

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 11 JULY, 2011 AT 4.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors

Gilbert, P. (Chairman)
Grice, Mrs. D. (Vice-Chairman)

Beddows, J.	Jones, Ms. J. L.
Bernard, Mrs. A. F.	Jones, R.
Bernard, J.D.	Morgan, C.W.J.
Grocott, M. R.	Todd, R.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. R. Green, M. J. Holder, Mrs. A. Spicer, and A. Williams.

2. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restrictions on Voting by Members and Party Whip Declarations

<u>Member</u>	<u>Nature of Interest</u>	<u>Type</u>
Grocott, M. R.	Wife works at Fair Oak Business & Enterprise College	Personal

No party whip declarations were received.

3 Minutes

A Member expressed concern that there were only 4 NEET hotspots in Cannock Chase listed on page 24 of the Minutes and that there were hotspots in other Wards not named.

The Policy and Performance Manager explained that these Wards had been identified by the Local Area Agreement as being particular hotspots during 2008-11. With the abolition of the Local Area Agreements (LAAs) it was considered that in future more precise local information would be collated. The Chief Executive reported that the Council was working, together with its partners, to address local areas of concern. The Blake Project is a pilot scheme and, if successful, similar schemes would be rolled out to other areas.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 March, 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed.

4. Annual Performance Report – 2010-11

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Executive (Enclosure 4.1 – 4.15 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Policy and Performance Manager explained that the Annual Report summarised the end of year outturn and the performance throughout the year of the Council's Priority Delivery Plans.

During the year a number of changes implemented by Central Government had affected performance management considerations and these were summarised on page 4 of the report. With the abolition of the LAAs the emphasis in future will shift from the need to meet national requirements to local discretion concerning performance targets. The annual LAA performance information has not been received from County partners and therefore did not form part of the Annual Report received by the Committee. It was reported that the Corporate Plan 2011-14 and supporting Priority Delivery Plans (PDPs) for 2011-12 had been agreed by Council and Scrutiny Committee would continue to monitor the delivery of the Council's PDPs throughout the year.

It was reported that for the former National Indicators that were reported on during the year 2010/11 performance had improved for nine indicators, three remained at a similar level and four indicators showed a decline in performance. Due to a lack of data from partners, information was not available for five performance indicators.

The following key issues were outlined:-

Corporate Improvement

The Chase Community Partnership had gone through a period of significant change and development. The refreshed Sustainable Community Strategy identified the priorities and the new Local Strategic Partnership structure and framework for delivery.

Concern was raised that under the Connecting Communities programme a project had been undertaken over an 18 month period by community workers trained by Birmingham University to 'clean up' and champion the Etching Hill area. However the students had received no recognition for this work and it was considered that an evaluation of the scheme was required in order for it to count towards the qualification to which the residents were working.

Culture and Sport

Attendance at the Council's leisure and culture activities continued to grow. The increase in attendances at the Chase It programme exceeded target by 57%; over 58,000 attendances were recorded at Play Ranger activities and over 1,900 new leisure memberships were received, generating income of over £500,000.

A Ward Member expressed annoyance that a letter had been received by Parish Councils informing them that the District Council would not, in future, be organising the Lantern Parades and that District Councillors had not been notified. It was explained that the Street Wardens, who had formerly carried out this initiative, had been made redundant.

Economic Development

Over the last 12 months the Council had provided work experience opportunities for over 50 young people through the Future Jobs Fund, with more than half going on to secure employment or structured training programmes. Work was continuing with partners to ensure more job opportunities for residents, including the Whitbread development in Rugeley where over half the new jobs were secured by local people.

Members were concerned that the land for the Tesco development in Rugeley was in a poor state and that land obtained could stand empty for sometime. Members considered that a more aggressive approach should be taken. The Chief Executive informed the Committee that Officers met with developers to endeavour to ascertain the time scales involved, but it was important that they were not deterred. He would report the concerns back to the appropriate Officers.

The news that Amazon was opening a new distribution centre in Rugeley with the creation of 700 new jobs was welcomed by the Committee and it was considered that Officers should be congratulated for their work in this connection.

Environment

During 2010/11 the blue wheeled bins for recycling had been successfully rolled out to approximately 41,000 properties. Recycling rates had increased significantly and the focus was to continue to reduce the amount of waste to landfill.

With respect to community safety, the Right Stuff project had been launched to target young people who could be at risk of becoming involved in anti social behaviour or other crime related issues.

Housing

The Decent Homes Standard had been achieved for all Council properties. Work had included replacing obsolete kitchens and ageing central heating systems had been replaced. The Council would continue to maintain the standards of properties and develop further affordable homes in Cannock Chase.

A Member considered that the Committee should discuss, as part of the work programme, NI187 – tackling fuel poverty - % of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating.

Health and Wellbeing

The Council had been working with partners in the Tobacco Control Alliances to tackle the supply and use of illicit tobacco. Other health initiatives included the continuation of the 'Good Life' project which included a 'kids do dinner' scheme to improve the cookery skills of young people. Information on the project was available on the Good Life website.

A Member considered that, in addition to smoking being banned from Council buildings, it should also not be allowed on Council grounds.

Town Centre Regeneration

The regeneration scheme for Hednesford Town Centre had been approved and work had commenced on site. The scheme included retail and leisure facilities with the potential creation of over 600 jobs.

RESOLVED:

That:-

- (A) The performance information relating to Priority Delivery Plans (PDPs) as detailed at Annexes 1a, 2a, 3a, 4a, 5a, 6a, and 7a be noted and approved. From a total of 232 actions and indicators reported during 2010/11, 184 (79.3%) had been rated green.
- (B) The financial information relating to PDPs as detailed at Annexes 1b, 2b, 3b, 4b, 5b, 6b, and 7b, be noted.
- (C) The actions and indicators which are rated Red or Amber and the associated commentary by the Lead Officer be noted, and that the following further information be provided to assist Members in their Scrutiny function:-
 - i) The success of the Tobacco Control Alliance and the number of those that had given up smoking;
 - (ii) With respect to the delivery of the 10 projects with schools to raise awareness of healthy living, whether the new art pieces for the trail referred to had been created.
 - (iii) NI 156 – The definition of “temporary” with respect to the time households stayed in temporary accommodation.
- (D) The attendance of Cannock Chase Council Officers at the next meeting was not requested.
- (E) It be noted that due to the abolition of the National Indicator Set and the unavailability of Local Area Agreement 2010/11 annual performance information this report relates only to the performance of the Council’s Priority Delivery Plans and the performance indicators for which the District Council was responsible for during 2010/11.

5. Determination of Work Programme 2011-12

Consideration was given to items to be included in the Work Programme for 2011-12.

RESOLVED:

That the following items be included in the Work Programme:-

- (A) Shared services
- (B) A representative from Hagley Park Sports College be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the dip in exam results.
- (C) Decline in performance that the Police and Council are dealing with anti social behaviour and crime issues.

6. Determination of the Membership of the Delivering Change Panel

Consideration was given to determination of the membership of the Delivering Change Panel. It was noted that in accordance with the current political balance the, Panel would be made up as follows:-

- 3 – Labour
- 2 – Conservatives
- 2 – Liberal Democrats

RESOLVED:

That the Membership of the Delivering Change Panel be noted and that the Labour and Liberal Democrat Group Leaders be contacted accordingly. Councillors J. Bernard and J. Beddows were appointed to the Panel from the Conservative Group.

CHAIRMAN