

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET

HELD ON THURSDAY 19 JANUARY 2017 AT 4:00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors:

Alcott, G.	Deputy Leader of the Council and Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader
Kraujalis, J.T.	Corporate Improvement Portfolio Leader
Bennett, C.	Crime and Partnerships Portfolio Leader
Mitchell, Mrs. C.	Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader
Preece, J.P.T.L.	Environment Portfolio Leader
Davis, Mrs. M.A.	Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Leader
Allen, F.W.C.	Housing Portfolio Leader

85. Apologies

Apologies were submitted for Councillors G. Adamson, Leader of the Council and Mrs. D.M. Todd, Town Centre Regeneration Portfolio Leader. In the Leader's absence, the meeting was chaired by the Deputy Leader.

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

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

87. Updates from Portfolio Leaders

Culture and Sport

AGP, Bradbury Lane

The Portfolio Leader advised that works were nearing completion and the facility was due to be handed over to the Council within a couple of weeks, with an intended opening in March.

Economic Development and Planning

Local Plan (Part 2) and Cannock Town Centre Area Action Plan

The Portfolio Leader reported that the Local Plan Part 2 Issues and Options document had been approved for consultation in December 2016 and the Cannock Town Centre Area Action Plan in September 2016. Consultation for

both plans was due to commence on Monday 30 January and run for a period of 8 weeks (instead of the statutory 6 weeks to encourage more public participation). The requirements for consultation for both plans were set out in planning regulations and the Statement of Community Involvement which was adopted by the Council in 2014. Publicity for the consultation and its associated events was going to be via a range of routes (working in conjunction with the Communications Team) including: the Council's website and social media pages; press releases; newspaper adverts; and via letters and e-mails to everyone registered on the Planning Policy database. A series of drop in events were also due to be held (as below) at which Officers would be present to answer any questions. Exhibition materials were also going to be available at these events:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>
Norton Canes Library	Thursday, 16 February	3:30pm to 6:30pm
Hednesford Library	Tuesday, 21 February	1:30pm to 4:30pm
Rugeley Library	Thursday, 23 February	10:00am to 1:00pm
Cannock Library	Friday, 24 February	10:00am to 1:00pm
Heath Hayes Library	Thursday, 2 March	3:30pm to 6:30pm
Brereton Library	Friday, 3 March	2:30pm to 5:30pm

A further drop in event specifically focused on the Area Action Plan was going to be held on Friday, 3 March from 10:00am to 1:00pm in the retail unit at the entrance to Cannock Market Hall. Unstaffed exhibitions were also going to be provided throughout the duration of the consultation in the reception area at the Civic Centre in Cannock, the retail unit at the entrance to Cannock Market, and the Rugeley Area Office. Other events were also going to be held as appropriate, e.g. a stakeholder event for those affected by the Cannock Area Action Plan proposals (e.g. traders etc.), meeting required under the Duty to Co-operate, and meetings with infrastructure providers. Officers were also willing to attend other meetings (e.g. parish councils, community groups etc.) and would do their best to accommodate all requests. The consultation was due to close on 27 March and all views would be taken into account when the next versions of the two plans were prepared.

88. Minutes of Cabinet Meeting of 15 December, 2016

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 December, 2016, be approved as a correct record and signed.

89. Forward Plan

The Forward Plan of Decisions for the period January to March, 2017 (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, 2017 be noted.

90. Recommendations of Scrutiny Committees

A recommendation had been referred to Cabinet for consideration by the Housing Scrutiny Committee held on 30 November, 2016. In respect of:

Review of Housing Allocations Policy

“That the proposed amendments to the Council’s Allocations Policy as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be agreed, and recommended to Cabinet.”

RESOLVED:

That the proposed amendments to the Council’s Allocations Policy be approved.

91. General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2017-18 to 2019-20

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Finance (Item 7.1 – 7.77 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

An additional document summarising the feedback from the second stage public consultation, which closed on 15 January, 2017, had been circulated in advance of the meeting and placed on the Council’s website.

The Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader moved a minor amendment that any references to Savings option B14 should read “Review Staffed Parks Contract”, which was agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the following be recommended to the meeting of Council on 8 February, 2017, as part of the formal budget setting process:-

- (A) The level of net spending for the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2017-18 be set at £11.056 million; with indicative net spending for 2018-19 and 2019-20 of £11.524 million and £11.607 million, respectively.
- (B) The detailed portfolio budgets as set out in Appendix 2 of the report;
- (C) The forecast outturn net budget of £11.423 million including a Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay of £0.350 million be approved.
- (D) The use of Government Grants in 2017-18 of £1.015 million with indicative figures of £1.000 million and £1.083 million for 2018-19 and 2019-20, respectively.
- (E) The working balances be set at £0.615 million; £0.633 million and £0.856 million for 2017-18 to 2019-20, respectively.
- (F) That a Council Tax of £208.87 be recommended to the Council for 2017-18; with indicative increases of 1.95% to the level of Council Tax for 2018-19 and 2019-20.
- (G) The Council’s Tax base be set at 27,571.88.
- (H) No change be made to the current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.
- (I) The revised capital programme, including new schemes, as set out in

Appendices 3 and 4 of the report.

Reason for Decisions

The report set out a draft budget for 2017-18 as well as indicative budgets for 2018-19 and 2019-20 and associated issues, and also included current indications of the impact this would have on Council Tax. It also set out the updated capital programme and set out the capital resources available to the Authority to finance the capital programme.

92. Housing Revenue Account Budgets 2016-17 to 2019-20

Consideration was given to the Joint Report of the Head of Finance and the Head of Housing and Waste Management (Item 8.1 – 8.8 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The revised position with regard to estimated income and expenditure in respect of the 2016-17 Housing Revenue Account Budget and Housing Revenue Account Budgets for 2017-18 to 2019-20 as summarised in Appendix 1 of the report, be noted.
- (B) Council, at its meeting to be held on 8 February, 2017, be recommended to:
 - (i) Determine a minimum level of working balances of £1.706 million for 2017-18, and indicative working balances of £1.730 million and £1.750 million for 2018-19 and 2019-20, respectively.
 - (ii) Note the further 1% reduction in rents in 2017-18 in accordance with the Government's Social Rent Policy.
 - (iii) Approve the Housing Revenue Account Revenue Budgets for 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 (and note the estimated outturn for 2016-17) as summarised in Appendix 1 of the report.

