

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET

HELD ON THURSDAY, 23 OCTOBER, 2014 AT 4:00 P.M.

IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors:

Adamson, G.	Leader of the Council
Lovell, A.	Corporate Improvement Portfolio Leader
Mitchell, Mrs C.	Culture & Sport Portfolio Leader
Alcott, G.	Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader
Bennett, C.	Environment 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

59. Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillor M.J. Holder, Deputy Leader and Crime and Partnerships Portfolio Leader. Apologies were also received from Mr. T. McGovern, Corporate Director, and Mr. I. Tennant, Head of Housing and Waste Management.

60. 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.

61. Updates from Portfolio Leaders

Housing

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Borrowing Programme

The Portfolio Leader updated Cabinet that the bid for additional borrowing to the Department for Communities and Local Government under the HRA Borrowing Programme, which had been reported to Cabinet on 17 July, 2014, had been partly successful.

As a result £1,015,000 of additional borrowing approval would be made available to part fund 21 additional Council dwellings to be provided at Green Lane, Rugeley. The remaining funding would be provided by the Council from uncommitted housing resources.

Full details of the proposed scheme would be reported at the next Cabinet meeting on 20 November, 2014.

Provision of Photovoltaic Panels

The Portfolio Leader updated Cabinet on the scheme to provide photovoltaic panels to Council owned bungalows, through a community share issue by Chase Community Solar, which had been considered by Cabinet on 20 March, 2014.

The scheme had not progressed as quickly as hoped, as a result of issues with Western Power Distribution (WPD) regarding connections to the national grid. Whilst WPD still had some final checks to make, the Portfolio Leader advised that the scheme had now moved forward and 188 further Council bungalows had been provisionally identified for photovoltaic panel installation.

The scheme was, however, dependent upon Chase Community Solar raising the necessary funding from their community share issue. The share issue was to be launched on Tuesday, 4 November, 2014 at an event in the Civic Centre Ballroom commencing at 7.30 pm, and Members would be receiving formal invitations from Chase Community Solar.

Environment

Enforcement Action for Spitting

The Portfolio Leader advised that, following a two month education and awareness raising campaign, with effect from 1 November, 2014, Environmental Enforcement Officers would begin issuing Fixed Penalty Notices to people spotted spitting in the streets. A further press and publicity campaign would ensure that residents were aware of the Council's seriousness in this regard.

Civil Parking Enforcement Review

The Portfolio Leader updated Cabinet on the future delivery of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) by the Council, which had been considered by Cabinet on 20 March, 2014. CPE is a County Council function that is currently delivered throughout Staffordshire by District Councils in accordance with Partnership Agreements.

It was reported that the County Council were seeking new partnership arrangements which would transfer some financial risk to the District Councils and, in view of this, it was decided that the Council would cease undertaking CPE with effect from 31 March, 2015.

Following the evaluation of a number of options, the County Council's Cabinet on 9 September, 2014 agreed that with effect from 1 April, 2015, CPE throughout Staffordshire would be delivered through a "Clear Streets" Partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

The proposed terms of the new county-wide Partnership Agreement would also enable District Councils to secure off-street enforcement and cash collection services for their own car parks. Discussions were, therefore, planned with Stoke-on-Trent City Council to potentially secure this service for the Council's car

parks.

The County Council were also proposing to abolish the Joint Staffordshire Parking Board and Local Parking Committees and establish new governance arrangements through the existing Community Highway Liaison Terms, following consultation with the appropriate County Council Ward Member.

The Cannock Chase Joint Parking Committee had also received a report, prepared by Staffordshire County Council, on these matters at their meeting on 22 October, 2014.

62. Minutes of Cabinet Meeting of 18 September, 2014

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 September, 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed.

63. Forward Plan

The Forward Plan of Decisions for the period October to December, 2014 (Item 5.1 of the Official Minutes of the Council) was considered.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period October to December, 2014 be noted.

64. Recommendations and References for Determination and Minutes of Policy Development and Other Committees

RESOLVED:

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

- (i) Economic Development and Planning – 12 August, 2014
- (ii) Environment – 14 August, 2014
- (iii) Health and Wellbeing – 4 August, 2014
- (iv) Town Centre Regeneration – 21 July, 2014

65. Town Centre Business Rates Discount Scheme and Discretionary Rates Relief Support for Businesses

Consideration was given to the Joint Report of the Corporate Director and the Head of Finance (Item 7.1 – 7.7 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) Option 3 (Operate the Town Centre Business Rates Discount Scheme as part of a new Discretionary Rate Relief Policy for the District) be agreed as the Council's preferred option.

- (B) The Discretionary Rates Relief Policy, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved for implementation.
- (C) The S.151 Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the relevant Portfolio Leader be authorised to amend the Discretionary Rates Relief Policy to ensure that it remains consistent with the business support policy objectives of the Council.

