

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET

HELD ON THURSDAY 19 DECEMBER 2019 AT 4:00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors:

Alcott, G.	Deputy Leader of the Council and Town Centre Regeneration Portfolio Leader
Pearson, A.R.	Corporate Improvement Portfolio Leader
Bennett, C.	Crime and Partnerships Portfolio Leader
Mitchell, Mrs. C.	Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader
Johnson, T.B.	Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader
Preece, J.P.T.L.	Environment Portfolio Leader
Martin, Mrs. C.E.	Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Leader
Kraujalis, J.T.	Housing Portfolio Leader
Woodhead, P.E.	<i>Invitee (non-voting Observer)</i>

Also in Attendance:

Lyons, Miss O.	Leader of the Opposition (for agenda item 6.)
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73. Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillor G. Adamson, Leader of the Council.

In the Leader's absence the meeting was chaired by the Deputy Leader.

74. 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.

75. Updates from Portfolio Leaders

Crime and Partnerships

Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Staffordshire Police Budgets

The Portfolio Leader advised that Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service and

Staffordshire Police were in the process of developing their respect budget proposals for 2020/21, which would be considered by the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel in February 2020.

Environment

Poplars Landfill Site

The Portfolio Leader advised that a number of complaints had been received recently regarding odours emanating from the Poplars Landfill Site in Cannock. As there was an Environmental Permit in place for the site, responsibility for regulation rested with the Environment Agency and the Council had no powers to take enforcement action.

Concerns had been raised that there was insufficient information being provided by the Environment Agency to the public about what was being done to alleviate the issue, and therefore representations had been made to the Agency and Biffa Waste Services Ltd., the site operators to address this.

76. Minutes of Cabinet Meeting of 13 November, 2019

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November, 2019, be approved as a correct record and signed.

77. Forward Plan

The Forward Plan of Decisions for the period December 2019 to February 2020 (Item 5.1 – 5.3 of the Official Minutes of the Council) was considered.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period December 2019 to February 2020 be noted.

78. Motions Referred from Council

Consideration was given to the Motion submitted to Council on 6 November 2019 by Councillor Miss O. Lyons in respect of Elmore Park, Rugeley (Item 6.1 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That a report be submitted to the next meeting of Cabinet, to be held on 30 January 2020, which sets out the overall costs of carrying out an options appraisal in respect of the existing toilet block in Elmore Park, Rugeley, and a feasibility study to assess the practicalities and costs of the proposals.

Reasons for Decisions

The issues as outlined in the motion were noted, and so it was therefore agreed that Cabinet receive a report setting out relevant costs for undertaking an options appraisal and feasibility study to address the issues raised.

(Councillor T.B. Johnson arrived at the meeting during the presentation of this item.)

79. Recommendations from Scrutiny Committees

Consideration was given to the recommendations agreed by the Community Scrutiny at its meeting held on 26 November 2019 in respect of 'Carbon Literacy' training (Item 7.1 – 7.2 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The training opportunity as presented be sourced and promoted, with a preference that it be attended by all senior managers and Council Members.
 - (i) Depending on the availability of the free training and the timing, key officers should be prioritised, but in all cases this should be completed urgently.
 - (ii) If the organisational need for the training was greater than the capacity of free training accessible by the Council, the costs and available budget be considered to ensure all appropriate staff, all Members and ongoing induction requirements were fully funded.
- (B) The principles of the training be established within the organisation to ensure institutional memory was preserved and incorporated in to the induction programme for all new staff at senior manager or above, and new Council Members.
- (C) The status of the knowledge and understanding of Climate Literacy be considered of equal importance as equality and diversity training.
- (D) The knowledge acquired from the training be used to introduce an additional parameter in section 6 of Council reports – '6.10 Climate Emergency'.
- (E) The Council uses its resources to promote externally the Climate Literacy of its staff and Members as a positive commitment toward aiding the Council in the challenges ahead.
- (F) Recommendations 5 and 5a. as submitted by the Community Scrutiny Committee be submitted to the Constitution Working Group for further consideration.

Reasons for Decisions

The training would increase the base knowledge within the organisation and underpin future actions and decision making for the Council as it prepared and implemented policy around the impacts of the Climate Emergency.

It was appropriate for the Constitution Working Group to consider recommendations 5 and 5a. as the matters outlined in those recommendations could not be determined by the Cabinet.

80. Empty Dwellings and Council Tax

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Finance (Item 8.1 – 8.8 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That Council, at its meeting to be held on 8 January 2020, be recommended to:

- (A) Adopt the schedule of charges and discounts contained within Appendix 1 of the report, with effect from 1 April 2020.
- (B) Adopt the schedule of charges and discounts contained within Appendix 2 of the report, with effect from 1 April 2021.

Reasons for Decisions

Cannock Chase Council's empty property discounts were generous, when compared to other councils, and the changes recommended were intended to be beneficial to both the occupation rate of dwellings and income to the Council.

The reduction of the 'free period' for empty dwellings from 3 months to 28 days was expected to affect around 2,000 properties that were estimated to become vacant whilst awaiting occupation by a new owner or new tenant. Additional charges in the region of £245,000 per annum would be levied if owners did not bring their homes into use more quickly (an average of £123 per bill). Cannock Chase Council would retain £29,000 of the additional yield.