Reasons for Decisions

The report considered proposed three-year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budgets for 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20, which had been formulated within the framework provided by the Approved Housing Revenue Account Business Plan considered by Cabinet on 10 December, 2015.

A review of the 2016-17 HRA budget, together with base HRA budgets for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20 were attached to the report as Appendix 1. The budgets had been formulated in accordance with the assumptions set out in the HRA Business Plan, with projected levels of income and expenditure as summarised as below:

Table 1: HRA Summary Budget 2017-18 to 2019-20			
	<u>2017-18</u> £000's	<u>2018-19</u> £000's	<u>2019-20</u> £000's
Income	-19,868	-19,460	-19,166
Expenditure	17,066	17,299	17,496
Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay	2,620	2,138	1,650
Working Balances Change	182	23	20

Rent income continued to reflect an annual rent reduction of 1% per annum (including the new 2019-20 budget), reflecting the revised national rent policy as determined by the Government's 2015 Summer Budget (the rent policy would revert to the Consumer Price Index +1% with effect from 2020-21).

No material changes to date had arisen from the Housing and Planning Act 2016 that impacted directly on the assumptions contained in the Business Plan. No account had been taken in the indicative budgets, as set last year, for the impact of Vacant High Value Housing Payments and High Income Social Tenants: Mandatory Rents (Pay to Stay) pending an analysis of the detailed regulations. Although the Government had rescinded the Pay to Stay mandatory requirement, the Council was still awaiting details re: High Value Vacant Payments. The Budgets therefore maintained the net reduction in properties due to voids at 2% for 2018-19 onwards as compared with an actual level of some 0.7%. Additional rental income of £151,000 was therefore assumed for 2016-17 and 2017-18 only. The full impact of the actual High Value Baseline would be assessed following publication of the proposed regulations and would then be subject to a further report.

The Budgets did however reflect the savings attributable to the HRA from Corporate and Support Services savings as contained in the General Fund Financial Recovery Plan and amounted to £207,000 per annum.

Capital financing charges were also lower than anticipated due to the prevailing low interest rates and this had enabled both a rescheduling of principal repayments and ongoing savings of £130,000 per annum.

In considering the HRA Revenue Account, consideration needed to be given to the HRA Capital Programme and the level of Working Balances. A key consideration of the capital programme was the Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO). In accordance with the Approved Business Plan the RCCO represented the net surplus on the Revenue Account after determining the level of Working Balances.

In view of the risks associated with the management of the HRA under self-financing, minimum working balances of 10% of net operating expenditure had been assumed throughout the three-year budget period.

93. Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2016-17 to 2019-20

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

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The estimated availability of Housing Revenue Account capital resources for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.
- (B) Council, at its meeting to be held on 8 February, 2017, be recommended to approve the three-year Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.

Reasons for Decisions

The report considered the draft proposed three-year HRA Capital Programme for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20, together with the forecast outturn for 2016-17, compiled within the financial framework provided by the Approved HRA Business Plan.

Details of the estimated availability of HRA capital resources during the three-year period were set out in Appendix 1 to the report, whilst a three-year HRA Capital Programme was set out in Appendix 2.

A comparison of estimated resource availability with the proposed HRA capital expenditure programmes was also set out as below:

	<u>2016-17</u> £000's	<u>2017-18</u> £000's	<u>2018-19</u> £000's	<u>2019-20</u> £000's
Net Resources Brought Forward	3,333	1,897	1,875	2,299
New Resources	9,992	10,173	5,897	5,422
Total Resources:	13,325	12,070	7,772	7,721
Less: Expenditure Programme	11,428	10,195	5,473	5,734
Resources carried forward to future years	1,897	1,875	2,299	1,987

94. Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Annual Investment Strategy 2017-18

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Finance (Item 10.1 – 10.29 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Head of Finance circulated an update in respect of paragraph 5.24 of the report ('Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream'), and an additional paragraph to be inserted at the end of Appendix 2, as follows:

"Local Authority Mortgage Scheme. Under this scheme the Council is required to place funds of £2 million with Lloyds Bank plc for a period of 5 years. This is classified as being a service investment, rather than a treasury management investment, and is, therefore, outside of the Specified / Non specified categories."

Neither item affected the recommendations contained in the report.

RESOLVED:

That Council, at its meeting to be held on 8 February, 2017, be recommended to approve:

- (A) The Prudential and Treasury Indicators.
- (B) The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement.
- (C) The Treasury Management Policy.
- (D) The Annual Investment Strategy for 2017-18.

Reasons for Decisions

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

95. Priority Economic Regeneration Projects

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Economic Development (Item 11.1 – 11.9 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) Approval be given to the use of S106 monies as summarised in Appendix 1 of the report to facilitate the development of detailed projects which would positively contribute to the Council's Financial Recovery Plan (FRP).
- (B) The Head of Economic Development be authorised to take those actions necessary to secure additional resources to support further project development work as appropriate.
- (C) Initial project development work to support the redevelopment of the Rugeley Market Hall/Bus Station site in Rugeley should be held in abeyance pending the identification of new funding opportunities.
- (D) The implementation of the Rugeley Flood Alleviation Scheme and the funds available for town centre improvements at a cost of £1.29m capital be noted.
- (E) Further reports should be presented to Cabinet to assess progress and project specific matters.

Reasons for Decisions

Initial work on the Council's FRP identified the importance of a number of projects which would potentially secure significant regeneration benefits but could also secure additional income to the Council in the form of business rates or Council Tax. However, the "priority projects" were still at a conceptual stage and needed to be developed into detailed projects which could be offered up for potential funding/investment purposes, generally as capital projects.

The revenue resources required to develop the "embryonic" capital projects were extremely limited with either Council reserves or S106 monies which could be readily accessed. Because of the Council's financial position, the use of Council reserves for this purpose was not considered appropriate. Equally, the use of S106 monies was complicated by the restrictions contained within each

agreement, particularly related to specific use of the monies concerned and location within which it had to be spent.

