

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CULTURE AND SPORT POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 25 JANUARY 2011 AT 4.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK
PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors

Bennett, Mrs D.J. (Chairman)

Jones, R. (Vice-Chairman)

Allen, F.W.C.

Mitchell, C.

Davis, Mrs. M.A.

Sutton, Mrs. H.M.

Grocott, M.R.

Whitehouse, Mrs. L.

10. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M.R. Green.

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

There were no Declarations of Interests.

12. Minutes

AGREED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2010 be approved as a correct record.

13. Outcome of the Scrutiny Review of the Prince of Wales Theatre

Mike Edmonds, Head of Culture, Leisure and Major Projects explained that the Report considered at the Scrutiny Committee on 12 July 2010 along with the minutes of that meeting were attached to the agenda for Members information. A Working Group had been established in order to review the Prince of Wales Theatre which looked at a number of issues to determine whether the Theatre offered value for money. The conclusion of the Working Group was that the Theatre was providing value for money. Members of the Working Group agreed that there was little scope in reducing expenditure or subsidy and opening the Theatre for more days may actually increase the subsidy level required.

Members were advised that the confidential financial information would be discussed later on in the Agenda under Part 2.

14. Update on Playbuilder Application 2010/11 and other alternative funding sources

The Chairman welcomed Graham Hunt, Renee Hardman, Karen Sullivan and Councillor Ben Adams

from Staffordshire County Council to the meeting who were in attendance to discuss the Playbuilder application submitted by the District Council.

Councillor Ben Adams referred to a briefing paper prepared by Staffordshire County Council regarding Cannock Chase District Council's Playbuilder funding application for the Bevan Lee Estate. He suggested that this be circulated to all Members on the Committee following the meeting.

He reported that the County Council had been advised that their Playbuilder grant allocation for 2010/2011 was £443,758. Applications from District Council's, Parish Council's and community groups were welcomed and Cannock Chase Council submitted an application for the Bevan Lee site. He commented that from 2008-2009/10 the District Council did not submit any Playbuilder applications and this application in 2010 was the only one submitted. The Bevan Lee site was one of 11 successful applications submitted by the 8 District/County Council's across Staffordshire.

It was explained that in June, following the General Election, the County Council was advised that the Playbuilder funding was no longer available. In July the County was advised by the Department for Education (DfE) to stop work on all sites that were not completed or works had not commenced. All applicants were advised of this. At this stage work had not commenced on the Bevan Lee site.

The County then completed a financial statement as requested by the DfE who wanted to know what monies were already spent and/or contractually committed. The DfE were advised that two sites were completed, five were contractually committed and four were not.

The DfE advised that the County Council's revised allocation was £277,348.75 which covered the two completed sites and also ensured that the sites that were contractually committed could be completed.

Councillor Adams expressed his disappointment that the County Council were not able to fund the Bevan Lee Playbuilder application. He then asked Karen Sullivan to advise Members of the alternative funding opportunities that were being investigated in order to fund the Bevan Lee project.

Karen Sullivan commented that she would be attending a meeting with Mike Edmonds tomorrow to discuss possible funding opportunities. She explained that two funds had been identified, they were the Staffordshire Environmental Fund who would fund up to 30K and the Aggregates Levy Grant Scheme who would fund up to 30K (85% of the costs).

The Chairman along with Members of the Committee expressed their disappointment that the Playbuilder application for the Bevan Lee site had been unsuccessful despite it being the only application the District Council had submitted during the three years of the programme. Members questioned the County Council representatives regarding the unsuccessful bid and sought clarification as to how many District or County Council's had successfully managed to secure funding. The Committee was advised that the successful Playbuilder applications at District and County level for each year of the programme was as follows:

District/Borough	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Total
Newcastle Under Lyme	2	1	1	4
Stafford	0	0	2	2
East Staffs	1	5	1	7
South Staffordshire	1	1	3	5
Lichfield	2	1	1	4
Tamworth	0	1	1	2

Cannock	0	0	1	1
Staffordshire Moorlands	2	1	1	4

Members noted that four of the successful bids in 2010 would not actually go ahead due to the reduced funding allocation.

Councillor Adams informed Members that each of the District/County Council's had also had unsuccessful bids during the Playbuilder programme. Cannock Chase District Council's bid had scored well and was supported by the County Council; however, less money was available due to the DfE reducing the amount of funding available and therefore it was unfortunate that the application could not be funded.

