

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
PROMOTING PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 4 JULY, 2018 AT 4.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT: Davis, Mrs. M.A. (Chairman)
Councillors Sutherland, M. (Vice-Chairman)

Dudson, A.	Lea, C.I.
Foley, D.	Stretton, Mrs. P.Z.
Grice, Mrs. D.	Tait, Ms. L.
Hewitt, P.M.	Wilkinson, Ms. C.L.
Hoare, M.W.A.	

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T.B. Johnson and P.D. Startin.

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

No declarations of interests or party whip declarations were received.

3. Minutes

Members were advised that the Annual Reports in relation to the Economic Development and Town Centres Scrutiny Committee and the Housing, Crime and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee, which were due to be considered later in the agenda, would summarise the work undertaken by the Committees during the 2017/18 municipal year.

The Interim Head of Economic Prosperity advised that in relation to the Economic Development and Town Centres Scrutiny Committee minutes Officers were looking at how to implement the SWIFT Travel Scheme and a report would be submitted to Council in due course. In relation to the S106 monies for the Tesco development in Rugeley the £30,000 would be used on improvement works to the physical environment and a report was due to be considered at Cabinet on 12 July seeking approval to spend S106 monies.

The Head of Housing, Partnerships and Interim Property commented that with regard the Housing, Crime and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee minutes the Community Safety element was now under the remit of the Community Scrutiny

Committee which was due to meet on 17 July, 2018.

The Interim Head of Economic Prosperity also updated Members with regard to the Mill Green Designer Village advising that the sale of the land adjacent to the Mill Green Nature Park had been completed and a capital receipt had been received. In response to a question raised by a Member regarding maintenance costs of the proposed new subway the Officer confirmed that the developer (who was the owner of the site) would be responsible for maintenance of the subway.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Economic Development and Town Centres Scrutiny Committee held on 4 April, 2018 and the Housing Crime and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held on 21 March, 2018 be approved as a correct record.

4. Promoting Prosperity Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2018/19

Consideration was given to the Joint Report of the Interim Head of Economic Prosperity and the Head of Housing, Partnerships and Interim Property (Item No. 4.1 – 4.5 plus appendices of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Chairman advised that a proposed Work Programme for 2018/19 was outlined at Appendix 1 and it was suggested that two Scrutiny reviews be undertaken in relation to the two service areas, as follows:-

- Economic Prosperity – Policy for Commercial Use of the Highway
- Housing – Review of Vulnerable Persons Decorating and Grass Cutting Scheme – Eligibility Criteria

She sought Members views on the suggested topics for the reviews. In relation to the Policy for Commercial Use of the Highway Members commented that shop owners in Cannock, Hednesford and Rugeley had expressed concern that they now had to pay to display “A-Boards” on a public highway. However, the policy did not cover other areas in the District such as Brereton.

The Interim Head of Economic Prosperity clarified that Council on 18 October, 2017 approved the adoption of the Policy. He commented that any review undertaken by Members would evaluate the impact of the introduction of the Policy and determine whether the application of the Policy should be retained and, if so, should it be extended beyond the largest town centres and/or District wide.

Members considered that a review of this Policy was high priority as they were receiving several complaints about this issue. It was suggested that the relevant Portfolio Holder should be invited to attend meetings when this matter was discussed.

Members questioned whether additional meetings of the Scrutiny Committee could be held in addition to the three scheduled meetings. It was considered that this review should be undertaken as soon as possible and it would be too late to report back to the next scheduled meeting on 21 November, 2018. Members

were advised that it was possible to arrange additional meetings of the Scrutiny Committee to deal with matters which cannot reasonably be considered at the next scheduled meeting.

It was agreed that the membership of the review would be made up of Councillors A. Dudson, P.M. Hewitt, Mrs. M.A. Davis and M. Sutherland. In addition a further meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be arranged before 21 November, 2018 in order that the outcome of the review could be reported back as soon as possible.

With regard to the suggestion for the Housing review the Head of Housing, Partnerships and Interim Property clarified that it would be a review of Vulnerable Persons Decorating and Grass Cutting Scheme – Eligibility criteria. She advised that the criteria for joining and leaving the scheme should be reviewed as if a person currently qualified they would remain eligible for life and as there was also a waiting list it could mean that a person did not qualify until another person had passed away.

A Member suggested that another possible review was to look at the Housing waiting list for single persons. The Head of Housing, Partnerships and Interim Property confirmed that the criterion for the waiting list for single persons was already being looked at. She was attending a meeting tomorrow and a Housing Needs Analysis would be prepared so that the matter could be discussed.

Members asked that this information be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee. The Head of Housing, Partnerships and Interim Property confirmed that she could bring this to the Committee; however, it would be a “work in progress” document.

It was agreed that the membership of this review would be made up of Councillors Mrs. P.Z. Stretton, C.I. Lea, Ms. L. Tait and Ms. C.L. Wilkinson. The progress on the outcome of the review would be reported to the Scrutiny Committee on 21 November, 2018.

Members who were sitting on the two reviews would be contacted in due course regarding dates for the first meetings. The Chairman commented that Members of the Scrutiny Committee were welcome to share their views on the reviews by contacting those Members who had been appointed to the reviews.

