

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET

HELD ON THURSDAY, 19 JANUARY, 2012 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
Alcott, G.	Economic Development and Planning 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

116. Apologies

There were no apologies.

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

No declarations were made in addition to, or restated in respect of, those already confirmed by Members in the Register of Members' Interests.

118. Updates from Portfolio Leaders

Culture and Sport

Chase Leisure Centre

The Portfolio Leader advised that work continued to progress on the redevelopment of the leisure centre. The new fitness suite and reception area would be handed over to Wigan Leisure Trust at 12.00 noon on Friday, 10 February, 2012, with a Press preview the day before, and an open evening for Councillors at 5.30 pm on Wednesday, 8 February, 2012. The Corporate Director confirmed that an e-mail invitation had been circulated to Members advising of the dates.

Corporate Improvement

Equalities Act

The Portfolio Leader advised that a briefing session was being arranged for Members to raise

awareness of the implications for them as decision makers in respect of the Equalities Act, 2010, which brings together existing equalities legislation.

Housing

Norton Canes Photovoltaic (Solar) Panels Pilot Scheme

The Portfolio Leader advised that a satisfactory financial appraisal had been received in respect of the company involved in the proposed pilot scheme, and a report would, therefore, be taken to the next Cabinet meeting on 2 February, 2012.

Elizabeth Road Redevelopment Scheme

The Portfolio Leader advised that the scheme remained on schedule, with handover of the first properties due in March, 2012.

Town Centre Regeneration

Hednesford Town Centre Redevelopment

The Portfolio Leader advised that Tesco had now committed to the scheme. A plaque from the former drill hall had been slightly damaged in removing it from the old building for reinstatement, in due course, at the new facility. In response to a question from a colleague, the Portfolio Leader confirmed that, to the best of her knowledge, the bus station would remain operational until such time as the new one was ready for use.

Economic Development and Planning

"Growing Places" Fund Bidding

The Portfolio Leader advised that the Council had submitted bids to both the Greater Birmingham and Solihull L.E.P., and the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire L.E.P. to which it belonged for consideration under the "Growing Places" fund. Initial indications were that the Council was on the "A" list for consideration.

119. Minutes

RESOLVED:

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

120. Forward Plan

Consideration was given to the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period January – March, 2012 (Enclosure 5.1 – 5.2 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period January – March, 2012 be noted.

121. 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) Economic Development and Planning – 12 October; and 8 December, 2011
- (ii) Housing – 23 November, 2011
- (iii) Town Centre Regeneration - 13 December, 2011
- (iv) Health and Wellbeing – 19 December, 2011
- (v) Environment – 6 December, 2011

122. Recommendation(s) from Economic Development and Planning Policy Development Committee – 8 December, 2011

Consideration was given to the following recommendation(s) referred from the Economic Development and Planning Policy Development Committee of 8 December, 2011:

The Work of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP's)

“That Cabinet be recommended to consider the appointment of a dedicated full time officer, on a short term basis, to provide support for the work associated with the Council being involved with two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).”

RESOLVED:

That a dedicated full time officer be appointed, on a short term basis, to provide support for the work associated with the Council being involved with two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).

123. Recommendation(s) from Town Centre Regeneration Policy Development Committee – 13 December, 2011

Consideration of the following recommendation(s) referred from the Town Centre Regeneration Policy Development Committee of 13 December, 2011, was deferred pending discussion as part of the budget setting process:

(i) Proposals for Rugeley Town Centre

“(B) That Cabinet is requested to consider establishing the scheme (the proposal to erect a mining memorial on Globe Island in Rugeley), as a Capital project and:

- (i) making a financial contribution towards the cost of the mining memorial and;
- (ii) authorise Officers to investigate the consents required including liaising

with the Planning and Highways Authorities regarding the proposal.”

(iii) Toilet Provision in Cannock Town Centre

“That Cabinet be requested to investigate Option 3 – Community Toilet Scheme, as detailed in the report and to consider allocating a budget of £10,000 in the 2012-13 Budget to investigate and, if feasible, introduce a Community Toilet Scheme in Cannock town centre on a pilot basis in order to assess its effectiveness, subject to a future review of the Scheme and any wider application to other parts of the District.”