The additional income to the Council would help to facilitate improvements to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme that were currently subject to formal consultation.

81. Proposed Improvements to the Play Area and Open Space at Penny Cress Green, Norton Canes

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles (Item 9.1 – 9.7 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) Approval to proceed with the proposed improvements to the play area and open space at Penny Cress Green, Norton Canes (The Cemna), as set out in the report and the indicative plan attached as Appendix 1 to the same report, be granted.
- (B) Council, at its meeting to be held on 8 January 2020, be recommended to include £187,477 from S106 funds into the Capital Programme for 2019-2022.
- (C) Permission to spend up to £120,000 be granted in order to deliver the proposed project as set out in the report, and to use the remaining balance of £67,477 for the improvements to indoor and outdoor sports and recreational activities within the Norton Canes area.
- (D) Authority be delegated to the Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles, in consultation with the Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader, to agree the project detail and to take such actions as may be necessary to progress the above decisions within existing approved budgets.

Reasons for Decisions

The site at Penny Cress Green occupied an area of 1.75 hectares and was in need of upgrading, thereby providing an opportunity to not only install new, modern play equipment, but to also enhance and improve the open space, making it a more useable and pleasant site.

Significant housing development had taken place over the last 5 years or so in Norton Canes, and the Parish Council had requested Cannock Chase Council utilise funding identified from the new developments to deliver new and improved sport, recreation and open space facilities within the Parish.

A contribution of £187,477 from the Council's S106 contributions, collected following the housing development situated south of Red Lion Lane, Norton Canes, had been identified and be used "for the improvements to indoor and outdoor sports and recreational activities within the Norton Canes area".

The Council was keen to progress the proposed development and for it to be completed by the second quarter of 2020. In order to achieve this deadline, it would be necessary to include the estimated cost of the proposed scheme in the Council's Capital Programme for 2019-20 and to secure approval to spend the S106 funds to develop and deliver the scheme within the budget approved.

82. Proposed Improvements to Public Open Space and Play Area Adjoining Fortescue Lane, Bonney Drive and Eaton Drive, Rugeley

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles (Item 10.1 – 10.6 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) Council, at its meeting to be held on 8 January 2020, be recommended to include an additional £28,332 in the Capital Programme 2019-2022 to undertake the proposed improvements set out in the report and the plan attached at Appendix 1 to the same report.
- (B) Approval be granted to add this additional amount to the £20,000 already included in the Capital Programme for Wolseley Road.
- (C) Permission to spend up to £48,332 be granted to deliver the proposed improvements to the public open space as set out in the report and the proposals plan attached at Appendix 1 to the same report.
- (D) Authority be delegated to the Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles, in consultation with the Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader, to agree the project detail and to take such actions as may be necessary to progress the above decisions within existing approved budgets.

Reasons for Decisions

A sum of £20,000 identified for this scheme, but referred to as Wolseley Road, had been included in the Council's Capital Programme for a number of years, but had been insufficient to deliver the proposed improvements.

However, a subsequent housing development in Stafford Borough, located on the Western Springs Road and close the Wolseley Road, had released some additional S106 funds amounting to £28,332, which, subject to Council approval,

could be added to the initial £20,000, making a total investment of £48,332, which was sufficient to deliver the improvements set out in the report and the plan attached at Appendix 1 to the same report.

Given the previous delays in delivering the scheme, and for it to be delivered in 2020, it would be necessary to include the additional S106 funds, amounting to £28,332, in the Capital Programme, and to secure approval to spend the S106 funds to develop and deliver the scheme within the budget approved.

83. Cannock Chase Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Financial Year Report

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Economic Prosperity (Item 11.1 – 11.10 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The Community Infrastructure Levy financial year report be noted.
- (B) The changes to the 'Community Infrastructure Levy – Guidance for Applicants and Developers' be noted.

Reasons for Decisions

The Council approved the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule and Regulation 123 List of infrastructure projects eligible to receive funding at its meeting held on 15 April 2015. CIL came into effect in relation to relevant chargeable development on 1 June 2015.

CIL was intended to provide a funding stream for infrastructure needed to support the policies and proposals in the adopted Local Plan. It would partly replace funding previously obtained via Planning Obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

The Council was legally required to produce a financial year report on CIL receipts and spend in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) ('CIL Regulations'). This was the fourth financial report since the adoption of CIL, and it provided a summary of CIL receipts and expenditure for the financial year 2018-19. It was noted that the CIL financial report would be replaced by an annual infrastructure funding statement as of 31 December 2020. This statement would have to provide summary details of CIL and S106 receipts and expenditure.

84. Revenues and Benefits Collection Report – Quarter 2

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Finance (Item 12.1 – 12.6 + Not for Publication Appendices 1, 2, and 3 (Item 12.7 – 12.17 of the Official Minutes of the Council)).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The 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 our preceptors.

Council Tax due for the current year amounted to £52.4m, of which some 55.1% was collected by the end of September 2019.

Business Rates due for the current year amounted to £33.6m, of which some 57.0% was collected by the end of September 2019.

Whilst the Council's collection rates were good, regrettably not all of the monies owed to the Council could be collected, and as such, the report contained a recommendation to write-off bad debts that could not be recovered.

The meeting closed at 4:33 p.m.

LEADER