Reasons for Decisions

The Town Centre Business Rates Discount Scheme (TCBRDS) was launched in September, 2012 using £100k secured from the Government's High Street Innovation Fund. Its purpose was to facilitate the reoccupation of vacant premises in the District's three town centres, thus helping to sustain their trading position and footfall. The Scheme was just one of a series of measures which the Council pursued to help support the District's town centres following Cabinet consideration of a detailed report on such matters in June, 2012.

A total of 25 businesses had been offered assistance since the scheme was launched, of which thirteen were located in Cannock Town Centre, eleven in Rugeley and one in Hednesford. The scheme had had a very positive effect upon the District's three town centres with vacancy rates well below the national average. As well as achieving the reoccupation of vacant floorspace, the scheme had also helped to create new employment opportunities in viable businesses with growth potential. All of the businesses supported to date were still trading, including those where the Council's support had now ceased.

Because of the success of the scheme steps had already been taken to secure further funding to enable it to continue in the short-term. This was primarily via a number of Section 106 Agreements which included specific financial provisions to facilitate town centre regeneration initiatives and could be used to secure "top-up" funding for the TCBRDS. However, the opportunity to negotiate and secure additional funds through this route were likely to be restricted to Cannock in the short to medium term and, therefore, such funding would only be available to support schemes in Cannock town centre, unless the money was vired to support existing commitments in the town centre.

As a consequence of the above situation, Cabinet were asked to consider three options:

1. Close TCBRDS, as its original funding had been fully utilised.
2. Operate TCBRDS in specific centres subject to funding.
3. Operate TCBRDS as part of the introduction of a Discretionary Rates Relief Policy that carries forward the TCBRDS as part of a wider framework.

66. Consultation on the Right to Move

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Housing and Waste Management (Item 8.1 – 8.7 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the action of the Head of Housing and Waste Management, following

consultation with the Housing Portfolio Leader, regarding the submission of the Council's response to the Department for Communities and Local Government consultation paper "Right to Move", as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be agreed.

Reasons for Decisions

The DCLG had published a consultation paper which set out proposed changes to the Social Housing Allocations Regulations and Statutory Guidance in order to introduce a "Right to Move", which would apply to existing social housing tenants who needed to transfer to another local authority area for employment or training.

Under the Council's current agreed Allocations Policy applicants were required to have a 12 months residency period in the Cannock Chase area and no exceptions were made for existing social housing tenants who wished to move to the District for employment reasons.

It was, however, considered that the Council's allocations policy should not impede labour mobility and as a result it was felt that the Government's proposed policy should be supported. There were, however, concerns regarding the implementation and operation of the proposed changes, in relation to the qualification criteria.

Responses to the consultation paper had to be received by 22 October 2014. As it was not possible to submit a proposed response to Cabinet for prior consideration, one was formulated by the Head of Housing and Waste Management following consultation with the Housing Portfolio Leader.

Therefore, the report sought confirmation of action regarding the submission of the Council's response.

67. Update on Partnership Activity

Consideration was given to the Report of the Chief Executive (Item 9.1 – 9.6 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the update on Partnership activity be noted.

Reasons for Decisions

The report provided a quarterly update on the key areas of focus for the Chase Community Partnership since the last report to Cabinet, together with detailed information and case studies on specific initiatives.

The LSP had its own governance structure and Terms of Reference, and, therefore, the quarterly update reports were intended to provide a summary of Partnership work for information. Any particular areas of interest to Cabinet could be reported in more detail in future Partnership Update reports, hence the recommendation that Cabinet identify specific areas of interest in respect of Partnership working. No particular areas of interest were identified.

68. Use of Council Crest on Third Party Publications

Consideration was given to the Report of the Chief Executive (Item 10.1 – 10.4 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) Permission be granted for The Chronicle to use the current Council Crest on the front of its publications.
- (B) An approach be agreed for future requests of this nature.
- (C) The Communications Team should maintain a log of permissions and monitor brand usage. Where Council branding is being used fraudulently or in conflict with the Brand Guidelines, necessary actions would be taken to address the issue and mitigate the impact of the misuse.

Reasons for Decisions

The Chronicle currently uses the former Cannock Urban District Council Crest on the front header of its weekly newspaper; the Crest was out of date; did not represent Cannock Chase District, and was not in accordance with the Council's Branding Guidelines.

The Chronicle advised that they sought permission from the former Council to use this Crest a number of years ago. However, due to the time period elapsed and a number of changes in personnel, no record of this agreement had been found.

Other local Chronicle editions use local Crests on the headers of their publications apart from Walsall Chronicle, which doesn't display an image. The Crests are used to reflect the history of the local area.

The use of the Council Crest by a third party was acceptable within the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity.

The meeting closed at 4.20 p.m.

LEADER