However, by carefully allocating priority projects to specific S106 monies it was possible to create a modest source of revenue funding for most of the projects. However, not all of the priority projects could be funded in this way, placing more emphasis on alternative funding resources. The proposed allocations summarised in Appendix 1 of the report were a practical solution to the current shortage of revenue funding opportunities. The Rugeley Flood Alleviation works and town centre improvement packages were funded separately by an allocation of £1.29m from the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

96. 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 19 JANUARY 2017 AT 4:00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 2

97. Debt Recovery

Consideration was given to the Not for Publication Report of the Head of Finance (Item 13.1 – 13.14 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The amounts detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report be written off.
- (B) The actions of the Head of Finance in writing off the irrecoverable debts, below £1,000, be noted.

Reasons for Decisions

Council Tax

Set out at Appendix 1 to the report was a list of arrears over £1,000 which could not be collected for the reasons stated. Included in the Appendix were 28 cases with arrears totalling £65,390.34

The amount of Council Tax charged in the financial year was £43,410,568.23, and so the amount of debt recommended for write-off in the report represented only 0.15% of one year's charges.

All of the amounts written off would be charged against the provision for bad debts.

Non-Domestic Rates

Set out at Appendix 2 to the report was a list of Non-Domestic arrears over £1,000 which could not be collected for the reasons stated. Included in the Appendix were 7 cases with arrears totalling £38,901.02.

The amount of Business Rates charged in the financial year was £37,634,836.53, and so the amount of debt recommended for write-off in the report represented only 0.1% of one year's charges.

Some of the Business Rates debts were being recommended for write-off on the grounds of insolvency of the companies that previously occupied properties. It was not uncommon in these circumstances for the properties concerned to be re-occupied, fairly quickly, by new companies often with similar names to the insolvent organisation. It often therefore appeared that the company had continued to trade, though this was not the case.

Where this situation occurred, the new occupier was an entirely separate legal entity to the previous occupant and could not be held liable for rates due from the insolvent company. Members were assured that such debts were only submitted for write-off when the Council was sure that the debts could not be recovered.

The meeting closed at 4.35 p.m.

LEADER

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 25 JANUARY, 2017 AT 3.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT:
Councillors

Cartwright, Mrs. S.M. (Chairman)

Allen, F.W.C.	Lea, C.I.
Cooper, Miss J.	Preece, J.P.T.L.
Dean, A.	Snape, D.J. (substituting for Burnett, G.)
Grice, Mrs. D.	Snape, P.A.
Grocott, M.R.	Sutherland, M.
Hoare, M.W.A.	
Kraujalis, J.T. (substituting for Pearson, A.R.)	

85. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A.R. Pearson (Vice-Chairman), G. Burnett, Miss M.J. Dudson and Miss M.A. Freeman.

Notification had been received that Councillor J.T. Kraujalis would be substituting for Councillor A.R. Pearson and Councillor D.J. Snape would be substituting for Councillor G. Burnett.

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

None.

87. Disclosure of lobbying of Members

Nothing disclosed.

88. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 January, 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed.

89. Members' Requests for Site Visits

RESOLVED:

- (A) That a site visit be undertaken in respect of Application CH/17/011, Residential development: Proposed two bedroom bungalow and associated amenity (resubmission of CH/15/0396), Land to the rear of 58 Brownhills Road, Norton Canes, WS11 9SE in order to assess potential impact of the development on adjacent neighbours.
- (B) That a site visit be undertaken in respect of Application CH/16/454, Residential development: Erection of 9 no. dwellings (outline application with all matters reserved), Land at 153 Norton East Road, Norton Canes, Cannock WS11 9RW in order to assess impact of the proposal on Green Space Network.

90. **Application CH/16/472, Cannock & Rugeley Cricket Club, Littleworth Road, Cannock, Telecommunications Prior Notification: Installation of a 17.5m Monopole with 3 no. exposed antennae, 1 no. 300mm Diameter Transmission dish, 2 no. equipment cabinets and 1 no. meter house within fenced compound**

Following a site visit consideration was given to the report of the Development Control Manager (Item 6.1 – 6.25 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Development Control Manager provided the following update:-

A slight revision of the wording of the recommendation should be made so that it reads:-

“Members are minded to determine that prior approval for the siting and appearance of the development is not required and to delegate authority to the Development Control Manager to notify the applicant accordingly after the expiration of the consultation period provided that no new material issues are raised.”

The Environmental Health Officer has commented:-

“The proposal together with the supporting information includes an ICNIRP declaration of compliance with public exposure guidelines for aggregated non-ionising radiation at and near to the proposed location. I can confirm that no adverse comments are offered as regards these proposals on the basis of this information.”

A further letter of representation has been received. This has raised no additional material issues to the ones raised by objectors and which are dealt with in the report. The representation therefore does not alter the overall assessment and recommendation.

RESOLVED:

That Prior Approval for the siting and appearance of the development is not

required and authority be delegated to the Development Control Manager to notify the applicant accordingly after the expiration of the consultation period provided that no new material issues are raised.

91. Application CH/16/442, 31 Littleworth Hill, Hednesford, Single storey extension to rear, side porch extension and changes to elevational treatment

Following a site visit consideration was given to the report of the Development Control Manager (Item 6.26 – 6.41 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Development Control Manager advised that amended plans had been submitted which shows the inclusion of roof lights into the extension (this was shown on the presentation).

Prior to consideration of the application a representation was made by Mr. Whitehouse who was objecting to the application.

RESOLVED:

That the application be approved subject to the conditions contained in the report for the reasons stated therein.

The meeting closed at 3.50pm.

CHAIRMAN

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 15 FEBRUARY, 2017 AT 3.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT:
Councillors

Cartwright, Mrs. S.M. (Chairman)
Pearson, A.R. (Vice-Chairman)

Burnett, G.	Hoare, M.W.A.
Cooper, Miss J.	Lea, C.I.
Dean, A.	Preece, J.P.T.L.
Dudson, Miss M.J.	Snape, P.A.
Freeman, Miss M.A.	Sutherland, M.
Grice, Mrs. D.	

92. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors F.W.C. Allen and M.R. Grocott.

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

None.

94. Disclosure of lobbying of Members

Councillor A. Dean declared that he had been lobbied in respect of Application CH/16/0348, Land at 38 Park Gate Road, Rugeley – residential development: erection of 4 no. detached dwellings and demolition of existing dwelling – amended plans.

