

Cannock Chase Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the

Cabinet

Held on Thursday 3 March 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

In the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Cannock

Part 1

Present:

Councillors:

Lyons, Mrs. O.	Leader of the Council
Jones, B.	Deputy Leader of the Council and Neighbourhood Safety & Partnerships Portfolio Leader
Jones, Mrs. V.	Community Engagement, Health & Wellbeing Portfolio Leader
Fitzgerald, Mrs. A.A.	Housing, Heritage & Leisure Portfolio Leader
Hewitt, P.M.	Innovation & High Street Portfolio Leader

84. Apologies

Apologies were submitted for Councillors J.P. Johnson, Environment and Climate Change Portfolio Leader, and M. Sutherland, District Development Portfolio Leader.

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

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

The Leader advised that all Cabinet members had been lobbied by different community groups, councillors, town councillors and others in respect of agenda item 7, 'Pye Green Community Centre'.

86. Updates from Portfolio Leaders

(i) Leader of the Council

The Leader updated in respect of the following:

- **Russian Attack on Ukraine**

Further to last night's full Council meeting, the letter to the Ukrainian Ambassador to the UK to show the Council's solidarity and unity against the unprovoked and wholly unacceptable aggression by Russia was being drafted and would be circulated around to Members once complete. Additionally, a Ukrainian flag was being sourced to be raised at and flown from the Civic Centre as soon as able to do so.

- **Council Tax Information Booklet**

Further to the approval of the Council Tax precepts at last night's full Council meeting, a booklet had been drafted for distribution to households that would include information about each element of the precept (i.e., Police, Fire & Rescue, County Council, District Council and Parish and Town Councils), and what the responsibilities of each organisation were.

(ii) **Community Engagement, Health & Wellbeing**

The Portfolio Leader updated in respect of the following:

- **Cannock Chase Can Promotion**

The App was launched last month, and since then the project team had been touring local supermarkets, community centres and groups to gain support for the App and the wider programme. The tour had been accompanied by a variety of promotional activities that would focus the public's attention on the app. A dedicated Facebook page and separate website were in place to reach those people that could not access the app. Other promotional activities included radio advertising, banners in Council parks and community centres, plasma screens in GP's surgeries, and brand labelling on all Council vehicles and any health and wellbeing related work.

Dates had been confirmed with local supermarkets for larger engagement opportunities, and links made with local support groups and the Job Centre. The project team were continuing to follow up on new leads and were now working toward the official launch in April, to tie in with the relaunch of Brereton Can, which first launched in 2019 by Brereton Millions, this being the prototype for the Cannock Chase Can project, which was further developed with the inclusion of the new feature, the 'wellness wheel', with each spoke representing themes that influence individual health and wellbeing. Brereton Can was now being aligned to the wellness themes in the Cannock Chase Can app, and both projects would work in tandem with and support each other moving forward.

Brereton businesses and community groups met this week to showcase how they could get involved. They would be piloting how a well-established community group could increase local connections to the project.

There were already 232 users signed up to the app, actively committing to challenges and using it as they should. The overall response had been positive from users so far. Going forward, new features would be developed to keep the app fresh and relevant.

As part of the official release, Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles had offered five annual memberships as a prize draw for all those that signed up in February. The winners were now being chosen at random and would be notified in the coming days.

In addition to the app, further wider engagement activities had been created.

- **Cannock Hospital Minor Injuries Unit**

There was still concern that, after numerous letters to the NHS Commissioners and the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust (as the managers of the Unit), that the Unit had still not been reopened. The public had made their views clear on this and wanted it reinstated, resulting in a petition for its reopening being signed by

3,008 residents across Cannock Chase and the surrounding area. Councillor Hewitt, working across the District and County Councils, had presented this petition to Staffordshire County Council, asking that they lobby the NHS Commissioners, to heed the views of the residents and provide a date for the reopening of the Unit.

(iii) District Development

On behalf of the Portfolio Leader, the Leader of the Council updated in respect of the following:

- **Omicron Grant Support**

The Economic Development Team were actively recontacting those businesses that had not responded to the Omicron invitation email sent out initially. This extra support would continue for the next three weeks so the Council could be sure all attempts had been made to support those businesses that were eligible for the Omicron grant support.

Additionally, further business applications continued to be approved under the Discretionary Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) Policy, with the aim being that by taking both of these direct actions the ARG spend would be maximised by 18 March.

In respect of the Welcome Back Fund, all monies on the programme were to be spent in full, so £179,000 would be defrayed by the 31 March deadline date.

- **Apprenticeships and 'Nil Top Up' Training Grants**

With regards to apprenticeships, the original target was to have 50 approved and in place. The actual number approved was 63, which was an investment package worth £315,000. The apprenticeships had been created from businesses sectors including engineering and manufacturing, retail and commercial enterprise, education and training, construction, planning and the building, and arts, media, and publishing.

For the 'Nil Cost Training Top Up', the total investment grant package was worth £65,000. The grants had supported sectors including telecommunications, training, professional services / photography, laundry, holistic therapies, digital marketing, scaffolding, HE consultancy to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), test and inspection, and IT services.

Working with partners local case stories will be highlighted, and the intention would be to work with partners and funding opportunities to secure future delivery of initiatives of this nature.

- **McArthurGlen Designer Outlet**

Planning approval was granted on 9 February for the provision of a multi-storey car park at the Designer Outlet.