(iv) Proposals for Brook Square, Rugeley

“That Cabinet is requested to note the Committee’s wish to support the principle of a bandstand in Brook Square subject to there being adequate capital resources available to do so and subject to the outcome of the support offered to the Miners Memorial Society.”

RESOLVED:

That consideration of these matters be deferred pending the outcome of the budget setting process.

124. Improvements to the Communal Areas of Communal Entrance Flat Blocks

Consideration was given to the Report of Head of Housing (Enclosure 9.1 – 9.14 of the Official Minutes of the council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The initial programme of proposed improvements to the Council’s communal entrance flat blocks as set out in Annex 2 to the Report be agreed.
- (B) The initial programme of proposed improvements be subject to consultation with tenants and leaseholders.
- (C) Subject to the approval of the proposed Housing Revenue Account Business Plan that the required resources to implement both the initial improvement programme and ongoing maintenance be considered when the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programmes for 2012-13 and future years are formulated.
- (D) Subject to the inclusion of the initial improvement and ongoing maintenance within the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programmes for 2012-13 and future years that:-
 - (i) The Head of Housing following consultation with the Housing Portfolio Leader be authorised to vary the proposed schedule of improvements to address any concerns from Leaseholders and that a further report be submitted to Cabinet if the requested variations are considered to compromise the overall aims of the programme.

- (ii) Scheme approval and permission to spend be granted in respect of the proposed works to communal areas and the replacement of entry phones.
- (iii) A further report be submitted on a proposed design for the replacement entrance halls to the 9 three storey communal entrance flat blocks on the Walsall Road and Moss Road Estates.
- (iv) The Council's agreed service standard for the External Envelope Works Programme be amended to include the initial improvement and ongoing maintenance to the communal areas of communal entrance flat blocks.

Reason(s) for the Decision

A survey of the Council's 31 blocks of communal entrance flats has shown the communal areas to be in a poor condition. The former bin stores also present problems in certain flat blocks whilst a number of door entry systems require renewal.

This report presents an initial programme of works to address these problems. The programme includes proposed improvements to the internal communal areas and the redesign of the communal entrance halls to combat the bin store problems in relation to the 9 three storey blocks. These improvements would be undertaken as an addition to the External Envelope Works Programme in accordance with the agreed seven year cycle as set out in Annex 2. The proposed design for the replacement entrance halls would also be the subject of a further Cabinet report.

The replacement of the door entry systems to the 9 communal entrance flat blocks (again as set out in Annex 2) would be undertaken during 2012-13 through a separate contract.

Provision has been made within the draft HRA Business Plan (to be considered as a separate report elsewhere on your agenda) to meet the cost of these initial improvements and provide for their ongoing maintenance. Subject to the draft HRA Business Plan being approved, it is proposed that consideration is given to implementing the works as part of the HRA Capital Programmes for 2012-13 and future years.

A number of communal entrance flats have been sold on a leasehold basis under the Right to Buy. The Council do, however, remain responsible for maintaining the external fabric and the communal areas, with the cost of the works being recharged on a proportional basis to each leaseholder.

The Council is required to consult with leaseholders before undertaking any maintenance work above £250 and leaseholders may therefore raise concerns about the extent of the proposed works. It is therefore suggested that the Head of Housing following consultation with the Housing Portfolio Leader be authorised to address any leaseholder concerns through a variation to the proposed schedule of improvements, provided that the overall aims of the programme are not compromised. If it is considered that the overall aims will be compromised, a further report will be presented to Cabinet.