95. Minutes

The Development Control Manager advised that with regard to Minute no. 91 a speaker, who attended the meeting on 25 January, 2017, had contacted the Council stating that the minutes were inaccurate as he and his wife were objecting to specific parts of the application not the application generally. As such, Members were asked to consider revising the minutes to read:-

“Prior to consideration of the application a representation was made by Mr. Whitehouse who was objecting to specific parts of the proposal and not the application generally”.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 January, 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed subject to Minute No. 91 being amended as follows:-

“Prior to consideration of the application a representation was made by Mr. Whitehouse who was objecting to specific parts of the proposal and not the application generally”.

96. Members’ Requests for Site Visits

No requests for site visits.

97. Application CH/16/348, Land at 38 Park Gate Road, Rugeley – Residential development: Erection of 4 no. detached dwellings and demolition of existing dwelling – amended plans

Following a site visit consideration was given to the report of the Development Control Manager (Item 6.1 – 6.28 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Development Control Manager provided the Committee with an update advising that the planning history had been omitted from the report. This was as follows:-

Planning History

CH/15/0116 – Residential Development – erection of 4 detached dwellings (outline including access). Members resolved to approve on 26 August 2015, subject to the completion of a S106 Agreement and conditions. The S106 Agreement has not been signed and the planning permission has not been issued.

He further advised that the agent has submitted a letter from a Chartered Arboriculturist, which states that in his professional opinion a tree and hedge survey would not be required in this instance. The two apple trees within the site boundary would be classed as U (having less than 10 years useful life) and the hedgerow would be protected if fencing is erected 1.2m from the base of the hedgerow. There are no trees within influencing distance of the development.

Prior to consideration of the application representations were made by Mr. Dudley, who was objecting to the application and Mr. J. Reynolds, the applicant’s agent, speaking in support of the application.

RESOLVED:

That the application be approved subject to the conditions contained in the report for the reasons stated therein and to the following additional conditions:-

1. Notwithstanding the approved plans, additional tree planting shall be provided within the rear gardens of the individual dwellings. The additional tree planting scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to first occupation of the dwellings. Thereafter, the tree planting shall be carried out in the first planting season following the occupation of any building or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner.

Reason:

In the interests of visual amenity of the area, in accordance with Local Plan Policies CP3 and CP14.

2. Notwithstanding the approved plans, provision shall be made for bird boxes to be incorporated into the side elevations of the individual dwellings. The details for the bird boxes shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the approved boxes shall be retained for the life of the development.

Reason:

In the interests of proper planning and enhancing the biodiversity of the site.

The meeting closed at 3.45pm.

CHAIRMAN

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
BETTER JOBS AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON THURSDAY 8 DECEMBER, 2016, AT 4.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT:

Councillors

Martin, Mrs. C.E. (Chairman)
Sutherland, M. (Vice-Chairman)

Cooper, Miss J.	Hardman, W.T.A.
Freeman, Miss M.A.	Johnson, T.B.
Grice, Mrs. D.	Molineux, G.N.
Hoare, M.W.A. (substituting for G. Burnett)	

Also in attendance as an observer:

- Councillor G. Alcott (Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader);

(The Chairman advised that she had agreed to amend the order of the agenda to accommodate one of the speakers).

16. Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillors G. Burnett, M.S. Buttery and P.A. Snape.

Notification had been received that Councillor Hoare would be in attendance as substitute for Councillor Burnett.

17. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restrictions on Voting by Members and Party Whip Declarations

No declarations of interests or party whip declarations were received.

18. Update on the Relocation of Gestamp UKs Cannock Facility

Ian Middleton from Gestamp provided Members with an update on the relocation of Gestamp to the site at Four Ashes.

He explained that Gestamp had outgrown their existing site and it was not conducive to modern day production. The Management Team and parent group in

Spain were keen to continue to operate in the area and had explored various relocation options to keep jobs in the Midlands. The only option available in the area was the site at Four Ashes as it was large enough for their needs. This would enable the vast majority of the workforce to be retained.

Work had commenced on the relocation to Four Ashes but there would be very little impact in 2017 at the site in Cannock as the move would be done progressively. There would be no complete exit from the Cannock site until 2020. The Management Team was working with the District Council and the Local MP to keep a presence in Cannock and it was proposed to create a high tech training centre on the existing site which would create new jobs. He confirmed that he would be willing to return to update the Committee with more detail as necessary.

In terms of the plans for the existing site he advised that part of the site was leased and the remainder was owned by the company. The appointment of planning consultants was currently taking place. They would advise on the best options for the part owned by the company. Consultations with a group of local residents would be commencing soon as they were keen to know what was being proposed for the site.

He further advised that the company were in the early stages of assessing the transport needs of existing employees to ensure those that couldn't drive could get to the new site. An employee survey had been undertaken in October and discussions were now underway.

Following the update Members were offered the opportunity to ask questions. A Member expressed her concern regarding the transport issues of the existing employees and was encouraged to hear that the company was in the process of addressing this. She also highlighted the concerns of local residents in respect of the future plans for the existing site. She was pleased to note that a presence would be retained at the existing site by the opening of a training centre.

Ian Middleton shared the Councillors concern and confirmed that the company had worked hard to keep the facility in Cannock open and to retain the majority of jobs. The Four Ashes site was more suitable for the company's needs as the current site had parking and traffic issues.

A Member asked whether relocation to Kingswood Lakeside had been considered. Ian Middleton confirmed that Kingswood Lakeside had been considered but the site did not offer the appropriate shape, scale or size. The site at Four Ashes was the best option available.

With regard to the future plans for the Cannock site Ian Middleton confirmed that 15 acres of the site were owned by the company and 5 acres was leased. It was anticipated that outline planning permission would be sought on the 15 acres for a mixture of housing and commercial use.

The Chairman thanked Ian Middleton for attending the Committee and providing the update and for offering to return and provide Members with a further update as and when necessary.

19. Update on the Chase Line Electrification

Richard Dugdale, Network Rail was in attendance to provide an update on the Chase Line Electrification. The Committee were provided with a presentation which outlined the following:-

- Reasons for the project
- Features of the electrification
- Progress update on Route Clearance
- Progress update on electrification
- Affordability
- Interfacing projects:-
 - Journey Time Reduction
 - Bloxwich Crossing

He confirmed that £100million was being spent on this route. It was on the same transport axis as the M6 and the trains themselves were very busy. It would provide an opportunity to reduce journey times, increase the frequency of the service and provide a means to introduce more trains into the West Midlands with a “cascade” of rolling stock to other routes. It would better utilise the already electrified infrastructure between Birmingham and Walsall.