Joint marketing initiatives were being worked on with McArthurGlen to maximise any public relations and joint working opportunities with all targets of increasing promotion of the Outlet and the wider District as a place to visit.

(iv) Housing, Heritage & Leisure

The Portfolio Leader updated in respect of the following:

- **Rugeley Leisure Centre**

The swimming pool was now open again to members, and from Saturday 5 March would be open for public sessions, with the full timetable recommencing from Monday 7 March. Furthermore, the floor of the squash courts had been repaired and the courts were now open too.

Also, a new disability hoist had been purchased to support those who needed additional help getting in and out of the pool.

Along with the Leader, a training session was attended on Sunday evening when over 20 new staff were put through their training course.

There was great enthusiasm all around for the opening of the pool and the official reopening of the leisure centre on 26 and 27 March.

- **Hawks Green Housing Development Completion Event**

The new housing development at Hawks Green had been completed, at which 22 new Council homes had been delivered. An opening event was scheduled for Friday 18 March, and it was hoped other Councillors would be able to attend.

- **British Schools Pistol and Rifle Championship**

The Council and Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles had worked together with Rugeley Rifle Club to provide an outstanding event for young athletes from all over the UK. Local children had also been encouraged to have a go on the last day of the event. British Shooting were so impressed with the venue that discussions were already underway for Cannock to host the event again next year.

Councillor Lisa Wilson and her team provided refreshments for staff and athletes. The terrific team purchased ingredients, made up lunches and sold them, with over £500 being raised and the profits being given to their Community Table to provide Easter eggs and treats for local children in Heath Hayes, Wimblebury and Hawks Green. Any leftover eggs would be given to children further afield.

(v) Innovation and High Streets

The Portfolio Leader updated in respect of the following:

- **Welcome Back Fund**

Back in April 2021, the Government launched a new 'Welcome Back' fund, with this Council being awarded £179,245 to spend on projects to encourage people back into local high streets. Working with Officers, local groups and the parish and town councils in the District were contacted to advise monies were available. A range of events and activities took place across the District that were all very well received by those who attended and took part. The funding was also used to make streetscene improvements in local areas.

(vi) Neighbourhood Safety & Partnerships

The Portfolio Leader updated in respect of the following:

- **Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel**

At the meeting of the Panel held on 14 February that was attended by the Portfolio Leader, the Panel formally approved the proposed Fire and Rescue

Budget and Precept for 2022/23. The Panel also received an update on the Fire and Rescue Safety Plan 2020-2024.

- **Staffordshire Leaders and Chief Executives Meeting**

At the meeting held on 17 February that was attended by the Portfolio Leader (in his capacity as Deputy Leader of the Council), several matters were discussed, including the Strategic Economic Development in Staffordshire 2022, and an update was given on the Staffordshire Sustainability Board.

- **Safer and Stronger Communities Strategies Group**

At the meeting also held on 17 February that was attended by the Portfolio Leader, topics discussed included the approach being taken to tackling anti-social behaviour, Hate Crime, Public Space and Serious Violence, Fraud, Domestic Abuse, Vulnerable Adults, Modern Slavery, and Counterterrorism. This was a very effective multi-agency approach to keeping people safe across Staffordshire.

- **Reduction in Anti-social Behaviour**

Following a meeting attended earlier today between the Council and Police, it was pleasing to report in the last twelve months, anti-social behaviour across the District had reduced by 31%, which equated to some 800 fewer reports and was an outstanding achievement.

This reflected extremely well on the Community Safety Partnership as a whole and was testament to the direct action taken by the Police, the diversionary activity to prevent offending, and the support given to victims by the Community Safety team and partners.

87. Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2022 be approved.

88. Forward Plan

The Forward Plan of Decisions for the period March to May 2022 (Item 5.1 – 5.2) was considered:

Resolved

That the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period March to May 2022 be noted.

89. Pye Green Community Centre, Bradbury Lane, Hednesford

Report of the Head of Economic Prosperity (Item 7.1 - 7.16).

Resolved:

That consent be refused for an assignment or sublet of Pye Green Community Centre to the Trustees of the 1st Hednesford Scouts Group.

Reasons for Decisions

Based on the impact to hirers, users, and the wider community, and the strength and level of concerns raised about Hednesford Town Council's request regarding the lease arrangements for the Pye Green Community Centre ('the Centre') (as well as

the current lease being clear the Centre was intended for community use), it was considered that refusal of consent for assignment or sublet of the Centre to the Trustees of the 1st Hednesford Scouts Group was the most appropriate course of action to take.

90. Quarter 3 Performance Report 2021/22

Report of the Head of Governance and Corporate Services (Item 6.1 - 6.61).

Resolved:

That the third quarter progress and performance information related to the delivery of the Council's priorities as detailed in report Appendices 1a to 1c and 2a to 2c, be noted.

Reasons for Decisions

The performance information allowed Cabinet to monitor progress in delivery of the Council's Corporate Priorities.

91. Revenues and Benefits Collection Report - Quarter 3 2020/21

Report of the Head of Finance (Item 8.1 - 8.17).

Resolved:

That:

(A) Information regarding collections be noted.

(B) The arrears listed in the confidential Appendices to the report be written off.

Reasons for Decisions

Efficient collection of the Council's revenues was of major importance to the funding of Council services and those provided by its preceptors.

Whilst the collection rates were good, regrettably not all of the monies owed to the Council could be collected, and so the report recommended the write off of bad debts that could not be recovered.

The meeting closed at 7:07 p.m.

Leader