Mike Edmonds, Head of Culture, Leisure and Major Projects stated that a substantial amount of work had been done in order to submit the Playbuilder application for the Bevan Lee site and the community had been heavily involved in developing the bid. Mike Edmonds also advised that numerous bids had not been submitted by the Council as part of the Playbuilder scheme following discussions with County Council Officers, whereby it was agreed that efforts should be concentrated on quality bids; the Bevan Lee being accepted by all as the best bid and most likely for success. The District Council would work with the County Council to secure alternative funding to enable the Bevan Lee project to progress.

A Member advised that he had attended the Bevan Lee Residents Association meeting who were very concerned and disappointed to discover that the bid had been unsuccessful. However, he was hopeful that alternative funding would be identified and confirmed that he would update the Residents Association of the current position.

The Chairman thanked the County Council representatives for attending the meeting.

AGREED:

That Staffordshire County Council's briefing paper regarding the Playbuilder funding application for the Bevan Lee Estate be circulated to all Members on the Committee.

15. Q2 Performance Report

Consideration was given to the Quarter 2 Culture and Sport Priority Delivery Plan. Mike Edmonds led Members through the report and highlighted areas where targets had not been achieved and were therefore classified as either Red or Amber.

He advised Members that the National Play day held in August in Hagley Park had not achieved the target of 1000 attendees due to the poor weather conditions. He made reference to the performance indicator to achieve 50,000 attendances at play ranger led activities during 2010-11 and commented that there were a number of activities planned for Quarter 3 which would assist in the target hopefully being achieved by the year end.

The Committee discussed the Chase Leisure Centre construction scheme and Mike Edmonds confirmed that it was anticipated that a Contractor would be appointed in the next 2 - 4 weeks. He advised Members that they would be kept informed on the progress of the project as an update would be contained in the quarterly performance reports submitted to each meeting.

Members had concern as to whether the Schools had been notified of the proposed pool closure

during the 12 month construction project in order that they could arrange alternative venues.

Mike Edmonds advised that discussions had taken place with the County Council's Swimming Manager regarding the timetable for works to be undertaken at the Leisure Centre.

Members considered that it was important to notify all Schools that used the Leisure Centre pool as soon as possible about the proposed pool closure. Mike Edmonds advised that it was the intention to write to all Schools and clubs who used the pool to inform them of the closure date. He commented that there was the opportunity to increase the pool time at Rugeley Leisure Centre but that it would not be possible to fully accommodate all of the club's or school's current requirements.

Members discussed the timetable for the project to select a 3rd party partner to deliver Culture and Leisure services and considered that an additional meeting was required. The Chairman invited the Chair of Friends of Cannock Park to speak. She raised concern regarding the proposals to exchange Trust land and considered that an immediate meeting of the Trustees should be called to discuss this further as CISWO and FOCP were not happy with the proposals.

Councillor Grocott advised that the Chase Leisure Centre construction scheme was not affected by the issue regarding the land exchange as the Leisure Centre improvements were being undertaken on the same footprint.

Mike Edmonds explained that land valuations were awaited with regard to the proposed land exchange and it was therefore not appropriate at the present time to hold a Trustees meeting. However, he confirmed that a meeting of the Council as Trustees would be arranged in due course in order to consider the land exchange.

With regard to the Quarter 2 Culture and Sport Priority Delivery Plan Members noted that 86% of the performance indicators were on target, 12% were classified as Amber and only 1% had not achieved the target.

AGREED:

- (A) That the Quarter 2 Culture and Sport Priority Delivery Plan be noted.
- (B) That all Schools and Clubs that use the Chase Leisure Centre Pool be informed of the proposed pool closure as soon as possible.
- (C) That a further informal briefing meeting be convened to enable Members to receive an update on the selection of a 3rd party partner for the future delivery of Culture and Leisure services.

16. Exclusion of the 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 Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

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17. Outcome of the Scrutiny Review of the Prince of Wales Theatre

Members considered the Theatre subsidy information outlined in Enclosure 8 of the report. Members discussed the ways in which it had been attempted to increase income at the Theatre over the years along with the high corporate recharges. Members noted that all Theatres were expensive to run and were heavily subsidised.