He then showed the Committee photographs which outlined the track lowering and bridge reconstruction at Wyrley and Essington Canal aqueduct and Walkers Rise, Hednesford, the track lowering at Walsall tunnel and the Park Street soffit demolition.

He confirmed that the key milestones included the reopening of the final road to traffic (Central Drive) and the piling and parapet works that had been completed. The Department for Transport had visited the line and remained supportive and public information events had been held in Walsall and Bloxwich.

He commented on the road closure over the crossing in Bloxwich and on the proposed closure of the two footpath crossings. Reference was also made to the fencing and vegetation management.

Finally he outlined the challenges being worked on, as follows:-

- Historic mine working
- Overhead electrification equipment interface at Walsall/Pleck
- Planning issues
- Ensuring value for money
- Overhead line configuration
- Speed profile

The next steps were:

- to close the Bloxwich level crossing and construct the footbridge
- footpath crossings (Landywood and Stoneyfields)
- Line speed improvements

- Complete parapet works including agreeing a way forward with three local authority footbridges
- Construct electrification equipment
- Fencing and vegetation management
- “Entry into Service” works
- Infrastructure ready for use – December 2017

Following the presentation the Chairman commented that the works completed so far had made a great improvement to the line. She had concern that trains to Birmingham were often cancelled and welcomed a more frequent service. She considered four carriage trains should be used as a minimum as trains were often full especially since Amazon had opened in Rugeley.

Richard Dugdale confirmed that trains would be at least three carriages and would run more frequently (every half hour as standard). However, it would be difficult to operate four carriage trains due to the length of the platforms along the route.

A Member asked whether there were plans to improve the platforms and stations especially now that the Mill Green Designer Village (MGDV) had been granted planning permission. Richard Dugdale advised that he was not aware of any active project as yet but there were discussions on going which would see some station improvements as a result of the MGDV.

A Member considered that consultation with residents regarding the level crossing and footpath closures was important. Richard Dugdale confirmed that there would be drop in sessions held at libraries and schools to advise of these plans and there would be liaison with all relevant bodies.

A Member commented on the condition of the rolling stock. He also made reference to the lack of fare collection and considered this needed to be addressed. He then referred to the bigger demand that would be placed on Cannock Station in the future as a result of the MGDV.

Richard Dugdale responded and advised that there was to be a new operator next October who would address fare collection as part of their plans. The frustration with the rolling stock was noted and the trains would be refreshed with the new franchise and there may be plans for new rolling stock.

The Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader thanked Richard Dugdale for attending the Committee and providing Members with an update on the Chase Line Electrification. He expressed his disappointment that Staffordshire County Council (who was the transport authority) had declined the offer for a representative to attend the meeting. He was also disappointed that Arriva had also declined the offer to attend the meeting. He considered that letters should be forwarded to Staffordshire County Council and Arriva to express the Committee’s concern regarding their none attendance.

He then made reference to a Working Group between representatives from the District Council, Network Rail and London Midland that had been set up to

discuss the station issues and the need for improvements. West Midlands Combined Authority and the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP had been approached to see if any funding was available to improve the stations.

20. Minutes

The Planning and Economic Development Services Manager confirmed that with regard to page 12 the bid for “Celebrate” lottery funding for a carnival event in Hednesford in August 2017 had been successful and £10,000 had been received.

He further commented that with regard to Minute 10 (page 8) there had been no challenge to the Mill Green Designer Outlet Village and the planning permission was effectively ‘live’.

He also made reference to the discussion at the previous meeting regarding the concern about the relocation of Gestamp’s facility in Cannock. He advised that Ian Middleton had attended the meeting today and provided the Committee with an update and had given a commitment to keep Members informed of any developments.

He commented that the update in respect of the West Midlands Combined Authority had been deferred at this meeting and the previous one due to the Head of Economic Development not being available. The Managing Director was leading on this and he was available to attend the next meeting on 12 April, 2017 to provide Members with an update.

He clarified that it had been intended that today’s meeting was to be mainly focussed on transport matters. Jeff Tucker from Staffordshire County Council had initially said he could attend but had then confirmed he was unavailable for the meeting. Additionally Arriva had been approached but were unable to attend.

The Chairman asked that letters be sent to Staffordshire County Council and Arriva to express the Committee’s concern regarding their respective none attendance and inviting them to attend another meeting on a date that was convenient for them.

RESOLVED:

- (A) That the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September, 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed.
- (B) That the Managing Director be invited to attend the meeting on 12 April, 2017 to provide an update on the West Midlands Combined Authority.
- (C) That letters be sent to Staffordshire County Council and Arriva to express the Committee’s concern regarding their none attendance and inviting them to attend a meeting on a date that was convenient for them and a further meeting be arranged accordingly.

21. Quarter 2 Performance Report – Better Jobs and Skills Priority Delivery Plan

Members noted the latest performance information (Item 5.1 to 6.9 of the Official Minutes of the Council) and the Planning and Economic Development Services Manager outlined the highlights in relation to the performance indicators.

22. Work Programme Update

The Planning and Economic Development Services Manager referred Members to the updated Work Programme (Item 7.1 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

He confirmed that in order to continue the discussions on transport issues a further meeting would be arranged on a date that was convenient for Staffordshire County Council and Arriva to attend.

He outlined the issues due to be discussed at the meeting on 12 April, 2017 which would have an education theme.

As advised earlier in the meeting he confirmed that the Managing Director would be invited to attend the meeting on 12 April, 2017 to provide an update on the WMCA.

RESOLVED:

That a further meeting of the Committee be arranged on a date that was convenient for Staffordshire County Council and Arriva to attend in order to continue the discussions on transport issues.

The meeting closed at 5.15pm.

CHAIRMAN

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CUSTOMERS AND CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 5 DECEMBER, 2016 AT 4.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT:
Councillors

Dudson, Miss M.J. (Chairman)
Snape, D.J. (Vice-Chairman)

Buttery, M.S.	Johnson, T.B.
Foley, D.	Martin, Mrs. C.E.
Freeman, Miss M.A.	Pearson, A.R.
Grice, Mrs. D.	Snape, P.A. (substitute)
Grocott, M.R.	Sutherland, M.