125. Housing Revenue Account Business Plan

Consideration was given to the Joint Report of Head of Housing and Head of Financial Management (Enclosure 10.1 – 10.37 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The proposed Housing Revenue Account Business (HRA) Plan (attached as Annex 1 to the Report) and the associated programme of capital expenditure (attached as Annex 2) be agreed and referred to Council on 15 February, 2012 for approval.
- (B) The assumptions used in formulating the HRA Business Plan (attached as Annex 3 to the Report) and the changes in assumptions from the initial HRA Business Plan (attached as Annex 4) are noted including the following key enhancements to the capital expenditure programme as a result of the potential additional expenditure capacity:-
- (i) The reprogramming of the reintroduction of the bathroom replacement programme to commence during the third quarter of year one.
 - (ii) The reprogramming of the completion of the structural reinstatement works to the:-
 - 63 Reema houses on the Moss Road Estate to Year 2.
 - 44 Cornish houses in the Rowley Close area to Year 4.
 - (iii) The enhancement of the service standards for the delivery of the kitchen replacement, electrical upgrading and bathroom replacement programmes.
 - (iv) The extension of the central heating replacement programme to include the replacement of the remaining solid fuel heating systems during years one and two.
 - (v) The introduction of additional planned maintenance programmes in relation to:-
 - Replacement of entry phones in Year 1.
 - Redesign of entrance halls to certain communal entrance flat blocks in Years 1 and 2.
 - Environmental improvements to communal areas in conjunction with the external curtilage works programme commencing in Year 3.
 - (vi) The construction of 50 new Council houses as part of the redevelopment of the Reema flats on the Moss Road Estate, Chadsmoor, commencing in Year 3.
 - (vii) The provision of a contingency budget for unforeseen capital works of £100k per annum throughout the Business Plan period.
- (C) The uncertainties regarding certain key Business Plan assumptions as detailed in the risk analysis (attached as Annex 6 to the Report) be noted including:-

- (i) The interest rate in respect of new Council borrowing to meet the draft £59.762 million settlement payments.
 - (ii) The future sale of Council properties as a result of changes to the Government's Right to Buy Policy.
- (D) The continued transfer of capital receipts generated from Right to Buy sales and the sale of certain vacant one bedroom bungalows to the General Fund Capital Programme for the provision of private sector disabled facilities grants and affordable housing be agreed.
- (E) The proposed HRA Business Plan and associated programme of capital expenditure be used to provide the financial framework for the formulation of three year HRA revenue and capital budgets, for the period 2012-2013 to 2014-2015, by Cabinet on 2 February 2012.
- (F) A further report be submitted (if required) on any significant changes to the proposed HRA Business Plan following the conclusion of the Council's settlement payment borrowing.
- (G) The HRA Business Plan be reviewed annually as part of the budget process.

Reason(s) for the Decision

The report considers a proposed HRA Business Plan which has been formulated to implement the self-financing regime for Council housing finance. This regime will replace the current HRA subsidy system with effect from 1 April 2012.

The proposed HRA Business Plan (attached as Annex 1) and the associated programme of capital expenditure (attached as Annex 2) have been developed from the initial HRA Business Plan which was agreed by Cabinet for consultation on 21 July 2011. In particular, it is based on the draft self-financing determinations in respect of the settlement payment and borrowing cap reported to Cabinet on 15 December 2011.

Account has also been taken of the results of the Initial Business Plan consultation exercise with tenants and the Housing Policy Development Committee, the review of capital scheme service standards considered by Cabinet on 17 November 2011, the condition survey of communal entrance flat blocks (presented as a separate report elsewhere on your agenda) and the need for additional social housing in the Cannock Chase area.

Details of the assumptions used in the draft Business Plan are set out in Annex 3. These present a number of changes from those used in the initial Business Plan as detailed in Annex 4. A risk analysis of key assumptions is also attached as Annex 6.

The proposed HRA Business Plan provides an additional £11 million of potential expenditure capacity compared to the initial Business Plan. Three options have been considered regarding the allocation of this additional capacity namely:-

- (i) Further improvements to the Council's housing stock.

- (ii) The provision of new Council housing.
- (iii) Facilitating the provision of additional social housing by housing associations and private sector disabled facilities grants.

There are, however, a number of advantages in pursuing a combination of all three options. As a result the proposed HRA Business Plan has been developed on the basis that the potential additional capacity of £11 million is used to:-

- (i) Fund £1.3 million of additional improvements to the Council's housing stock.
- (ii) Finance the construction of 50 new Council houses as part of the redevelopment of the Reema flats on the Moss Road Estate, Chadsmoor (£6 million).
- (iii) Facilitate the continued provision of additional social housing (by housing associations) and private sector disabled facilities grants through the continued transfer of capital receipts from RTB sales and the sale of vacant one bedroom bungalows to the General Fund Capital Programme (£3.7 million).

The proposed HRA Business Plan will provide the financial framework for the formulation of the Council's three year HRA revenue and capital budgets. It is therefore suggested that Cabinet base their proposed HRA budgets for the period 2012-13 to 2014-15 on the proposed HRA Business Plan.

