

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE

CABINET

HELD ON THURSDAY, 20 OCTOBER, 2011 AT 5.45 P.M.

IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors

Adamson, G.	Leader of the Council
Toth, J.	Deputy Leader of the Council and Environment Portfolio Leader
Dixon, D.I	Corporate Improvement Portfolio Leader
Mitchell, Mrs. C.	Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader
Davis, Mrs. M.A.	Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Leader
Allen, F.W.C.	Housing Portfolio Leader
Todd, Mrs. D.M.	Town Centre Regeneration Portfolio Leader

69. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G. Alcott, Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader.

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

The following declarations were made in addition to, or restated in respect of, those already confirmed by Members in the Register of Members' Interests were made.

<u>Member</u>	<u>Interest</u>	<u>Type</u>
Allen, F.W.C.	Member of the Broomhill Albion Working Mens Club (WMC)	Personal in relation to Item 8
	Representative on Chase Council for Voluntary Services (CVS)	Personal in relation to Item 8
Davies, Mrs. M.A.	Representative on Chase Council for Voluntary Services (CVS)	Personal in relation to Item 8
Dixon, D.I.	Contributor to Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)	Personal in relation to Item 14
	Member of the Broomhill Albion Working Mens Club (WMC)	Personal in relation to Item 8
	Member of the Welcome Working Mens Club (WMC)	Personal in relation to Item 8
Mitchell, Mrs. C.	Member of Birth Defects Foundation	Personal in relation to

	(BDF)	Item 8
Todd, Mrs. D.M.	Member of the Belt Road Working Mens Club (WMC)	Personal in relation to Item 8
Toth, J.	Member of Unison and Receives funding from Unison	Personal in relation to Item 14

71. Updates from Portfolio Leaders

Leader of the Council

Southern Staffordshire Design Awards

Councillors Alcott and Kraujalis had the previous day attended the Southern Staffordshire Design Awards, and it was pleasing to note that there were a couple of local awards: A local architect, S.P. Faizey, had received an award for the design of Walsall Waterfront South, while Norton Canes Community Library had been highly commended.

Economic Developments

The Leader advised of a number of positive items concerning the local economy:

- APC Overnight plc a major delivery firm were to move into a new 128,000 sq. ft. distribution centre at Kingswood Lakeside, creating 300 new jobs in addition to their existing workforce of 250.
- Brian James Furniture Store had been bought out of administration and would be re-opening on 29 October, 2011.
- Van Monster, a vehicle retailer was to move its headquarters to Walkmill Lane, Bridgtown, and would be sharing premises with Northgate Vehicle Hire who were also moving to the area.
- Research by Halifax plc indicated that Rugeley had enjoyed the third highest rise in house sales in England in the first six months of the year.

Adjustment to Cabinet Portfolios

The Leader advised that he had reviewed the current Cabinet portfolio responsibilities and intended to make the following adjustments to rationalise areas of responsibility, remove overlap and uncertainty and better align them with the Corporate Priorities. An amended Section 23 of the Constitution, detailing the revised responsibilities would be taken to Council on 2 November, 2011, for information, but briefly the changes were:

- Leader of the Council – As at present, but with the addition of Community Safety arrangements (ex-Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Leader for Environment).
- Deputy Leader of the Council and Environment Portfolio Leader – No additional responsibilities; other changes are noted in the affected Portfolios.
- Corporate Improvement – Unchanged.
- Culture and Sport – As at present with the addition of mortuary, cemeteries and burial grounds (ex-Health and Wellbeing), and parks, allotments and open spaces (ex-Deputy Leader and Portfolio Leader for Environment).
- Economic Development and Planning – As at present with the addition of town and country planning and transportation services etc (ex-Deputy Leader and Portfolio Leader for the Environment).
- Health and Wellbeing – Add administration of Housing and Council Tax benefits (ex-Housing); other changes are noted in the affected Portfolios.