Also in attendance:

- Councillor Mrs. M.A. Davis (Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Leader, Observer).
- Councillor J.T. Kraujalis (Corporate Improvement Portfolio Leader, Observer).

11. Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillors G. Burnett and C.D. Smith.

Councillor P.A. Snape was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Burnett.

12. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restrictions on Voting by Members and Party Whip Declarations

No declarations of interests or party whip declarations were received.

13. Minutes

Minute No. 9 – Financial Recovery Plan Consultation

The Chairman advised that the feedback received as part of the public consultation would be included in the papers for 15 December Cabinet which were due to be published on 7 December.

The Chairman also advised that for the next meeting of the Committee, an item would be included on the agenda to look at feedback received about, and lessons learnt from the public consultation process.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 October, 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed.

14. Quarter 2 Performance Report 2016-17 – Customers Priority Delivery Plan

Members noted the latest performance information (tem 4.1 – 4.10 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

Customer Contact Data

A Member asked if a breakdown could be provided on length of time taken to answer customer telephone calls as residents had been complaining that it was taking too long to do so. The Head of Commissioning responded agreeing to provide a full breakdown of the calls answered within time bands.

Another Member raised concern that this could be impacting on the telephone payments system as the number and value of payments made had dropped in quarter 2 when compared to quarter 1.

(Councillor T. B. Johnson arrived at the meeting during the consideration of this item.)

15. Local Government Association Peer Review Feedback Report

Consideration was given to the LGA's Feedback Report from its Council Peer Review Challenge held from 13 to 15 September, 2016 (Item 5.1 – 5.13 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Policy & Performance Manager delivered a short presentation on the above matter, which covered the following:

Peer Review – Key Messages

Develop and widen the 'Customer' priority to articulate what the Council will look like in the future:

- Need a forward looking vision and narrative.
- Enable staff and stakeholders to understand how the Council will evolve.

Consider broadening the financial strategy so it becomes multi-stranded and adaptable to increase resilience and reduce risk:

- Explore commercialisation, digitalisation and transformation.

Continue to utilise relationships to maximise influence and leverage as part of the 'leadership of place' role:

- Use our strengths and experience to make every contact count.
- Be clear and what the Council's offer is as well as its 'asks'.

Review the current democratic decision-making arrangements including overview & scrutiny to better utilise resources to support and enable balance between:

- Policy development.
- Holding to account.
- Community roles of councillors.

Move at pace to complete work on governance policies:

- Financial Regulations.
- Code of Conduct.
- Code of Governance.
- Information Governance.

Consider how to develop leadership, organisational capacity & capabilities to ensure that the Council has the skills and resources aligned to deliver future priorities.

Draw on learning from both within the Council and wider local government sector to support improvement and development.

Peer Review – Discuss

Is the report a fair reflection?

Is there anything that you would disagree with?

Is there anything missing?

Views on taking the review forward.

The Policy & Performance Manager reported that a follow-up meeting had been held last week with representatives from the Peer Review team to establish how to put the report recommendations into action and what support the LGA could provide to the Council.

The Chairman suggested that the Committee select three of the seven report recommendations for Cabinet to prioritise when responding to the report.

Members discussed the role of shared services, commenting that: the Council should focus on moving to such arrangements where possible; not seek to limit itself in the number of authorities it would be prepared to work with; ensure that Cannock Chase residents would still be the Council's primary focus; service provision would not be diluted; and a benchmark of excellence should be established so that high quality services would be provided across all councils. The Health & Wellbeing Portfolio Leader asked if benchmarking information was available for those services currently shared with Stafford Borough Council. The Head of Commissioning replied that he would speak with the Head of Governance to establish if such information existed and could be share with Members.

Members then discussed the democratic structures of the Council, commenting that the existing structure gave Members regular opportunity to question Officers in a public arena which would be reduced if the number and frequency of

committees was cut and that the focus of Members' roles was gradually changing from being committee focussed to community focus so having fewer committees was the way forward for the future. Members also requested the LGA provide examples supporting their recommendations.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet, when responding to the LGA's Peer Review report, prioritise its focus on the following recommendations as set out in the report:

- Recommendation 1 – “Further develop and widen the ‘Customer’ priority of the Corporate Plan so as to articulate what the Cannock Chase District Council of the future will look like.”
- Recommendation 4 – “Review the current democratic decision-making arrangements – including Overview & Scrutiny – to better enable councillors to have a timely and proportionate opportunity to inform, influence and challenge decision-making and policy development.”
- Recommendation 6 – “Consider how the corporate leadership, organisational capacity and capabilities need to develop further to ensure that the Council has the skills and resources aligned to deliver future priorities.” This to also incorporate recommendation 3 – “Continue to utilise informal and formal relationships to maximise influence and leverage, as part of the Council’s ‘leadership of place’ role.”

The meeting closed at 4:45pm

CHAIRMAN

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 30 NOVEMBER, 2016 AT 4.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK
PART 1

PRESENT:: Councillors:

Foley, D. (Chairman)
Burnett, G. (Vice-Chairman)

Cooper, Miss. J.	Hoare, M.W.A.
Dean, A. (Substitute)	Snape, D.J.
Dudson, A.	Stretton, Mrs. P.Z.
Grice, Mrs. D.	Witton, P.T.
Hardman, W.T.A.	

13. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. S.M. Cartwright, Mrs. C.L. Peake, Miss. S. Whitehouse, F.W.C. Allen (Housing Portfolio Leader) and P. A. Snape (Substitute for Councillor Mrs. C.L. Peake). Apology also received from Mike Walker, Environmental Protection Manager.

Councillor A. Dean was in attendance and substitute for Councillor Miss. S. Whitehouse.

Nirmal Samrai, Head of Housing and Waste Management reported that the Environmental Protection Manager would give a presentation at the next meeting with regard to Houses in Multiple Occupation.

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

No further declarations were made in addition to those already confirmed by Members in the Register of Members Interests.

15. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September, 2016 be approved as a correct record subject to an amendment to Minute 12, Page 7 and Councillor M. Hoard being amended to Councillor M. Hoare.

16. Notes

The Notes of the Housing (Allocations) Sub-Group held on 11 October and 15 November, 2016 were received for information.

17. Quarter 2 Performance Update 2016-17 – More and Better Housing Priority Delivery Plan

Members considered the Quarter 2 Performance Information 2016-17, More and Better Housing Priority Delivery Plan (Item 4.1 – 4.6).

