



## **Cannock Chase Council**

### **Council Meeting**

**Wednesday 20 January 2021 at 6:00pm**

**Meeting to be held via Remote Access**

#### **Part 1**

Notice is hereby given of the above mentioned meeting of the Council which you are summoned to attend for the purpose of transacting the business set out below:-

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

To declare any interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

Members should refer to the guidance included as part of this agenda.

- 3. Minutes**

To confirm the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 25 November 2020, Minute Nos. 42 – 55; Page Nos. 37 – 56.

- 4. Questions Received from the Public under Council Procedure Rule 4B(c)**

- (i) To receive the following question submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4B(c) by Mick Davey:**

“Does the closure of Lea hall coal mine 25 January 1991 and the following closure of the Rugeley A Power station in 1994 and Rugeley B Power Station 8 June 2016 have significant health benefits for the population of Rugeley and the surrounding villages e.g., people with pulmonary diseases for example Asthma and C.O.P.D. and could an enquiry be set up to examine the benefits and problems of Rugeley and the adjacent villages?”

**5. The Chairman's Announcements and Correspondence**

To receive any Announcements and Correspondence from the Chairman of the Council.

**6. The Leader's Announcements and Correspondence**

To receive any Announcements and Correspondence from the Leader of the Council.

**7. Questions Received under Council Procedure Rule 8**

No Questions have been received under Council Procedure Rule 8.

**8. Recommendations Referred from Cabinet, Committees etc.**

None referred.

**9. Motions Received under Council Procedure Rule 6**

**(i) To consider the following Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 6 by Councillor A.R. Pearson, Community Safety and Partnerships Portfolio Leader:**

"At a council meeting held on 5th April 2017 the following motion was passed:

"That the Cannock Chase district council views with great concern the gross injustice whereby the treasury receives 50% of the surplus from the mine workers pension scheme, accumulating over £3 billion to date.

This money has been taken and continues to be taken from former coal mining communities such as our own, that can least afford it. The money removed from the pension scheme is vastly out of proportion to the risk covered by the treasury.

This council requests that the public accounts committee conduct an independent scrutiny of this extremely unfair arrangement, and calls on the M.P. for Cannock Chase to take up the case for further actions in parliament."

I am very sad to say little or no notice was taken by the treasury, the public accounts committee, or the M.P. for Cannock Chase. Therefore, I submit the following motion for consideration by this authority:

- The Council views the vastly increasing concern the ongoing pillaging of the Mineworkers pension scheme.
- The treasury is still receiving 50% of the scheme's surplus, it is now stated by Justice for mineworkers that it has reached £4.2 billion, this has been taken from the former mineworkers and their widows and the communities such as our own.
- There is no justifiable reason why the treasury takes 50% of the surplus when the risks are so low, to illustrate this the Labour Party 2019 election manifesto proposed that it would only take 10% of the surplus to maintain the status of guarantor.
- Therefore this council request that the M.P. for Cannock Chase writes to the Secretary of State for work and pensions to ask why so many of her constituents continue to be plundered by the government at a time in their lives when this hard earned money is so needed."

(ii) **To consider the following Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 6 by Councillor G. Adamson, Leader of the Council:**

“COVID-19 has deepened existing inequalities, hitting the poorest and most vulnerable communities the hardest. It has put a spotlight on economic inequalities and fragile social safety nets that leave vulnerable communities to bear the brunt of the crisis. At the same time, social, political and economic inequalities have amplified the impacts of the pandemic. On the economic front, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly increased global unemployment and dramatically slashed workers’ incomes.” **Goal 10, Reduced Inequalities (UN Sustainable Development Goals).**

There is a large and growing body of evidence that highlights the disproportionate impact on low income communities as a result of recent global recessions and the COVID-19 pandemic.