- Housing - No additional responsibilities; other changes are noted in the affected Portfolios.
- Town Centre Regeneration – Unchanged.

Culture and Sport

The Portfolio Leader advised that, with regard to the third party procurement project for leisure management Officers were currently undertaking evaluation of the bids and would be making a recommendation to Cabinet regarding the preferred partner in due course. However, she wished it highlighting to Members that there was a substantial amount of work involved in the evaluation and she expressed her gratitude to the Officers involved. She also noted an apology to the Corporate Director in respect of a briefing note that he had forwarded to her previously, but that she had not seen owing to a technology problem.

Housing

Lift at Grace Moore Court Sheltered Housing

The Portfolio Leader advised that the refurbishment / replacement of the lift in Grace Moore Court was now completed and there would be an official opening ceremony on Monday, 24 October at 2.00pm.

Moss Road Estate Redevelopment Drop-in Centre

The Portfolio Leader also advised that he had visited the drop-in centre when it opened and there had been a reasonable level of initial interest from residents in the time that he had spent there. Housing staff had manned the centre and been very courteous and helpful, even when dealing with difficult customers and he wished to record his thanks to them.

Photovoltaic (Solar) Panels in Norton Canes

The Portfolio Leader reported that he had attended a demonstration held by British Gas for Norton Canes residents to explain the benefits of PV panels and answer any questions they might have. The event had been well attended; and British Gas had satisfactorily addressed concerns raised by residents, in particular tenants do not have to change electricity suppliers. Notifications had been sent to 40 suitable properties in the area seeking expressions of interest with a view to running an initial pilot of 25 properties. In the event that there was greater interest than anticipated, a further report would be submitted to Cabinet seeking authorisation to extend the scheme..

Town Centre Regeneration

The Portfolio Leader advised that the new bingo hall in Hednesford would be hosting its official opening that evening.

72. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September, 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed.

73. Forward Plan

Consideration was given to the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period October - December, 2011 (Enclosure 5.1 – 5.3 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period October – December, 2011 be noted.

74. Minutes of Policy Development Committees and Other Committees

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the following Policy Development Committees and other Committees be received for information:

- (i) Housing – 15 August, 2011
- (ii) Environment – 25 August, 2011

75. Recommendation from Scrutiny Committee – 26 September, 2011

Consideration was given to the following recommendation referred from the Scrutiny Committee held on 26 September, 2011, in respect of Shared Services:

“That Cabinet is requested to consider releasing the moratorium on Officers attending talks on future potential or prospective Shared Services.”

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The request from the Scrutiny Committee be noted.
- (B) Cabinet wished to express their disappointment that Scrutiny Committee had not taken the opportunity to undertake a post implementation review of Shared Services which had now been in operation for between six and nine months
- (C) In light of (B), a cross-Party Working Group be set up to:
 - (i) Review the impact of the first tranche of services shared with Stafford Borough Council; and
 - (ii) To establish if there is merit in further sharing of services.
- (D) The Working Group would consist of 11 Members with numbers being allocated in accordance with the political balance calculation, i.e. 5 Labour; 3 Conservative; and 3 Liberal Democrat.
- (E) The Labour Group representatives would be: Councillors: Adamson, G. (Chair); Davis, Mrs. M.A.; Holder, M.; Kraujalis, JT.; and Spicer, Mrs. A.

76. Recommendation from Rate Relief Committee – 29 September, 2011

Consideration was given to the following recommendation referred from the Rate Relief Committee of 29 September, 2011:

“That Cabinet be recommended to adopt the proposed framework, as set out in Annex 4 of the report in respect of awards for Non-Domestic Rate Relief from 1 April, 2012.” (Enclosure 8.1.)

RESOLVED:

That the proposed framework, as set out in Annex 4 of the report in respect of awards for Non-Domestic Rate Relief from 1 April, 2012, be adopted.