More and better housing: increasing the supply of affordable housing

It was reported that the target figure of 165 homes would not be achieved this year. This was due to one site being completed last year and included in the figures for this year.

Increasing the supply of affordable housing – Progress the redevelopment of 25 former garage sites and other areas of Council owned land

It was reported that five sites had been selected and Novus would commence works from January, 2017. It was anticipated that the programme would be complete around March, 2018.

The garage sites selected were Berwick Drive, Coulthwaite Way, land at Hannaford Way, Woodlands Close and Brinsford Road.

Review of voids process to improve turnarounds and sustain tenancies

Nirmal Samrai reported that an action group had been established and a plan would be submitted to the next meeting.

Planning for the housing needs of the District

A Member asked about income and targets for affordable housing, and future plans against what the Council could deliver.

Nirmal Samrai advised the Member that Michael Tichford, Head of Economic Development may be better placed to respond to the query.

Members noted the Quarter 2 Performance Update 2016-17 – More and Better Housing Priority Delivery Plan.

18. Review of Allocations Policy – Recommendations from Housing (Allocations) Sub-Group

Members received a presentation from Janet Baldasera, Strategic Housing and Tenancy Services Manager who outlined the following:

- Out of Area Applicants and the qualification
- Arrears – Statute of Limitations – Qualification and Allocation

- Review Issues
- Out of Area – Local Connection
- Under-occupation/Bedroom Tax – Band 1 and Band 4
- Low Demand Properties/Communal Flats – Property Eligibility – Two bedroom flats and one bedroom in a mature block
- Tenancy Sustainability – Pre-Tenancy 2 – Payment method and withdrawal of offers
- Tenancy Sustainability – Pre-Tenancy – Making an application
- Homelessness Applicants – Suitable properties EOI – Expression of Interest

In response to a question raised by a Member, Janet Baldasera advised that there would be no changes to sheltered accommodation.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed amendments to the Council's Allocations Policy as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be agreed, and recommended to Cabinet.

19. Estate Management Review – Overview

Members received a presentation from Janet Baldasera, Strategic Housing and Tenancy Services Manager and Belinda Wildey, Estate Management Team Leader who outlined the following:

- Structure of the Tenancy Services – Estate Management Team
- Objectives of the Service
- Tenancy Management
- Tenancy Audits – April-Nov
- Tenancy Management Performance – April-Nov
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Anti-Social Behaviour Performance – April-Nov 2016
- Tenancy Sustainment
- Tenancy Sustainment Performance – July-Nov 2016
- Tenancy Fraud
- Tenancy Fraud Performance – April-Nov 2016
- Estate Caretaker Service
- Estate Caretaking Performance – April-Nov 2016 (Monthly Inspection Programme)
- Minor Works
- Minor Work Improvements – April-Nov 2016
- Review of Service
- Estate Walks
- Estate Walks Annual Evaluation Comparison
- Implementation

It was reported that estate walks would be phased out and an emphasis would be placed on the development of a tenancy sustainability strategy. Proposals for this would be brought back to the next meeting.

In response to a question raised by a Member, Belinda Wildey advised that those tenants who stored large amounts of rubbish and other items in their properties would be offered support through a range of different services to try and help with the problem.

She also advised that estate walks of the neighbourhood areas had become very resource intensive and often work was duplicated around highways and staff conducting ground visits. An annual evaluation and comparison had been undertaken which showed that serious issues had reduced from 2011-12.

A Member commented on the work produced in the report and referred to the tenancy audits, he asked if there were any plans for more in-depth profiling of tenants.

Nirmal Samrai responded and advised that it may be worth conducting a tenant census, however whilst data had been collected on new tenants, it was more difficult historically. She reported that the Council managed over 5000 properties and any further in-depth profiling would need to be carried out in stages.

A Member referred to the abandoned properties and asked if there were any future plans for work to be carried out on reducing them and finding out the causes.

Belinda Wildey explained that the Tenancy Sustainment Officers would now be able to investigate this through the tenancy sustainment plan. She also referred to the case study which had been circulated which showed how the sustainability plan would intervene and help those tenants that were vulnerable and assist with maintaining their tenancy.

In response to a question raised by a Member, Belinda Wildey referred to the success on tenancy fraud and advised that anonymous complaints, residents coming forward, suspicion on tenancy audits and the investigation into abandonments could lead to fraud being detected.

Members of the Committee referred to the estate walks and commented how useful these had been over the years, particularly those where residents groups had been involved. Officers responded and advised that if Members wished to continue with the estate walks they were welcome to do so.

The Chairman and Members discussed 'champions' and asked if this could be extended to estate walks. Belinda Wildey explained that the Council had tried through various social media tools including Facebook and Twitter to attract new people but had received no response.

In response to a question raised by a Member concerning those families with certain needs, Belinda Wildey responded and advised that the Council worked in conjunction with other partners and there was now an officer responsible for the Resilient Families Project.

The Chairman referred to minor works and asked what the maximum budget was

which could be applied for.

Belinda Wildey responded and advised that the maximum budget was £5k which could be applied for but could not cross over with other repairs. She also indicated that there would be some refusals due to the criteria not being met. There was £10k available per neighbourhood and there were thirteen estates per neighbourhood. Information regarding this was available in the Hometalk magazine and the tenants newsletter.

CHAIRMAN

(The meeting concluded at 5.10 p.m.).

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2016 AT 4.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT:
Councillors

Witton, P.T. (Chairman)

Buttery, M.S. Johnson, J.P.
Grice, Mrs. D.

Also Present:

- James Cook, Engagement Lead – Grant Thornton (External Auditors)
- Laura Hinsley, Manager – Grant Thornton (External Auditors)

18. Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillors Mrs. S.M. Cartwright (Vice-Chairman), J. Bowater and P.E. Woodhead.

19. Declaration of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members

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

20. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 September, 2016, be approved as a correct record and signed.

21. Internal Audit Quarter 2 2016-17 Report

Consideration was given to the Report of the Chief Internal Auditor (Item 4.1 – 4.9 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Chief Internal Auditor took Members through the report, drawing particular attention to the commentary on the audits completed during quarter 2 and the list of audits in progress.

