

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HELD ON TUESDAY, 16 APRIL, 2013 AT 4.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT:
Councillors

Kraujalis, J. T. (Chairman)
Bernard, J. D. (Vice-Chairman)

Cartwright, Mrs. S.	Lovell, A.
Davies, D. N.	Morgan, C. W. J.
Freeman, Miss M.	Stretton, Mrs. P. Z.
Jones, Ms. J. L.	

By invitation: Councillor G. Alcott, Economic Development & Planning
Portfolio Leader

39. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. A. F. Bernard, Mrs. D. Grice, M. R. Grocott, Mrs. A. Spicer, and M. Sutherland.

40. 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.

41. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meetings held on 14 February and 4 March, 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

42. Youth Unemployment in Cannock Chase

The Committee received a presentation from Councillor A. Lovell the Chairman of the Economic Development & Planning Policy Development Committee.

Councillor Lovell reported that the Economic Development and Planning Policy Development Committee as part of its work programme had met with a number of organisations in order to seek ways of addressing youth unemployment problems.

Prior to the onset of the recession 5-6% of those aged 18-24 year olds claimed Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). However, in January 2010, when youth unemployment was at its peak, it stood at 13.1%. It was explained that negative impacts on that age group included:

- Loss of self esteem and confidence
- Health implications
- Social implications
- Creation of a 'lost generation'

To help overcome these barriers, support was provided through improved information, advice and guidance from a number of agencies, including Job Centre Plus, Staffordshire Young People's Service, and Work Clubs etc. Councillor Lovell advised that specific initiatives were provided by Community Buddies, one to one mentoring, Families First, Making Space and Inspire to Independence. It was reported that Job Centre Plus had attended a recent meeting and advised that they had a strong rigorous programme in place to help overcome unemployment, particularly with regard to the long term unemployed. Training was carried out to ensure that people had the right skills and attitude to find work.

The Council and its partners were working together with employers in order to maximise local jobs going to local people with particular emphasis on work opportunities for young people. The Planning & Economic Development Services Manager advised that in 2011 Whitbread had made a commitment to open a pub/restaurant and hotel in Rugeley and that they had intimated that they intended to employ local people, particularly those aged 25 and under. Most of the 65 new jobs which were created were taken by young people local to Rugeley.

The Economic Development & Planning Portfolio Leader explained that an initiative had been identified with regard to apprenticeships being taken on locally and the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) had set aside an amount for 2012-13 of £50,000 to address this issue. It was explained that the Council had also included in its budget the same amount for the following year. He advised that the Council would continue to seek additional funding. He advised that the Future Jobs Fund scheme had previously been run by the Council which had proven to be successful, with a large percentage of those taking part going on to find work.

Members were requested to put forward suggestions on how the apprenticeship scheme could be promoted.

Councillor Lovell advised that the percentage of 18-24 year olds claiming Jobseekers Allowance as a total number in that age group was as follows:-

	<u>January 2008</u>	<u>January 2010</u>	<u>January 2013</u>
CCDC	5.4%	13.1%	8.3%
Staffordshire	3.4%	8.5%	5.8%
Great Britain	4.1%	8.1%	7.0%

A graph showing monthly youth unemployment figures from January 2010 to February 2013 was listed within the presentation. It was reported that normally the months of January and February were when numbers usually peaked This being due to employers laying off the seasonal staff they had taken on over the Christmas period.

It was considered that good progress had been made, with the number of unemployed significantly reducing from January 2010 when they stood at 1065, to February 2013 when they numbered 715. The Committee was advised that youth unemployment was now at its lowest level since the end of 2008. Initiatives were continuing to be carried out to increase employment opportunities, including working with companies such as Tesco Partnerships with respect to the Rugeley store, APC at Cannock and Aldi at Hednesford.

A Member raised concern that buses had been seen running from Walsall taking people to the Amazon depot at Rugeley. It was explained that the bus service had been provided by a recruitment agency collecting people from the Wolverhampton/Walsall area as Amazon, due to a number of reasons, had encountered difficulties in recruiting locally. The Committee was advised that the bus service was now due to be withdrawn.

Councillor Lovell explained that the current Economic Development & Planning Policy Development Committee considered that development of successful responses to youth unemployment should be included in the work programme for 2013-14. The Committee had requested that a representative from South Staffordshire College should be invited to attend a future meeting.

Councillor Lovell thanked the Planning & Economic Development Services Manager for the work Officers had carried out, together with the Council's partners, to address unemployment issues.

43. Scrutiny Working Groups

The Chairman provided an update on the following Scrutiny Working Groups. He explained that although the Terms of Reference for the Working Groups had not been formally set up and agreed, background working had been undertaken.

Air Quality and Industrial Emissions

Councillor J. T. Kraujalis explained that the Working Group intended primarily to investigate Biffa's Anaerobic Digester at the Poplars Landfill site and the unpleasant odour problems emanating from there. Members had recently visited the site to ascertain what actions Biffa were being taken to rectify the matter. The Working Group would establish if a problem still existed and report their findings, conclusions and recommendations to Scrutiny Committee for consideration. It was noted that the Environment Agency was responsible for regulating the site.

It had previously been reported that an odour problem existed with a company

in Rugeley that made pork scratchings and this issue would be investigated.

Scrutiny Task and Finish

Councillor Kraujalis considered that Members of the Working Group should visit another local authority, for example, Staffordshire Moorlands or the County Council, to see how effective their Scrutiny Committees worked. He considered that it may be preferable to have Scrutiny Sub-Committees rather than Policy Development Committees. The findings would be reported back to the Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

Perception of Crime

Councillor J. D. Bernard advised that work was on going by the Council and its partners, to address people's perception of crime. He explained that he would liaise with the Corporate Director on what specifically the Working Group would be looking into.

Anti Social Behaviour

Councillor Miss M. Freeman explained that a meeting had been held with the Police and the Partnership Section. The Working Group would look at what strategies; protocols and systems were in place to tackle anti social behaviour

The Corporate Director advised that draft Terms of Reference for each Working Group would be drawn up and circulated to Members of the Scrutiny Committee for agreement.

44. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the first meeting of Scrutiny Committee in the next Municipal Year was to be held on 4 July, 2013.

The meeting closed at 5.20 pm

CHAIRMAN