77. Review of the 2011-12 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme

Consideration was given to the Joint Report of the Head of Housing and the Head of Financial Management (Enclosure 9.1 – 9.7 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The position with regard to actual (as at 31 August, 2011) and estimated expenditure in respect of the 2011-12 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme be noted and approval be given to incur £95,000 of additional scheme costs (met through the virement of existing resources) in respect of the provision of second doors to bungalows.
- (B) The current position regarding the estimated availability of HRA Capital resources and revised application of funding be noted.

Reason(s) for the Decision

The report presented a review of the 2011-12 HRA Capital Programme in accordance with the Council's agreed Capital Expenditure Control Procedures and Financial Regulations.

78. Communications Strategy, 2011-14

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Policy (Enclosure 10.1 – 10.6 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the revised Communications Strategy be noted and recommended to Council for approval.

Reason(s) for the Decision

Consultation undertaken with residents during summer 2011, together with the socially modelled customer insight data, collectively emphasised the importance of targeted, tailored communications. The new Strategy is informed by this data and details the strategic direction for improving the effectiveness of the Council's communications both internally and externally.

79. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Waste Core Strategy, 2010-2026, Publication Document, September, 2011

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration (Enclosure 11.1 – 11.11 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) Authority be given to the Head of Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Leader for the Environment to finalise representations to Staffordshire County Council, based on the issues identified in Section 4 of the report..
- (B) Staffordshire County Council be asked to consider the Council's comments on the Publication Joint Waste Core Strategy and to note that the District Council reserves the right to object to policies relevant to new waste management facilities and existing landfill sites at the Examination, in terms of their impact on the amenity of residents, premium employment sites, air pollution, noise, issues of nature conservation interest up to and including European level, flood risk and the means of transport.

Reason(s) for the Decision

The broad principles of the Emerging Waste Core Strategy can be supported, subject to the matters identified in Section 4 of the report, which express the Council's concern that the policies in the Core Strategy should not support inappropriate waste management infrastructure within the District.

80. Proposal for Business Rate Retention - Consultation Response

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Financial Management (Enclosure 12.1 – 12.7 of the Official Minutes of the Council). The Head of Financial Management also circulated a draft County wide response.

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The report on the proposed changes to Local Government Funding be noted
- (B) The draft response of the Council be approved in principle with the formal response and responses to the technical questions being delegated to the Leader of the Council and the Head of Financial Management.
- (C) That the approval of a County-wide response (draft circulated at the meeting), be delegated to the Leader and Head of Financial Management.

Reason(s) for the Decision

The background to the proposed draft response was as detailed in the report.

81. Localising Support for Council Tax in England - Consultation Response

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Financial Management (Enclosure 13.1 – 13.7 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The report on the proposed changes to Council Tax Benefit be noted
- (B) The response of the Leader of the Council be retrospectively approved.

Reason(s) for the Decision

The background to the response was as detailed in the report.

82. Local Government Pension Scheme

Consideration was given to a request from the UNISON Regional Office to adopt a statement in respect of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), (Enclosure 14.1 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

- (A) That Cabinet adopt the following Labour Group Statement in respect of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS):
 - “We condemn the arbitrary 3.2% increase in employee contributions to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) announced by George Osborne. This rise will force many current members of the scheme to leave with damaging consequences for them as individuals and the future viability of the scheme it self.
 - We reject the characterisation of local government pensions as “gold plated” and note that in 2009/10 the average LGPS annual pension was just £4,052. We believe that LGPS, being a funded scheme, can be sustainable and affordable.
 - We believe this proposal seriously undermines these principles. We therefore demand that the Chancellor withdraws his proposal and that the Government enters into dialogue with Local Authorities and the Trade Unions to secure the future of the LGPS.”

Reason(s) for the Decision

Cabinet considered that the Government’s proposals in respect of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) could result in many current members of the scheme leaving with damaging consequences for them as individuals and the future viability of the LGPS.

The meeting closed at 6.35 pm.

LEADER