

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 3 NOVEMBER AT 4.00 P.M.
AT THE CAXTON COURT SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEME, CAXTON STREET,
CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT:
Councillors

Kraujalis, J.T. (Chairman)
Preece, J. (Vice-Chairman)

Ball, G.D.	Burley, Mrs. J.L.
Bernard, Mrs. A.F.	Dixon, D.I.
	Sutton, Mrs. H.M. (substitute)

9. Tour of the Caxton Court Sheltered Housing Scheme

Prior to considering the formal business of the meeting, the Committee received a tour of the Caxton Court Sheltered Housing Scheme from the Scheme Manager.

Following the tour, residents gave positive feedback on the Scheme and identified a few areas for improvement, including the provision of wi-fi access within the Scheme.

The Scheme Manager reported she had raised this matter with ICT Services earlier in the year, but had been advised that wi-fi installation was not possible at the time.

The Head of Housing & Waste Management then advised that he would follow this matter up with the Head of Technology.

10. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors F.W.C. Allen, Mrs A. Allt (substituted by Cllr. Mrs. H.M. Sutton), Mrs. M.A. Davis (invitee) and Mrs. D. Grice.

11. 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.

12. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 August, 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed.

13. Housing – Place – Improvement Living Environment Quarter 1

Consideration was given to the Housing – Place – Improved Living Environment Priority Delivery Plan (PDP) 2014-15 quarter one performance update (Item 3.1 – 3.4 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the Housing – Place – Improved Living Environment Priority Delivery Plan 2014-15 quarter one performance update be noted.

14. Cannock Chase Housing Market Assessment – Summer 2014

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Housing & Waste Management (Item 4.1 – 4.16 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Head of Housing & Waste Management drew Members' attention to the following key aspects of the report:

- National average house prices had grown 10.7% since last year; however this was heavily weighted towards London and the South East. Excluding those two areas out of the calculation brought the national average down to an increase of only 4.3%, which was more in line with the local average increase.
- The average house price for Cannock Chase at the end of June 2014 was the second lowest in Staffordshire, and lower than the neighbouring authorities of Lichfield, South Staffordshire and Stafford.
- The District average was again below both the county and regional averages. The gap between the District and County had increased by 0.2% over the past year, whereas the gap between the District and region had dropped by 4% to 16%.
- The average house price for the District was over 6 times average income, whilst affordability had improved slightly compared to the previous year, home ownership was still out of reach for many people due to the District having some of the lowest income levels in the county.
- As a result of the above, local Estate Agents report that the private sector rental market was buoyant, with demand for such properties increasing year on year. The average rental income had increased by 1.2% from last year, up to £511 per calendar month.

- All lettings agents had reported improved performance across both sales and lettings, but cautioned against the prospect of another property boom happening, suggesting that more realistic property values in the area (compared to the national average) were the main factor for the market being more resilient and stable locally.

The Chairman queried if the Council provided any incentives to help local people buy properties in the area.

The Head of Housing & Waste Management replied that the Council was a member of the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme, which helped to provide buyers with a 95% mortgage on 'second-hand' properties, with the Council guaranteeing the final 20% of the mortgage (i.e. the amount above 75%). The Scheme had been operating since December 2012 with 28 successful purchases being completed to date. The Council had a guaranteed loan of £2m with Lloyds Bank in order to administer the Scheme.

The Chairman then queried if there was any shared ownership properties available in the District.

The Head of Housing & Waste Management replied that new shared ownership properties had reduced since the introduction of 'Home Buy', as Home Buy was more financially beneficial to tenants in the longer term. He further advised that 20 'shared equity' properties were being built as part of the Moss Road redevelopment.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Housing Market Assessment (as shown at Appendix 1 to the report) be noted.

15. Work Programme – 2014-15 Municipal Year

Consideration was given to the Committee's updated work programme for 2014-15.

RESOLVED:

That the updated Housing Policy Development Committee work programme for 2014-15 be approved.

The meeting closed at 4:50pm

CHAIRMAN