For low income and non-earning residents in our district, income-based inequalities that pre-date COVID-19 have been further exposed and greatly exacerbated by these crises, the impact of which is yet to be fully realised. As this situation continues to unfold, and daily redundancies reach the thousands across the UK, Public Health England are reporting that those on the lowest incomes have suffered more than double the infection and mortality rates of those within the more financially stable or wealthier parts of the district and Country.<sup>1</sup> It is becoming clear that poverty is the key defining factor in how people experience the social and economic impacts of this pandemic in their lives, yet those struggling on the lowest incomes have the least influence in shaping and influencing our approach to recovery.

We have an opportunity in how we plan our Recovery, firstly to give true recognition to those low-income workers who have kept our country running while many of us were in lockdown or isolating at home, but also to create a lasting legacy of change, where poverty is not inevitable in our society and where fairer, greener and stronger communities can emerge.

In declaring a Poverty Emergency, this Council recognises that this is the time for that change. By aligning this work with our Climate Emergency declaration this Council commits to a People and Planet approach to Recovery and Renewal which encompasses:

**Prioritising People and Planet** Identifying where the environmental and poverty agendas overlap in order to tackle common issues of inequality, health and wellbeing.

**Recognising Socio-Economic Deprivation as an equalities issue** Acknowledging that the stress of being poor and in crisis has a detrimental impact on health, including mental health and wellbeing, achievement, life chances, participation, resilience and social cohesion.

**Investing in ‘Levelling Up’ locally** Working with residents to understand the barriers to employment, housing, health, leisure or education, and investing locally to level up our district’s communities.

**Embedding Lived Experience** Building on the foundations of the Poverty Truth Commissions, to reach out to people affected by poverty and use their experience to develop better policies and services which respond to their needs.

**Building stronger communities** Continuing to work with the network of groups involved in the community response and other local initiatives, to increase participation

in local democracy and involve people in the decisions that affect their lives. Providing a means for new groups to meet and build confidence, to collaborate, educate, experience a sense of ownership and influence and to build democratic participation, in order to root necessary responses within the heart of low-income communities.

**Unlocking Community Wealth and Potential** Developing further council strategies around community wealth building, including supporting communities to consider routes to community ownership in order to create jobs and share local wealth. Fostering the education, awareness, skills and culture-shift at all levels that provide the precursor to meaningfully explore and expand community ownership as a route out of poverty and forward through the crisis.

**Working together** Growing a network of local academics, professionals, unions, those with expertise in supporting migrants and asylum seekers and with existing and emerging poverty-related grassroots community groups and a wider network of people with lived-experience to support our work.

**Expanding our evidence-base** Collating more detailed poverty-related data in order to better inform the local and national approach.

**Starting with ourselves** Ensuring that our staff and those within our council companies are paid at least a local living wage will make us an example to others, helping to expand our local living wage district status. Through this and the implementation of a social value policy we can create inclusive growth in our district, in partnership with our suppliers, contractors and commissioned services.

**Therefore, this Council resolves to:**

1. Formally acknowledge the rising levels of poverty so widely evidenced over the past decade and further exacerbated by the dual crises of pandemic and recession.
2. Identify, report on and address unfair socio-economic barriers to democratic participation, security and wellbeing wherever they exist.
3. Ensure that the Poverty Emergency workstream sits alongside all other workstreams within the council's recovery planning.
4. Develop a Poverty Emergency Strategy which takes a People and Planet approach to helping residents in our district cope which aims to remedy the disproportionate social and economic impacts of the pandemic and recession.
5. Continue to streamline and widely publicise access routes to advocacy and support for those directly impacted by the crisis and facing homelessness and unemployment/underemployment
6. Work collaboratively with partners to provide space for community-led 'hubs' where solutions to low income and crisis impacts can be explored by local residents and support provided
7. Keep the disproportionate impacts of the crisis on low income communities at the forefront of our response to planning, housing, land allocation and development including our response to recent legislative changes
8. Develop a dedicated online space for sharing of good practice, networking with other councils and an interface for collaboration with those directly impacted

