

**CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
**THURSDAY 27 FEBRUARY, 2014 AT 4.00 P.M.**  
**IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK**

**PART 1**

PRESENT:  
Councillors

Spicer, Mrs. A. (Chairman)  
Ball, G.D. (Vice-Chairman)

Allt, Mrs. A.                      Jones, R.  
Cartwright, Mrs. S.M.      Todd, Mrs. D.M.

External Advisors also in attendance:      Mark Watkins – St. Modwen Developments  
Natal Chapman – Cannock Shopping Centre  
Paul Brewer – JVA  
Graham Hunt – Staffordshire County Council

**29. Apologies**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs. L.M. Whitehouse.

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

No other Declarations of Interests were made in addition to those already confirmed by Members in the Register of Members' Interests.

**31. Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December, 2013 be approved as a correct record.

**32. Exclusion of 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 3, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).



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**PART 2**

**33. Discussion on Town Centre Issues – The Future of Town Centres**

The Head of Planning and Regeneration explained that the meeting had been arranged so that the Committee could debate the challenges facing town centres and to consider options to respond to these challenges. He welcomed the external advisors to the meeting – Graham Hunt, Staffordshire County Council, Natal Chapman, Cannock Shopping Centre Manager, Paul Brewer, JVA and Mark Watkins, St. Modwen Developments. These representatives had been invited to share their retail experience with Members of the Committee in order to assist the discussion.

The Planning and Economic Development Services Manager led Members through the Briefing Note (Item 5.1 – 5.25) which outlined detailed issues associated with the District's three town centres in the context of the following issues:

- The Future of Town Centres
- Investment in Redevelopment Schemes
- Car Parking Issues

In summary, the outcome of the various studies undertaken was that town centres cannot survive by relying on their historic functions; they need to change in order to survive. Local Authorities played an important role as they would need to work with partners to identify a future vision for their town centres.

He displayed plans which identified the principal streets in each of the town centres. Also circulated was a list of six questions regarding the future of the District's town centres in order to stimulate the debate together with information outlining comparative short stay car park charges as at January 2014 and car park tickets sales (2010-2014).

The views of Members of the Committee and the external advisors were sought to establish their thoughts and ideas on what the town centres should be like in the future and what elements were considered to be important. The external representatives shared their experiences to give the Committee an idea of what they considered to be important in order to improve the town centres.

The Committee noted that the conclusion of the Portas Review was that shopping

habits and preferences have changed and town centres need to provide something new. There was a general view that town centres would need to provide a broader mix of commercial and other uses and consideration should be given to:-

- Creating a smaller retail core within each town centre
- Establishing modern shopping facilities within the town centres
- The contribution of markets
- More food and drink establishments
- More service based uses
- More residential development

The external representatives and Members of the Committee also gave their views and shared their experiences with regard to:

- the Business Rates Discount Scheme initiative
- car parking provision - whether car parking charges should be reviewed to encourage more visits to the town centres
- enabling town centres to compete more effectively and complement out of town retail developments
- the need for a more pro-active approach to town centre regeneration and designating specific locations for redevelopment.

Consideration was given to the figures regarding ticket sales and usage of the car parks within the town centres. Members discussed whether there was a need to review the charges so as to provide value for money car parking provision which could compete with out of town retail developments. Additionally, the Committee noted the figures relating to footfall in the town centres during each month in comparison to the previous year.

The Committee considered that it was clear that the offer of the town centres needed to be refreshed. The debate with the external representatives was a good starting point for the Committee in assisting them to formulate initiatives and ideas to support the improvement of the District's town centres.

Following a lengthy debate, it was RESOLVED:

- (A) That the Committee note the national level proposals for the future of town centres as outlined in the briefing note.
- (B) That the Committee supported a pro-active approach to town centre regeneration and actively encouraged the process of reinvention by designating specific locations for redevelopment.
- (C) That the Committee had support for a review of car parking charges so as to ensure what is provided is value for money and can compete and complement out of town retail developments.
- (D) That the Committee agreed that the offer available within the town centres needed to be refreshed.

(E) That feedback from the meeting would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee scheduled for 12 March, 2014.

The meeting finished at 5.55 p.m.

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CHAIRMAN