

**CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
**TUESDAY, 28 JUNE, 2011 AT 4.00 P.M.**  
**IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK**

**PART 1**

PRESENT: Councillors

Whitehouse, Mrs. L. (Chairman)  
Todd, R. (Vice-Chairman)

Alcott, G.                      Jones, Ms. J. L.  
Burnett, G.                     Spicer, Mrs. A.  
Davies, D. N.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. J. Holder and R. Jones.

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

No declarations of interests were received.

**3. Minutes**

Concern was raised that, as previously agreed, the details of the consultation responses received in relation to the Housing Provision on Land West of Pye Green Road had not been provided to Members. The Head of Planning & Regeneration apologised for this and explained that, although this information had been provided to all Members through the Cabinet reports process, the details would be forwarded to Members of the Committee this week.

AGREED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 March, 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed.

**4. Consultation from Department for Communities and Local Government – Relaxation of Planning Controls for Change of use from Commercial to Residential**

Consideration was given to the Report (Enclosure 4.1 – 4.7 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Head of Planning & Regeneration explained that the Planning Control Committee at its meeting on 1 June, 2011 had initially considered the Report and requested that this Committee consider the issues raised and make comments for the Cabinet Portfolio Leader for Economic Development and Planning to consider as part of the Council's formal response to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) by 30 June, 2011.

The Planning Services Manager provided a summary of what the DCLG's proposals were with respect to the relaxation of planning controls for change of use from commercial to residential. It was explained that the Government considered that one of the key barriers to increasing housing supply was to address the mismatch between the under supply of premises for housing and an over supply of premises for commercial uses. The Committee was informed that the key proposal was to grant automatic rights for change of use from B1(business) to C3 (dwelling houses). However, the Government was also consulting on additional permitted development rights for changes of use were appropriate for:-

- Allowing change of use from B2 (general industry) and B8 (storage and distribution) to C3; and
- Widening the opportunity to convert unused space above a shop into flats (currently the permitted development right allowed for one flat to be provided above a shop (A1) or a financial and professional service use (A2) without the need for planning permission)

The Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order grouped uses into classes and planning permission was not required to change from one use to another if they were both in the same class. The Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 also permitted certain changes between classes.

Where external alterations to buildings or new build was proposed, these would have to go through the normal planning application process. It was reported that agricultural buildings were not covered by these proposals and applications for change of use of these buildings would continue to require planning permission.

Officers were of the opinion that whilst in cities there might be many vacant office buildings suitable for conversion in locations that had good access to services, this was not the case in Cannock Chase and the potential supply of new dwellings would therefore be very limited. The district was on target to deliver the proposed 5,800 dwellings as proposed in the draft Core Strategy such that there was no local evidence of an under supply of housing. It was explained that should the proposals be implemented there would be not be the opportunity to negotiate S106 agreements for the provision of affordable housing or community facilities.

The Head of Planning and Regeneration explained that office work was an important sector of the local employment market which the Core Strategy policy was aiming to build on, and the loss of this type of building to residential use would be contrary to this.

A Member considered that the former National Coal Board offices in Allport Street was an example of how offices could be successfully converted to residential use. The Planning Services Manager explained that this was in a residential area but other commercial developments could be inappropriately located with the potential for 'bad neighbour' uses following conversion to residential. In response to the view expressed by Members that a more positive response to the proposal be made, Officers suggested that deregulation could be delivered in a positive manner which respects local circumstances by the use of Local Development Orders to grant automatic permission for change of use from class B to C3 in appropriate locations, rather than use of a nationally prescriptive process. Members agreed that this was a suitable response.

AGREED

- (A) That the Portfolio Leader for Economic Development & Planning agrees a response to the Department for Communities and Local Government on the relaxation of planning controls for change of use from commercial to residential uses which takes into account the views of the Committee, and in particular considers the principle of a positive response, subject to local control on appropriate locations for application of the relaxations.
- (B) A copy of the response be forwarded to Members of the Committee.

**5. Consultation from Department for Communities and Local Government – Draft Planning Policy Statement Relating to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

Consideration was given to the Report (Enclosure 5.1 – 5.5 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

It was explained that the views of the Committee were being sought for the Cabinet Portfolio for Economic Development & Planning to consider as part of the Council's formal response to the consultation deadline of 6 July, 2011.

The Planning Services Manager gave an overview of the Government's proposals to change national policy guidance for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople. The proposals were designed to give local planning authorities powers to meet the needs for site provision in their area, in consultation with local communities.

It was reported that currently there were 5 gypsy traveller sites in the area. The Planning Services Manager explained that the Government was committed to ensuring fairness in the planning system and applications from travellers for development on Green Belt would be dealt with in exactly the same way as applications from members of the settled community. The Committee considered that there should be extra enforcement powers to deal with unauthorised sites.

AGREED

That:-

- (A) The proposed responses contained within the report should form the basis for the Portfolio Leader for Economic Development & Planning's formal response to the Department for Communities and Local Government on the draft Planning Policy Statement relating to gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople.
- (B) A copy of the formal response be forwarded to Members of the Committee.

(The meeting closed at 5.35 p.m.)

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CHAIRMAN