9. Support the Portfolio lead for Health and Wellbeing to lead on this work, and a wide network of residents with lived experience.
10. Take a collaborative and evidence-based approach, working more closely with health, universities, trade unions and poverty-related community groups to improve our research and intelligence
11. Use what we learn through the work of the Poverty Emergency to raise the voices of those affected by poverty to help inform the government to shape and deliver their 'Levelling Up' agenda in our district and sub-region.
12. Invite other Councils to join with us in declaring a Poverty Emergency as a vehicle for systemic change in our society.
13. To share through networks like the LGA, our model for declaring a Poverty Emergency alongside a Climate Emergency as best practice in recovery and renewal."

*Notes:*

*<sup>1</sup>Public Health England report: Disparities in the Risk and Outcomes of COVID-19 June 2020*

*This motion is derived from an original motion adopted by Chester and Cheshire West Council.*

**(iii) To consider the following Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 6 by Councillor Mrs. C.E. Martin, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Leader:**

"The high unemployment and spiralling poverty forecast for 2021 is not an inevitable outcome from this pandemic and urgent action can still avert this. I therefore urge this Council to call on the Government to take the measures that can protect people's jobs and incomes, lives and livelihoods. These must include; -

An increase in Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) to £320 a week – the living wage – and make it available to all workers so people can afford to self-isolate. The current £96 a week is a fifth of average weekly earnings and 2 million who earn less than £120 a week are not even entitled to that. Even while the vaccine is being rolled out people will still need to self-isolate to prevent the virus spreading.

A fix to furlough so that no one is paid less than minimum wage, it is unacceptable there are hundreds of thousands of the lowest paid receiving only 80% of the minimum living wage.

No cutting Universal Credit in April - cutting UC back £20 a week amounts to taking away £1000 a year from millions of low-income households.

An increase to public service wages and raising the minimum wage to £10 an hour. A pay cut in real terms – after a decade of real cuts - is a grave insult to millions of public service workers who cared for our loved ones during this crisis. Raising their wages and the minimum wage to £10 per hour would greatly assist in the fight against in-work poverty.

Protect and create jobs; the TUC has shown that investing £85 billion in green infrastructures would create 1.2 million jobs in 2 years and investing the resources public services need would create 600,000 jobs. This investment, alongside giving the

packages of support which public sectors and businesses need, can prevent more job losses.

I call on this Council to resolve that the Managing Director pass on our demands to the Government, and also to ask our MP for her support in this, as it does have a direct impact on many of her constituents.”

*This motion has come from the TUC.*

**(iv) To consider the following Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 6 by Councillor P.E. Woodhead, Leader of the Chase Community Independents and Green Group:**

“Universal Basic Income is a non-means tested, unconditional, non-withdrawable payment which covers the basic cost of living from the state to every person paid irrespective of wealth, background, employment or marital status. A fully implemented system would replace the need for a complex and unfair welfare state, benefit system and tax credits but it is recognised that extensive research and pilot schemes would need to be established to understand how this might play a role in the financial and social security needed to promote a prosperous and equitable future for every person.

Cannock Chase has areas recognised with historic and continuing deprivation, poverty and challenges to promote equal opportunities for all. The impact of the pandemic will be felt most severely on those with greatest need, the most vulnerable to the economic and social impact a changing world of work and employment will have in the coming years. With businesses closing, employment opportunities reducing and the fragility of zero-hour contract and the gig economy our community of Cannock Chase will not be immune to financial and social challenges to come.

The Council recognises that financial security is critical to a stable, thriving and prosperous community in Cannock Chase. The Council further recognises that with the changing nature of employment, earning and livelihoods the current welfare, benefits and tax credit system is not fit for purpose to fulfil the challenges of a post Covid future.

