

**CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
**HELD ON THURSDAY, 28 MARCH, 2013 AT 4.00 P.M.**  
**IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK**

**PART 1**

PRESENT: Councillors

Lovell, A. (Chairman)

Alcott, G.  
Gamble, B.

Jones, Ms. J. L.  
Sutherland, M.  
Todd, R.

(It was noted that Councillor L. Whitehouse was in attendance in place of Councillor J. Jones being a named substitute and advance notice having been given in accordance with the terms of the scheme.)

**24. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G. Alcott, D. Davies, Ms. J. Jones and M. Sutherland.

**25. 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.

**26. Minutes**

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November, 2012. It was reported that with regard to the issues identified regarding bus services, Officers had liaised with Arriva who had reported that Senior Management would be willing to meet with Officers and Members from the Council to enable the transport concerns raised to be discussed. A date to meet with Ariva was being identified.

The Head of Planning and Regeneration explained that Cabinet had considered the Committee's recommendation with regard to the Cannock Chase Visitor Economy. It was reported that Cabinet had reaffirmed their support for the activities of the Staffordshire Destination Partnership and its contribution to local employment provision and efforts to strengthen the local economy.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November, 2012 be approved as a correct

record and signed.

## **27. Cannock Chase District Integrated Transport Strategy**

It was reported that County Councillor M. Maryon had submitted his apology for not being able to attend. Senior Officers from the County Council would be invited to attend the next meeting of the Committee, together with the Portfolio Leader for Highways and Transport to discuss the Integrated Transport Strategy. It was reported that Councillor Maryon was not standing for re-election.

RESOLVED:

That Senior Officers from the County Council, together with the Portfolio Leader for Highways and Transport be invited to the next meeting of the Committee in order that the Cannock Chase District Integrated Transport Strategy could be further considered.

## **28. Tackling Youth Unemployment: Local Responses**

### 18-24 Unemployment Update

The Planning & Economic Development Services Manager advised that he had circulated data with the agenda relating to the number of those aged 18-24 that were unemployed. He explained that through ill health it had not been possible for the Director of Workforce Development, South Staffordshire College on behalf of Chase Community Partnerships to attend nor the representatives from Tesco plc.

Members expressed their disappointment that Tesco had not been able to send a representative to the meeting, particularly in view of the size of the organisation. The Planning & Economic Development Services Manager agreed to relate the concerns of the Committee back to them.

The Planning & Economic Development Services Manager advised that there had been a steady decline in unemployment and youth unemployment. Seasonal changes had taken place when extra staff had been taken on over the Christmas period. It was explained that unemployment rates in Cannock Chase were consistent with the County and National levels.

Concern was raised as to the accuracy of the figures provided. The Planning & Economic Development Services Manager advised that Nomis was a service provided by the Office for National Statistics and gave access to the most detailed and up to date labour market statistics from official sources. Data was available on population, employment, unemployment, qualifications, earnings, benefit claimants and businesses. The information was available by Regional, National, County, District, Ward, LEAs, and 2010 Parliamentary Constituency levels. He agreed to circulate a copy of the report detailing the district profile to Members of the Committee.

### Current Policies in Context

The Committee received a presentation from Tina Evans, Partnership Manager, Staffordshire and Shropshire District, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Carol Hemming from the DWP was also in attendance

It was explained that those claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) in February 2013 in Cannock Chase were -

All people 2,285 (aged 16-64)  
Up to 6 months – 1350  
Over 6 months and up to 12 months – 310  
Over 12 months – 620

Age 18-24 – total 715 (8.6% of Cannock figures)  
Up to 6 months – 475 (5.7%)  
Over 6 months and up to 12 months – 100 (1.2%)  
Over 12 months – 140 (1.7%)

Jobcentre Plus provided Adviser support to those aged 16-17 applying for JSA and an assessment of their needs was carried out to ascertain what skills they required to access the jobs market and they helped to overcome any barriers that might be making it difficult for them to attain work.

Those unemployed aged 18-24 from week 39 and those aged 25+ from week 52 had to attend a mandatory Work Programme for a further 104 weeks. It was explained that the Work Programme was voluntary for disadvantaged groups, at the discretion of the Adviser, with the exception of those ex-offenders who were mandated from day one to attend. Those identified as not trying to move forward and not attending the Work Programme could have hefty benefit sanctions imposed against them.

The Partnership Manager gave an overview of the Jobcentre Plus offer and explained that it consisted of 4 elements. The core mandatory interventions which included new jobseekers interview, minimum fortnightly face to face Jobsearch Review, and Work Programme referral interview. Flexible Interventions – the Adviser would determine the frequency, duration and content by assessing the support the claimant needed through a diagnostic interview. Access to a flexible menu of Back to Work support and to the Flexible Support Fund and support contract provision. Job Centre Plus offered a flexible range of back to work support. This included careers advice, exploring different work options, and work trials being undertaken. Help was also given towards childcare costs where needed.