RESOLVED:

- (A) That the Promoting Prosperity Scrutiny Committee’s Work Programme for 2018/19 be as follows:-

Meeting Date	Item
4 July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• End of Year Outturn for Housing PDP for 2017-18• End of Year Outturn for Economic Development & Town Centres PDP for 2017-18

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report on work of the Housing and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee for 2017-18 • Annual Report on work of the Economic Development & Town Centres Scrutiny Committee for 2017-18 • Determine Review Programme for the two service areas 2018-19
21 November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting Prosperity PDP Progress Report April to September 2018 • Update on Scrutiny reviews
13 March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting Prosperity PDP Progress Report October to December 2018 • Update on Scrutiny reviews

(B) That the two reviews undertaken would be as follows:-

- (i) Economic Prosperity - Policy for Commercial Use of the Highway (Councillors A. Dudson, P.M. Hewitt, Mrs. M.A. Davis and M. Sutherland and the relevant Portfolio Holder be invited to attend)
- (ii) Housing - Review of Vulnerable Persons Grass Cutting Scheme – Eligibility Criteria (Councillors Mrs. P.Z. Stretton, C.I. Lea, Ms. L. Tait and Ms. C.L. Wilkinson)

(C) That an additional meeting of the Scrutiny Committee be arranged before 21 November, 2018 so that the outcome of the review of the Policy for Commercial Use of the Highway could be reported.

(D) That information on the criteria for the Housing waiting list for single persons be submitted to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

5. **Annual Report 2017-18 (Economic Development and Town Centres Scrutiny Committee)**

Consideration was given to the Interim Head of Economic Prosperity (Item No. 5.1 – 5.4 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Interim Head of Economic Prosperity outlined the work undertaken by the Economic Development and Town Centres Scrutiny Committee during the 2017/18 municipal year.

He advised that the Committee had set up a Working Group which focused on local transport, in particular, bus services. The Group had made three recommendations and he updated the Committee on the progress of these. The first recommendation was that Cabinet write to Arriva to show support for the inclusion of Rugeley within the “saver zones” area. He commented that Cabinet,

through the Deputy Leader, had wrote to Arriva and a response had been received from the Managing Director of Arriva and he had attended a meeting with Officers. The Managing Director had advised that Arriva was reviewing its fees and charges for Cannock/Stafford/Rugeley and, as part of this review, “saver zones” would be looked at.

He confirmed that the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee had sent a letter to Staffordshire County Council expressing the Committee’s disappointment on the reduced bus services being provided in the District from April, 2018 in line with the second recommendation. The response from the County Council confirmed the decision that had been made.

With regard to the third recommendation to contact Parish/Town Council’s to ask if they would be willing to make a contribution towards subsidising the Lichfield and Rugeley Village Connect service he advised that the County Council had gone out to tender for this service. As no one was willing to tender for the service it had ceased running.

The Officer added that Arriva were trialling a new mini bus service in Kent which passengers booked via an App. If this trial was successful Arriva may role it out in different areas.

With regard to the trial of the mini bus service in Kent Members considered that even if it was successful in Kent it did not necessarily mean it would work/fail in the Cannock Chase District area. However, it was noted that large buses often carried only a few passengers and the use of mini buses could be useful. It was also noted that the lack of competition for bus services within the District was an issue. The Interim Head of Economic Prosperity advised that the Working Group had discussed these issues as part of their review.

RESOLVED:

That the Economic Development and Town Centres Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2017/18 be noted and submitted to Council on 25 July, 2018 for information.

6. Annual Report 2017-18 (Housing, Crime and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee)

Consideration was given to the Head of Housing, Partnerships and Interim Property (Item No. 6.1 – 6.4 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Head of Housing, Partnerships and Interim Property outlined the work undertaken by the Housing, Crime and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee during the 2017/18 municipal year.

She advised that the Committee had undertaken a review of the Anti Social Behaviour Policy. However, as the implementation of the draft Corporate Anti Social Behaviour Policy would have staffing implications it was agreed that the Managing Director would be consulted on the roll-out of the Policy. This work would fall under the remit of the Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

The Locality Policing Review had been removed from the work programme as Members did not have the power to direct the work of the Police.

The Committee also took part in a Re-Thinking Social Housing Workshop which was launched by the Chartered Institute of Housing. The results were expected Summer 2018 and would be circulated to the Scrutiny Committee once they were available.

RESOLVED:

That the Housing, Crime and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2017/18 be noted and submitted to Council on 25 July, 2018 for information and the results of the Re-Thinking Social Housing Workshop be circulated to the Committee once they were available.

7. End of Year 2017/18 Housing PDP Performance Update

Members considered and noted the latest performance information for the Housing Priority Delivery Plan (Item 7.1 - 7.4 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Head of Housing, Partnerships and Interim Property commented that the progress on the key actions was satisfactory overall and she sought any questions from Members.

Members commented on the progress of the Moss Road Estate and considered that the Council should be proud of what had been developed. Additionally comments were made on the excellent job undertaken in respect of the improvement programmes to the Council's housing stock. A Member sought clarification regarding the waiting time for replacing baths with showers. The Head of Housing, Partnerships and Interim Property advised that this was part of the Disabled Facilities Grant and the current waiting time was 18 months. However, there were changes taking place to the way the Grant was administered and a new approach was being developed. It was planned to allocate a sum of money into the HRA to deal with the backlog and improve the 18 month waiting time.

RESOLVED:

That the Housing Priority Delivery Plan 2017/18 be noted.

8. End of Year 2017/18 Economic Development and Town Centres PDP Performance Update

Members considered and noted the latest performance information for the Economic Development and Town Centres Priority Delivery Plan (Item 7.1 - 7.4 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Interim Head of Economic Prosperity sought Members comments on the

information provided. A Member asked about Town Centre vacancy rates which was higher than the previous year. The Officer advised that although vacancy rates had risen the rates were still well below the national average of 12%. He commented that there was only one more vacant shop over the three main town centres when compared to this time last year.

RESOLVED:

That the Economic Development and Town Centre Priority Delivery Plan 2017/18 be noted.

The meeting closed at 5:10pm.

CHAIRMAN