlands Rail Executive and Staffordshire County Council to develop the Outline Business Case, and authority be delegated to the Head of Economic Prosperity to decide on the timing and procurement strategy for this work.
- (D) The Head of Economic Prosperity, in consultation with the Head of Finance and the Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader, be authorised to submit relevant bids for external funding to secure investment to support the upgrade of Cannock Railway Station.
- (E) The package of short-term enhancements to Cannock Railway Station to improve the station environment, as set out in report paragraph 5.15, be noted.

Reasons for Decisions

To determine a way forward for the potential transformational upgrade of Cannock Railway Station.

76. Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED:

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 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

Cannock Chase Council

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
Cabinet**

Held on Thursday 28 January 2021 at 4:00 p.m.

Via Remote Access

Part 2

77. Land at Church Street, Chadsmoor

Consideration was given to the Not for Publication Report of the Head of Economic Prosperity (Item 16.1 – 16.32).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) A long lease be granted to Cannock Division Girl Guiding (subject to planning permission) on favourable terms, on the basis that the Council wished to support the ambitions of Cannock Division Girl Guiding and 1st Chadsmoor Scouts.
- (B) Authority be delegated to the Head of Economic Prosperity to agree terms and conditions and all other actions required to implement the preferred option.

Reasons for Decisions

A request had been received from Cannock Division Girl Guiding for the Council to grant a long lease of the Church Street site so that funds could be raised and the site redeveloped with a building that would serve the needs of both Cannock Division Girl Guiding and the 1st Chadsmoor Scouts (currently in occupation of adjacent Staffordshire County Council owned land to the south).

It was the intention of both of the aforementioned organisations that the new building would also be made available for use by the wider community of Chadsmoor and Cannock, particular charities and community groups / organisations.

The report identified two options for the Council's land, and based on the above reasons, Cabinet determined its preferred option as shown in decision (A).

78. Rugeley Leisure Centre Swimming Pool

Consideration was given to the Not for Publication Report of the Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles (Item 17.1 – 17.5).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) Capital funding totalling £490,000 and permission to spend be approved in

order to undertake the works required to repair the swimming pool and replace the boiler at Rugeley Leisure Centre.

- (B) Authority be delegated to the Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles, in consultation with the Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader, to agree and finalise all arrangements and agreements required to implement decision (A), above.

Reasons for Decisions

Urgent repairs were needed to Rugeley Swimming Pool following the discovery of significant leaks and failed pool structure during the first national lockdown. In addition, the boiler that provided heating to the pool was nearing the end of its life and required replacement.

Consequently, it was logical to undertake the pool repairs, pipework and boiler replacement at the same time, thereby reducing any future risks of failure and resultant loss of income through any future enforced pool closures.

79. Leisure and Culture Services Update

The Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles referred Members to a letter that had been received from the Chair of the Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust. The letter advised that, owing to the need for additional information, the IHL Board had not been in a position to ratify a Going Concern judgement at its meeting on 22 January, 2021, and the matter would instead be considered at the next scheduled Board meeting on 5 February, 2021.

Accordingly, Members were asked to note that the effective date referred to in Cabinet Minute 65(A) (of the Cabinet meeting held on 14 January 2021) would instead be 5 February, 2021.

The meeting closed at 5:10 p.m.

LEADER