A universal Basic Income has the potential to address many of the most complex challenges in our society including inequality, poverty, precarious employment, recognition of the value of non-economic work such as caring for family members or voluntary work, giving employers a more flexible workforce and employees greater freedom to pursue their ambitions and removing the complex, conditionality and negative aspects of the current system.

The Council believes that these principles need testing and developing to understand their impact on the real challenges which lie ahead and recognises the work being undertaken by UBILab and others. It is noted that trials have also been considered in Finland and Spain are rolling out something similar as part of their Covid-19 response.

The Council resolves that the Managing Director write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and their counterparts in all political parties as well as our Member of Parliament calling for a fully evaluated pilot of a Universal Basic Income in our community of Cannock Chase.”

## References

*This motion has been drafted by myself, inspired by the many other motions taken to Local Authorities across the Country*

<https://www.ubilabnetwork.org/>

*Further reading can be found drawn from references within some of the motions taken elsewhere*

<https://citizensincome.org/>

<http://www.usbig.net/pdf/manyfacesofubi.pdf>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X19301652>

<https://www.nber.org/papers/w27351>

<https://economics.mit.edu/files/16000>

<https://www.bmj.com/content/355/bmj.i6473>

[http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_Forum\\_IncGrwth\\_2017.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Forum_IncGrwth_2017.pdf)

<https://basicincome.scot/>

<https://clivelord.wordpress.com/>

### **10. Comments and Questions on Part 1 Minutes of Cabinet, Committees, Sub-Committees and Panels under Rule 9**

To receive any comments or questions submitted under Rule 9 on Part 1 Minutes of meetings of Cabinet, Committees, Sub-Committees or Panels as included in the Minutes Record circulated alongside this agenda.

### **11. Review of the Members' Allowances Scheme**

Report of the Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer (Item 11.1 – 11.18).



**T. McGovern,  
Managing Director**

12 January 2021





## **Guidance on Declaring Personal, Pecuniary, and Disclosable Pecuniary Interests at Meetings**

### **Definition of what is a Personal, Pecuniary and Disclosable Pecuniary Interest**

**A Personal Interest** is one where your well-being or financial position, or those of a member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association would be affected to a greater extent than the majority of Council Tax payers, ratepayers, or inhabitants of the electoral ward(s) affected by the decision. You automatically have a personal interest if you have given notice in the Register of Members' Interests, e.g. if you are appointed to an outside body by the Council.

**A Pecuniary Interest** is a personal interest where the matter

- a) affects your financial position or that of a member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association or a body in which you have registered in the Register of Members Interests or
- b) relates to the determining of any consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or any person with whom you have a close association or a body in which you have registered in the Register of Members Interests

and, in either case, where a member of the public knowing the facts would reasonably regard the interest as so significant it is likely to affect your judgement of the public interest

**A Disclosable Pecuniary Interest** is an interest of yourself or your partner (which means spouse or civil partner, a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners) in respect of employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried out for profit or gain; sponsorship; contracts; land; licences; corporate tenancies; or securities, as defined with the Localism Act, 2011.

### **Please make it clear whether it is a Personal, Pecuniary or Disclosable Pecuniary Interest**

It would be helpful if, prior to the commencement of the meeting, Members informed the Monitoring Officer of any declarations of interest, of which you are aware. This will help in the recording of the declarations in the Minutes of the meeting.

### **Declaring Interests at Full Council**

The Code of Conduct requires that personal interests where you have a personal interest in any business of the Council, and where you are aware or ought reasonably to be aware of the existence of the personal interest, and you attend a meeting of the Council at which the business is considered, you must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.

Some items will be mentioned in the papers for full Council but are not actually being considered by Full Council. In such circumstances the Monitoring Officer's advice to Members is that there is no need to declare an interest unless the particular matter is mentioned or discussed. As a general rule, Members only need to declare an interest at full Council in the following circumstances:

- Where a matter is before the Council for a decision and/or
- Where the matter in which the Member has an interest is specifically mentioned or discussed at the Council meeting.