In respect of the Licensing & Hackney Carriages audit, the Chief Internal Auditor advised that it was recommended that DBS paperwork should be retained for no more than 6 months after a decision had been made on whether or not to issue a licence, but preferably destroyed sooner if no longer required.

In respect of the Treasury Management audit, a Member asked if reduced staffing levels were considered a potential problem going forward. The Chief Internal Auditor replied that this had been raised as part of the Internal Audit Annual Report on a number of occasions as a growing issue across the Council, as fewer Officers meant there was greater risk of system controls not being operated and monitored effectively. The Head of Governance further replied that the Managing Director had concerns over Officer capacity, particularly at management level, but a review of team structures, workloads and priorities would be undertaken as necessary.

In respect of the High Level IT Security Framework audit, a Member asked when it was expected that the operating procedures referred to would be drafted. The Chief Internal Auditor replied that it should be no more than 6 months after the audit taking place, but ideally as soon as possible.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

22. Strategic Risk Register

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Governance (*presented by the Risk & Resilience Manager*) (Item 5.1 – 5.16 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Risk & Resilience Manager reported that the Council's risk profile was unchanged since the last update, but it was expected that the rating for risk 18, '*Viability / Funding of Cannock Chase Council as a result of public expenditure reductions and changes to Government's funding regime*' would be reduced following completion of the Financial Recovery Plan process, although the rating could be increased again depending on the Council's funding position in the future.

RESOLVED:

That the progress made in the identification and management of the strategic risks be noted.

23. Annual Governance Statement – Progress Report

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Governance (Item 6.1 – 6.9 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

In addition to the progress updates provided in the report, the Head of Governance also reported the following:

- Housing & Planning Act – implementation of proposals had been delayed as guidance was still awaited. However it was understood that further changes to the Act had been announced as part of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement.
- Code of Governance and Employees' Code of Conduct – it was anticipated that work on both of these documents would commence in early 2017 following completion of the 2016/17 budget process.
- IT Strategy – no longer being submitted to the Customers & Corporate Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in December for consideration as Officers were seeking clarification on whether or not the Strategy required approval by Members.

RESOLVED:

That the progress report on the Annual Governance Statement 2015-16 be noted.

24. Annual Audit Letter 2015-16

Consideration was given to the Report of the External Auditors (Item 7.1 – 7.15 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

James Cook advised that certification work on the Council's Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim had been completed, and as a result, an adjustment figure to the accounts to the value of approximately £2,500 would be required. Of concern however was that for the benefits claims tested as part of the certification work 1 in 10 was found to have contained errors, which was a considerably higher rate than other local authorities tested. Accordingly, Officers had been advised to undertake testing work throughout the course of the year so as to reduce the number of errors made and rectify more quickly any errors found.

Laura Hinsley reported that Officers had understood the testing process and worked hard to ensure thorough testing was carried out, but the outcome was that more errors had been found compared to the previous year's testing.

Members raised concern with the number of errors being made and requested that relevant Officers be asked to attend the next meeting to report on how this was going to be addressed.

The Chief Internal Auditor advised that a Housing Benefit system audit was planned to take place in the coming months but would need to check which part of the system was due to be audited as Members concerns could be addressed via that route instead.

The Head of Governance further advised that if the relevant part of the system was not due to be audited, then the Head of Finance and/or Revenues & Benefits Manager would be requested to attend the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the report of the External Auditors be noted.

The meeting closed at 4:45 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
LICENSING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE
HELD ON FRIDAY 6 JANUARY, 2017 AT 10:00AM
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors

Grice, Mrs. D. (Chairman)
Dudson, A. (Vice-Chairman)

Allen, F.W.C. Snape, D.J.
Dean, A. Sutherland, M.
Grocott, M.R. Witton, P.T.
Lea, C.I.

15. Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillor Mrs. D.M. Todd.

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

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

17. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 October, 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed.

18. 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 Paragraphs 1 and 2, Part 1, Schedule 12A Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
LICENSING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE
HELD ON FRIDAY 6 JANUARY, 2017 AT 10:00AM
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK
PART 2

19. Application for a Private Hire Vehicle Licence

(Councillor Grocott arrived at the meeting at the start of this item.)

Consideration was given to the Not for Publication report of the Head of Environmental Health (Enclosure 5.1 – 5.18 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Chairman invited all those present to introduce themselves and outlined the procedure to be followed at the Hearing.

The Officer of the Licensing Authority presented the Council's case by taking the Committee through the report outlining the relevant issues for consideration.

The Committee then briefly adjourned to view the Applicant's vehicle.

The Committee reconvened and the Officer of the Licensing Authority concluded the presentation of the Council's case.

The Applicant and Members of the Committee then put questions to the Officer.

The Applicant then presented his case to the Committee.

Members of the Committee and the Officer of the Licensing Authority then put questions to the Applicant.

The Officer of the Licensing Authority and the Applicant then summed up their respective cases to the Committee.

The Officer of the Licensing Authority and the Driver then left the room in order that the Committee could deliberate in private, accompanied by the Council's Legal Adviser and Secretary to the Committee.

Following deliberations, the Officer of the Licensing Authority and the Applicant returned to the meeting, and the Legal Advisor to the Committee read out the decision of the Committee (and the reasons for the decision) on the Chairman's behalf.

RESOLVED:

That having regard to all the circumstances the application for a private hire vehicle licence be granted.

Reasons for the Decision

The Committee noted the Council's Policy, attached as Annex 1 to the report. In particular the Committee noted paragraph 20.1 of the Policy, which stated "All saloon vehicles which are new to licensing with the Council will be no more than 42 months old. Vintage, classic or novelty vehicles will be considered on their own merit."

Notwithstanding paragraph 20.1 of the Policy, the Committee noted that it had a duty to consider applications falling outside of the requirements of the Policy, and to consider such applications on their own individual merits.

The Committee considered the merits of the applicant's vehicle, as being as a potential licensed private hire vehicle, against the Policy objectives for improving air quality, and ensuring high standards of vehicle safety, comfort and access.

The Committee considered that the vehicle was in excellent condition, despite being some 15 months older than the 42 month age limit prescribed by paragraph 20.1 of the Policy. The Committee considered that it was a prestige vehicle of very high quality.

The Committee considered that on balance the exceptional merits of the applicant's vehicle justified licensing the vehicle contrary to the Council's Policy.

The meeting closed at 11:00am

CHAIRMAN