The Youth Contract offered a range of additional help to ensure that every unemployed young person who needed support, would get it. There were to be an extra 250,000 work experience opportunities provided nationally. Sector-based work academy places were to be provided over the next three years, to ensure that there was an offer of a place for every 18 to 24 year old before they entered the Work Programme. There were 160,000 new wage incentives worth up to £2,275 each for employers who recruited an 18-24 year old from the Work Programme or Jobcentre Plus to a job expected to last at least 26 weeks. A further 20,000 Apprenticeship Grants for Employers (AGE) to encourage small or medium sized businesses to recruit their first 16-24 year old apprentice. Around £120m was being provided to help the most vulnerable 16-17 year old NEETs (not in education, employment or training) back into education, training or a job with training.

Other measures to get people into work included:

- Work Clubs
- Work Experience
- New Enterprise Allowance
- Enterprise Clubs

A new Universal Jobmatch service launched in November 2012, was seen as a way to help improve the way people could search and apply for jobs. People were able to access the service from a home computer or anywhere with internet access. It was free to use, subject to internet provider charges, and available 24/7, with people able to create and manage their own account online.

It was explained that those claiming JSA had a responsibility to look for work and had to take steps each week that they could reasonably be expected to undertake to ensure they had the best prospects of securing employment.

It was reported that the DWP was working with the County Council with regard to getting transport links to employment. They engaged with as many businesses as possible to promote the incentives available. Projects were undertaken with troubled families, i.e. those with a history of worklessness to try to break down any barriers.

A Member advised that she attended regular meetings of small and medium sized businesses and had not been aware of some of the incentives available. The DWP representatives were invited to send a representative to a future employers meeting to provide further information.

Members requested that a copy of the presentation be forwarded to them.

#### Local Responses (LSP)

The Planning & Economic Services Manager advised that he would invite representatives from South Staffordshire College and Tesco to future meetings of the Committee fitting within the Work Programme for next year.

It was reported that the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) was endeavouring to address problems in Cannock Chase, particularly with respect to health and economic issues. An Enterprise and Skills Board had been set up under the guidance of Graham Morley, the Chief Executive & Principal at the South Staffordshire College who had agreed to oversee projects for a 12 month period. An initiative had been identified with regard to apprenticeships being taken on locally and an amount of £50,000 had been set aside for this. It was explained that those taking on an apprentice would receive an additional payment of £1,000 on top of a similar amount payable by the National Apprenticeship Service. However, this would increase to £1,500 for those taking on an apprentice from the Blake area, as this was being focused upon by the LSP. The Committee was advised that Council had also identified an amount of £50,000 in its budget for the year 2014-15 to enable the project to continue. Members requested an update on progress at a future meeting of the Committee.

### Tesco partnerships Approach

The Planning & Economic Development Services Manager provided an update with regard to the Tesco stores in Hednesford and Rugeley. He advised that both stores had been designated Tesco Partnerships stores which provided pre-employment training to unemployed people with a guaranteed job for those who complete the training course. This approach had been used at Hednesford and would also be carried out at the Rugeley store.

At Hednesford a series of open days had been attended by approximately of 500 JSA claimants of which 100 were selected for the Tesco Partnership training programme which extended over ten weeks. Of those attending 94 people had completed the course and had been guaranteed jobs, of which 34 were aged under 25..

The Planning & Economic Development Services Manager advised that Rugeley was to be a slightly smaller store. It was understood that there would be approximately 250 jobs available in total of which 80 were to be filled by those currently claiming JSA, and it was anticipated that a similar ratio of one-third would be in the 18-24 age group. It was reported that a small percentage of existing staff may request to be relocated from Hednesford to the Rugeley store. It was anticipated that recruitment open days for the Rugeley store would also be held. The Committee was advised that Tesco preferred to appoint locally and from the long term unemployed and disadvantaged as much as possible.

### **29. Performance Outturn Updates – Quarter 3**

The Head of Planning & Regeneration advised that overall a positive picture was indicated in quarter 3.

He explained that the most recent measure of the employment figures indicated a local rate of 63.7% compared to a regional rate of 67.6% and a national rate of 70.3%. However the data was based on the Annual Population Survey which suffered from low confidence levels at district level. Therefore the reliability of the data could change by 8% either side and should be treated with caution.

A Member suggested that when the planned improvement works were carried out on Hednesford Park, this could potentially create some new job opportunities..

### **30. Community Infrastructure Levy Update**

The Committee received a presentation from the Planning Projects Officer.