The HRA Business Plan will be reviewed annually as part of the budget process. However, should there be any significant changes to the Plan, following the conclusion of the Council's settlement payment borrowing, a further report will be submitted to Cabinet.

126. "Laying the Foundations" – A Housing Strategy for England

Consideration was given to the Joint Report of Head of Housing, Head of Environmental Health, Head of Policy and Head of Planning and Regeneration (Enclosure 11.1 – 11.7 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The contents and implications of the Government's revised national housing strategy for England, "Laying the Foundations" be noted..
- (B) Further reports are considered by the Housing Policy Development Committee and/or Cabinet following the publication of consultation papers by the Department for Communities and Local Government on the matters stated within the report.

Reason(s) for the Decision

The Government have published a revised national housing strategy for England entitled "Laying the Foundations". This strategy will impact on the Council's strategic housing and enabling role and its role as a social housing landlord.

Many of the policies and initiatives are, however, already in place as a result of the Localism Act

2011 and budget announcements, whilst others will be subject to further development through consultation papers to be issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government.

The report therefore presents an overview of the strategy and a preliminary assessment of its implications for the Council. A more detailed analysis of specific policies and initiatives will be the subject of further reports.

The Housing Policy Development Committee have also considered the revised national strategy and their views have been set out in section 5.

127. Land at Corner of Burntwood Road / Brownhills Road, Norton Canes

Consideration was given to the Report of Head of Planning and Regeneration (Enclosure 12.1 – 12.5 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the request for a lease on the terms as set out in paragraph 4.5 of the report be approved.

Reason(s) for the Decision

The land at the junction of Burntwood Road /Brownhills Road occupies a prominent location within Norton Canes but was very simply laid out with grass and two trees. The Parish Council propose seeking funding to enhance the appearance of the land and make it a focal point of the village but in order to do so require Cannock Chase Council to grant a lease of the land concerned.

The Council had previously granted the Parish Council a lease of other land within the village at a peppercorn rental which was developed out as a Millennium garden/ public amenity area. By agreeing to lease the land the Council would assist the Parish Council to secure funding for the landscaping scheme and at the same time pass on the maintenance liability. For these reasons it was recommended that the proposal be supported.

128. Update on Partnership Activity

Consideration was given to the Report of Head of Policy (Enclosure 12.1 – 12.5 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The revised structures and priorities in relation to local Partnership working be noted.
- (B) The update on the Partnership Delivery Plan be noted, reports be received on a monthly basis with updates on Partnership activity in the District.

Reason(s) for the Decision

The report was intended to provide an overview of the wide-range of work being co-ordinated

by the Partnership Team and to embed Partnership working in the mainstream decision-making processes. It was, therefore, recommended that Cabinet:

- (i) Note the revised structures and priorities in relation to local Partnership working;
- (ii) Note the update on the Partnership Delivery Plan and, agree to receive reports on a monthly basis with updates on Partnership activity in the District.

129. 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(s) 3, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

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IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 2

130. 91 – 93 High Green, Cannock

Consideration was given to the Not for Publication Report of Head of Planning and Regeneration (Enclosure 15.1 – 15.9 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) Disposal of 91-93 High Green, Cannock, be approved through either the disposal of the freehold interest in, or the grant of a long lease of, 91-93 High Green, Cannock on terms and conditions to be approved by the Head of Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Leader for Corporate Improvement with the aim of maximising the financial return to the Council.
- (B) Relocation of the existing tenant of 91-93 High Green to alternative Council owned premises at 29-31 Park Road, Cannock, be approved on terms and conditions to be negotiated by the Head of Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Leader for Corporate Improvement.
- (C) Relocation of the Chase Tenants and Residents Federation to alternative accommodation be approved in accordance with principles agreed in paragraph 4.10 of the Report, on terms and conditions to be negotiated by the Head of Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Leader for Corporate Improvement.

Reason(s) for the Decision

As part of the property review process associated with Delivering Change for 2011/12, Council owned property at 91-93 High Green, Cannock was identified as a potential property for disposal. In order to generate a capital receipt the options are:

- (i) the disposal of the freehold interest in 91-93 High Green, Cannock, or;
- (ii) the grant of a long lease of 91-93 High Green, Cannock

The meeting closed at 6.35 pm.

LEADER