It was reported that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was a tax which would be levied on most forms of built development, with the exception of affordable housing and development by charities. The liability to pay CIL arose when planning permission was granted following a charging schedule being adopted. The levy would be applied in £s per square metre on the net increase in floorspace proposed. It was explained that the levy could be paid 'in kind' e.g. land provided by a developer to a local authority, subject to a valuation procedure. CIL would be used to fund infrastructure required to deliver the policies and proposals in the Local Plan, including ongoing maintenance costs. Infrastructure included roads and other transport

facilities, flood defences, education, medical, sport and recreation facilities and open spaces. Affordable housing was currently not included and would continue to be dealt with via planning obligations (S106). Funds would be passed to Parish Councils and Community Forums where development was proposed in a Local Plan. Where there was a Neighbourhood Plan in place, 25% of CIL funds would go to the relevant Parish/Neighbourhood Forum, elsewhere the amount would be 15%.

In order for a CIL to be set up, an up to date adopted Local Plan with an accompanying Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) was needed to be in place. Evidence was needed that there was a requirement for some funding to be obtained via CIL in order to deliver projects in the IDP. There would be a requirement to show that the CIL rates proposed to be set for specific categories of development, e.g. residential, business, retail, would not, in general terms, make developments required to deliver the policies and proposals in the Local Plan, unviable. Different rates could be set in separate geographical locations if evidence supported this. There was a requirement to consult on the preliminary draft charging schedule and list of infrastructure projects. After taking account of comments received, a draft charging schedule would be published which would be considered at an Examination chaired by an Independent Inspector. Subject to the Inspector being satisfied that the legal tests had been met and that the Council had responded to any recommendations for modifying the charging schedule that were made by the Inspector, it would then be adopted.

The Planning Projects Officer advised that the 2010 CIL Regulations gave statutory effect to the previous policy tests that a planning obligation could only constitute a reason for granting planning permission where it was 'necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development'. In addition no funding of an infrastructure project could be sought via a planning obligation where 5 or more separate obligations had already been entered into to provide funding for that project. The limit of 5 comes into force in April 2014 with a count back to April 2010. This would, in effect, mean that the use of 'pooled contributions' from several developments to provide facilities such as a new classroom at a school or a new/improved children's play area, would become limited. Careful consideration would need to be given to which projects were to be included in the S123 list which accompanied the CIL Charging Schedule, as S106 funding could not be sought for these. However, if no list was produced, the Regulations provide that no S106 funding could be sought for any other purpose than affordable housing. The list could be reviewed on an annual basis to reflect changing priorities or sources of funding.

It was reported that evidence on viability had been produced as a joint piece of work with Lichfield and Tamworth Councils by the District Valuer. Only residential and retail developments had been identified as potentially viable in parts of Cannock Chase, with no other development types being identified as viable.

The IDP was being updated with cost estimates and indications of whether CIL, S106 and other funding sources, e.g. direct from service/infrastructure providers, and Government, were available or needed. This included discussions by the Council on open space sport, recreation, education and transport matters with the County Council and the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation partnership on mitigating the impact of additional visitor pressure.

The Planning Projects Officer advised that further work on viability would need to be carried out, specifically to more accurately reflect the commitments currently being made by house builders in the district to complete S106 agreements, which included a wide range of infrastructure provision and affordable housing. This indicated that new residential development was viable across Cannock Chase.

It was reported that the key issues to resolve and proposed timescales were:

- Complete analysis of viability issues July, 2013
- Complete outstanding work on IDP costings and identify which projects need support from CIL in conjunction with internal and external service providers. September, 2013
  - Internal – open space, sport and recreation facilities
  - External – Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation partnership mitigation of impact of new housing on the SAC
    - County Council – education and transport
- Obtain Cabinet approval to consult on preliminary draft charging schedule December, 2013
- Taking into account comments received, obtain Cabinet approval to publish draft charging schedule March, 2014
- Examination into draft charging schedule June, 2014
- Adoption of charging schedule September, 2014

It was reported that the only adopted charging schedule in the West Midlands was currently Shropshire's which was charging housing development at a rate of £40 per square metre in urban areas and £80 per square metre in rural areas. Other draft charging schedules were out to consultation. The Planning Projects Officer explained that from general experience in districts outside the south-east, it was considered that only residential and retail developments would pass the viability tests.

The Committee requested that their thanks be conveyed to Officers for the considerable amount of work that they had undertaken with respect to the Community Infrastructure Levy.

### 31. **Work Programme Review**

Consideration was given to the Work Programme 2013-14.

Members considered that the following subjects should be included:

- Developing successful responses to youth unemployment

18-24 Unemployment figures  
Tesco Partnerships Approach

- Cannock Chase Integrated Transport Strategy
- Performance Reports
- Community Infrastructure Levy

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CHAIRMAN

(The meeting closed at 6.15 p.m.)